

December 2019

How Teachers Plan for and Implement Strategies That Motivate Adolescent Students to Engage in Literacy Experiences

Chelsea Faase
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.uwm.edu/etd>



Part of the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Faase, Chelsea, "How Teachers Plan for and Implement Strategies That Motivate Adolescent Students to Engage in Literacy Experiences" (2019). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2301.
<https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/2301>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by UWM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UWM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact open-access@uwm.edu.

HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE
ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES

by

Chelsea J. Faase

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Urban Education

at

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

December 2019

ABSTRACT

HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES

by

Chelsea J. Faase

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019
Under the Supervision of Professor Tania Mertzman Habeck

This qualitative comparative case study sought to demonstrate how exemplary teachers motivate their adolescent students to engage in literacy experiences. The objectives and the themes of this research looked at what teachers understand about how adolescents are motivated, how they plan for that motivation, and how their planning emerges in their classrooms. Four exemplary teachers studied demonstrate multiple similar beliefs, while maintaining the unique ways these motivational practices emerged in their classrooms. This study shares each individual story, while generalizing common themes across the cases. While additional work can be done to find how exemplary teachers and motivation impact more diverse classrooms, the tension between curriculum and teachers, as well as a new understanding towards assessment practices, it reinforces current studies and adds to the breadth of knowledge when it comes to exemplary teachers motivating adolescents. The expansion of current research has led to an understanding of the need for exemplary teachers to constantly be working to develop their craft and reflect on their current practices. It also highlights the need for teachers to motivate their students by caring for their emotional and psychological well-being. Finally, it demonstrates the need for motivation to be a strategic process, ideally as a partnership between teachers and students. All in all, exemplary teachers are constantly reflecting on their practices in order to educate the whole student and meet their needs while creating an environment where students are motivated to engage in literacy practices due to the opportunities that these teachers provide.

© Copyright by Chelsea J. Faase, 2019
All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

To my family. Who have supported me throughout my entire life.

Particularly to my parents, who instilled the love of learning as a priority in my life. And proving that through education, we can achieve anything.

Finally, to stories- let them be told, and let us learn from them, let each educator realize the uniqueness of their own story.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	pg. xi
Chapter 1	
Introduction	
Vignette- Life of an Educator	pg. 1
Personal Statement on Research	pg. 4
Understanding the Problem	pg. 5
Key Background of the Problem	pg. 7
Teacher's Perceptions	pg. 8
Practices, Routines and Environment for adolescents	pg. 10
Statement of Purpose	pg. 11
Research Problem	pg. 12
Research Questions	pg. 12
Significance	pg. 12
Theoretical Framework/Approach	pg. 13
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework	pg. 14
Understanding the Problem	pg. 15
Understanding the Perspective	pg. 15
Reading Engagement Perspective	pg. 15
Sociocultural Theory	pg. 17
Model of Motivation and Personality	pg. 18
Tensions between the perspectives	pg. 19
Research Design	pg. 20
Multiple case study	pg. 20
Limitations	pg. 20
Methods	pg. 21
Definitions of Terms	pg. 22
Vignette- Watching the Flowers Grow	pg. 24
Chapter 2	
Review of the literature	pg. 26
Introduction	pg. 26
Scope of the Review	pg. 27
Key Terms	pg. 29
Adolescents	pg. 29
Motivation	pg. 30
Exemplary Teachers	pg. 34
Synthesis	pg. 36
Teacher-Created Environments	pg. 36
Use of Technology	pg. 40
Re-defining literacy practices based on student needs	pg. 42
Lack of acceptance outside of Merriam-Webster	pg. 46
New Identities	pg. 48
Adolescents need to talk	pg. 53
Statement of Purpose	pg. 57
Research questions	pg. 57
Research Gap	pg. 57

Vignette- For the love of animals	pg. 59
Chapter 3	pg. 61
Methods	
Introduction	pg. 61
Statement of purpose	pg. 62
Research problem	pg. 62
Research questions	pg. 62
Research design	pg. 63
Figure 2: Research questions and study design	pg. 63
How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences	pg.63
How does a teacher understand motivation in an early adolescent language arts classroom	pg.64
How does a teacher plan for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class	pg.64
How does a teacher's understanding of motivation emerge in their early adolescent language arts class	pg. 65
Justification of research	pg. 65
Reflexivity	pg. 66
Study Context	pg. 68
Population/Data	pg. 68
Exemplary teacher qualifications	pg. 69
Creating a community of learners	pg. 69
Utilizing your classroom amenities	pg. 69
Expanding the institutionalization and standardization	pg. 70
Incorporating routines and practices that allow for student interaction	pg. 70
Class objective meet the need of students	pg. 70
Diversity consideration of text and differentiation	pg. 71
Classroom procedures allow for student autonomy	pg. 71
Fosters an environment that maximizes the interconnectedness of students and learning	pg. 71
Logistical data on the research participants	pg. 72
Must teach in the Midwest, United States	pg. 72
Must teach 5th-8th grade	pg. 72
Must have completed at least three consecutive years of teaching at that age level	pg. 72
Could span a variety of educational environments	pg. 72
Recruitment	pg. 73
Speak with area colleges for principals to contact	pg. 73
Speak with colleagues to connect within a more widespread area	pg. 73
Final recommendations	pg. 73
Recruit participants for initial observation	pg. 73
Introduction to data collection	pg. 74
Pre-research survey for sampling purposes	pg. 74
Classroom observations	pg. 74
Continuing Study	pg. 75
Figure 3- participation scoring on the initial checklist	pg. 76
Invitation for continued study	pg. 77
Examination of artifacts	pg. 78

Interviews with the teacher	pg. 78
Classroom Observations	pg. 79
Breakdown of the data collection	pg. 80
Figure 4: recorded observation structure and time spent with participants	pg. 81
Justification of discrepancy	pg. 81
Analysis Strategies	pg. 82
Case-Level Analysis	pg. 82
Inductive Content Analysis	pg. 83
Cross-Case Analysis	pg. 85
Figure 5: Overall themes and recorded evidence by participants	pg. 86
Member Check and Inter-rater Reliability	pg. 88
Importance and Application of the Study	pg. 89
Limitations/Delimitations	pg. 90
Summary	pg. 90
Vignette- Two Peas in a Pod	pg. 92
Chapter 4	pg. 94
Findings	
Introduction	pg. 94
Introduction of themes	pg. 94
Figure 6: Table of themes, definitions and examples	pg. 94
Personalized Education	pg. 96
Purposeful Literacy experiences	pg. 96
Educating the whole student	pg. 97
Setting the student up for success	pg. 97
Best learning environment	pg. 97
Emphasis on progress	pg. 98
Constant Reflection	pg. 98
Being vulnerable	pg. 98
Making connections	pg. 99
Learning as a partnership	pg. 99
Building a trusting community	pg. 99
Content creation	pg. 100
High-interest topics	pg. 100
Teachers encouraging their students to see themselves as readers and writers	pg. 100
Professional learning opportunities/educational talk	pg. 100
Meeting the students' psychological needs	pg. 101
Exposure to books/text	pg. 101
Students' sharing and discussing	pg. 101
Perceptive Paige	
Demographics of Paige	pg. 102
Demographics of her school	pg. 103
Welcome to Paige's classroom, practices and planning	pg. 104
Figure 7: Collage image of Paige's classroom	pg. 104
Planning for motivation in Paige's Classroom	pg. 106
Reflection	pg. 107
PBL/Purpose	pg. 108
Rubrics/grades	pg. 109
What Paige believes helps her students be most successful	pg. 110
Meeting student's needs	pg. 110

Literacy experiences outside of the classroom	pg. 112
Empowering her students	pg. 114
Connecting to her students	pg. 116
How Paige feels about motivation	pg. 117
Making connections	pg. 118
Personalizing Education	pg. 119
Creating joy	pg. 121
What motivates Paige	pg. 122
Ownership Owen	pg. 123
Demographics of Owen	pg. 123
Demographics of his school	pg. 124
Welcome to Owen's classroom	pg. 124
Figure 8: Collage image of Owen's classroom	pg. 125
Schedule and class routine	pg. 126
Planning for motivation in Owen's Classroom	pg. 128
Confidence in tools	pg. 128
Data Driven	pg. 129
Building their background	pg. 129
What Owen believes helps his students be most successful	pg. 131
Vulnerability	pg. 131
Trust	pg. 132
Ownership	pg. 133
How Owen feels about motivation	pg. 133
High interest	pg. 133
Good People	pg. 136
What motivates Owen	pg. 138
Inclusive Isabelle	pg. 138
Demographics of Isabelle	pg. 138
Demographics of her school	pg. 140
Welcome to Isabelle's classroom	pg. 140
Figure 9: Collage image of Isabelle's classroom	pg. 141
Schedule and class routine	pg. 142
Planning for motivation in Isabelle's Classroom	pg. 146
Voice in the classroom	pg. 146
Seeking outside resources	pg. 146
Seeking student feedback	pg. 147
What Isabelle believes helps her students be most successful	pg. 147
Examples and Modeling	pg. 147
Students viewed growth	pg. 148
Celebrating success	pg. 149
How Isabelle feels about motivation	pg. 149
Relevance of the material	pg. 149
Opportunities to share	pg. 151
Opportunities for student choice	pg. 152
What motivates Isabelle	pg. 154
Deliberate Danielle	pg. 154
Demographics of Danielle	pg. 154
Demographics of Danielle's school	pg. 156
Welcome to Danielle's classroom	pg. 156
Figure 10: Collage image of Danielle's classroom	pg. 157
Schedule and class routine	pg. 158

Community circle	pg. 158
Energizer time	pg. 159
Google slides	pg. 160
Planning for motivation in Danielle's Classroom	pg. 160
Reflection	pg. 161
Extension/Personal	pg. 161
What Danielle believes helps her students be most successful	pg. 162
In the zone reading	pg. 162
Teaching the whole student	pg. 163
Learning psychology	pg. 163
How Danielle feels about motivation	pg. 165
Meeting the students at their level	pg. 165
Analogies/Rigor and Relevance	pg. 168
Student Owning their Learning	pg. 172
What motivates Danielle	pg. 175
Data Compared to the Themes	
Personalized Education	pg. 176
Figure 11. Chart for personalized education	pg. 176
Purposeful Literacy experiences	pg. 177
Figure 12. Chart for Literacy experiences	pg. 177
Educating the whole student	pg. 179
Figure 13. Chart for educating the whole student	pg. 179
Setting the student up for success	pg. 181
Figure 14. Chart for Chart for setting the students up for success	pg. 181
Best learning environment	pg. 183
Figure 15. Chart for Best learning environment	pg. 183
Emphasis on progress	pg. 185
Figure 16. Chart for Emphasis on progress	pg. 185
Constant Reflection	pg. 186
Figure 17. Chart for Constant reflection	pg. 187
Being vulnerable	pg. 188
Figure 18. Chart for Being vulnerable	pg. 188
Making connections	pg. 189
Figure 19. Chart for Making connections	pg. 189
Learning as a partnership	pg. 191
Figure 20. Chart for Learning as a partnership	pg. 191
Building a trusting community	pg. 193
Figure 21. Chart for Building a trusting community	pg. 193
Content creation	pg. 195
Figure 22. Chart for Content creation	pg. 195
High-interest topics	pg. 196
Figure 23. Chart for High-interest topics	pg. 196
Teachers promotion of students to see themselves as readers and writers	pg. 198
Figure 24. Chart for teacher's promotion of students seeing themselves as readers and writers	pg. 198
Professional learning opportunities/educational talk	pg. 200
Figure 25. Chart for Professional learning opportunities	pg. 200
Meeting the students' psychological needs	pg. 201
Figure 26. Chart for Students psychological needs	pg. 201

Exposure to books/text	pg. 203
Figure 27. Chart for exposure to books/text	pg. 203
Students' sharing and discussing	pg. 205
Figure 28. Chart for students sharing and discussing	pg. 205
General comparison on differences across participants	pg. 207
General comparison on similarities across participants	pg. 209
Data compared to exemplary teaching research	pg. 211
Figure 29: Comparison of initial definition of exemplary teaching to present themes.	pg. 212
Creating a community of Learners	pg. 212
Utilizing classroom amenities	pg. 213
Expanding the institutionalization	pg. 214
Incorporating routines that allow for student interaction	pg. 215
Class objectives meet student need	pg. 216
Diversity and differentiation	pg. 217
Student autonomy	pg. 218
Maximizes interconnectedness	pg. 219
Expanding the definition	pg. 220
Data compared to motivation research	pg. 220
Figure 30: Comparison between Wigfield and Guthrie's findings and present themes	pg. 221
Reinforce their data	pg. 221
Counteract their data	pg. 223
Not included in their data	pg. 226
Data Compared to previous research	pg. 227
Figure 31: Main findings of previously grounded research	pg. 227
How the data supports current research	pg. 228
Curriculum and classroom routines	pg. 228
Wide range of reading material	pg. 229
Classroom conversations	pg. 230
In-depth knowledge	pg. 231
Aspects of research not addressed	pg. 231
Displayed student work	pg. 231
Focus on meaning-making/inferential questions	pg. 232
Sparingly using external motivations	pg. 233
Additional thought to research	pg. 234
Vignette- The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree	pg. 235
Chapter 5	pg. 237
Figure 32. Chart representation of the theme's response to the research questions.	pg. 237
How teachers understand motivation	pg. 237
How teachers plan for motivation	pg. 239
How motivation emerges in the classroom	pg. 241
Research questions	pg. 244
Interpretation of Findings	pg. 244
Exemplary educators understand motivation to be meeting the emotional and psychological needs of the students.	pg. 244
Exemplary educators plan for motivation through constant reflection and professional development.	pg. 247
Teacher's understanding of motivation emerges in the classroom through purposeful strategic process of practicing literacy.	pg. 249

Implications for practice	pg. 251
Extended Findings; Implications for Teacher educators	pg. 252
Recommendations for further considerations	pg. 255
Conclusion	pg. 256
Vignette- Closing my Story	pg. 258
References	pg. 260
Appendix	pg. 272
Appendix A: Pre-research sampling survey	pg. 272
Appendix B: Formal letter of invitation to study	pg. 273
Appendix C: Interview questions	pg. 274
Appendix D: Observation focus	pg. 277
Appendix E: Interview questions	pg. 278
Appendix F: Letter to support recruitment	pg. 279
Appendix G: Letter to research site	pg. 281
Curriculum Vitae	pg. 282

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework	pg. 14
Figure 2: Research questions and study design	pg. 63
Figure 3- participation scoring on the initial checklist	pg. 76
Figure 4: recorded observation structure and time spent with participants	pg. 81
Figure 5: Overall themes and recorded evidence by participants	pg. 86
Figure 6: Table of themes, definitions and examples	pg. 94
Figure 7: Collage image of Paige's classroom	pg. 104
Figure 8: Collage image of Owen's classroom	pg. 125
Figure 9: Collage image of Isabelle's classroom	pg. 141
Figure 10: Collage image of Danielle's classroom	pg. 157
Figure 11. Chart for personalized education	pg. 176
Figure 12. Chart for Literacy experiences	pg. 177
Figure 13. Chart for educating the whole student	pg. 179
Figure 14. Chart for Chart for setting the students up for success	pg. 181
Figure 15. Chart for Best learning environment	pg. 183
Figure 16. Chart for Emphasis on progress	pg. 185
Figure 17. Chart for Constant reflection	pg. 187
Figure 18. Chart for Being vulnerable	pg. 188
Figure 19. Chart for Making connections	pg. 189
Figure 20. Chart for Learning as a partnership	pg. 191
Figure 21. Chart for Building a trusting community	pg. 193
Figure 22. Chart for Content creation	pg. 195
Figure 23. Chart for High-interest topics	pg. 196
Figure 24. Chart for teacher's promotion of students seeing themselves as readers and writers	pg. 198
Figure 25. Chart for Professional learning opportunities	pg. 200
Figure 26. Chart for Students psychological needs	pg. 201
Figure 27. Chart for exposure to books/text	pg. 203
Figure 28. Chart for students sharing and discussing	pg. 205
Figure 29: Comparison of initial definition of exemplary teaching to present themes.	pg. 212
Figure 30: Comparison between Wigfield and Guthrie's findings and present themes	pg. 221
Figure 31: Main findings of previously grounded research	pg. 227
Figure 32. Chart representation of the theme's response to the research questions.	pg. 237

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Tania Mertzman Habeck. Not only was she paramount in my success in the completion of my dissertation, but she was a vital support throughout the entire program. Tania's guidance, mentorship, and knowledge pushed me to become an expert in the field of reading research. Whether it was the independent studies under her guidance, or the number of phone conversations, I can confidently say that I would not be here without her and appreciate every ounce of support and effort she provided me throughout this entire journey.

Additionally, I want to thank the rest of my committee, Dr. Aaron Schutz, Dr. Candance Doerr-Stevens and Dr. Michael Ford. Their encouragement as well as their constructive feedback allowed me to produce a research project that contributes to the greater field of literacy research. Their support challenged me to re-think about my topic and the lens for which I was examining it. Each of their perspectives aided in the research, the writing, and the completion of this dissertation. The breadth of knowledge this committee is inspirational, and I feel privileged to have been able to work with and learn from them. A particular thanks goes out to Dr. Michael Ford. He was a guest committee member brought in due to his pivotal role in my initial interest in seeking this degree. As chair of my master's presentation, Dr. Ford encouraged me to continue on in my educational journey. His brilliance as an educator and researcher are goals that I strive for in my own future plans.

I owe an enormous amount of gratitude to my research participants. Not only did they allow me into their classrooms and educational lives, but they also gave up time to sit and discuss their practices with me. The individuals I studied are inspiring and deserved to have their stories told. Each student who walks through their doors leave better students, and better people due to their interactions with their teachers.

Finally, a tremendous amount of thanks to my family throughout the past five years.

Their support, encouragement, and listening ear are what got me through the degree. Each played a fundamental role in keeping me motivated throughout this miraculous journey. Finally, this work is in honor of the original Dr. Faase, my father and forever supporter. I know he is smiling down on this accomplishment, and will continue to guide me in the directions of education and knowledge, in an attempt to mirror the incredible educator he was.

HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

You may tell a tale that takes up residence in someone's soul, becomes their blood and self and purpose. That tale will move them and drive them and who knows what they might do because of it, because of your words. That is your role, your gift.

—Erin Morgenstern, *The Night Circus*

The Life of an Educator

The following dissertation should read like a story. Its themes and message woven through each page, the voices of the “characters” floating off of the page, begging to be heard. This research is a story—or rather, a collection of stories, from the stories of the participants to the educators’ vignettes intermixed in the research. But primarily it is my story and should begin with such.

Even before my birth, education was the hub around which my family spun. My parents met through education, my mom being the principal at a private school where my dad worked for the church. From that moment, their goals and dreams surrounded the education and life that they could provide to my siblings and me.

No one epitomized the concept of being a lifelong learner more than my own father, Tom Faase. My dad was a brilliant man; a professor of sociology at St. Norbert College, holding three masters’ degrees and his Ph.D. from an Ivy League school. My dad worked every day to learn something new. While we were growing up, he would often offer to help us with our homework and research so he could learn more about topics we were covering. Afterward, he would sit down to discuss them with more excitement than any of us ever had. My dad felt that a day without learning something was a day wasted. He taught at St. Norbert for over 28 years.

My mom, Debbie Faase, is a believer in dreams and supporter of all things inquisitive. Also in education for her whole career, my mom taught the range of grades from first through eighth grade before becoming one of the youngest administrators at the school where she met my father. She went on to teach in the education department at St. Norbert College (for 33 years) and continues to inspire hopeful educators to excite and inspire children of all ages. As children, our home was always filled with adventure and learning. Summers were spent on constant “field trips” to the local fire station, state park, or lakefront, discovering what our community had to share. My parents viewed every opportunity as a learning opportunity, one that should be researched beforehand, processed, and reflected on afterward. Our parents instilled in us three children, who are separated in age by just under four years, the joy of reading, researching, discovering, inventing, sharing, and discussing from our youngest of ages. These practices are ones that my siblings and I have all continued to hold strong to and foster within the lives of our families and friends around us. And as much as I can sing the praises of my family, it is my parents who will be the first to give credit to the amazing educational experiences that were afforded to us through our kindergarten–eighth-grade public schooling at an alternative school—Aldo Leopold Community School.

Aldo Leopold Community School in Green Bay was established in 1976 as part of an alternative program at another school. By 1978, it was in a building of its own, making its way as a school on its own. The school was started by Dr. Margaret Hutchison and a set of core teachers who would continue to run the school through the time that I attended. According to an analysis of original memos and proposals to the district, Dr. Hutchinson wanted a school whose core principle was “Learning from life for life.” The following are the core values that the school was originally based on:

- *Experiential learning*
- *Individualized instruction*
- *Extensive parental involvement*

- *Using the community as a classroom*
- *Fostering a positive attitude toward self, school, and community*

Dr. Hutchinson believed that students should be provided the opportunity to learn from a curriculum that works with their previous real-life experiences that students will find intrinsic motivation when presented with material that truly matters to them and the community around them. She also believed that all children are naturally curious and that when giving the opportunity to explore and inquire, we can harness that curiosity to increase their desire to learn. One of the original teachers who worked hand-in-hand with Dr. Hutchison to start the school described this phenomenon in this way: “All children are naturally curious. When you structure them too much and just give them information and want them to just give that same information back to you to prove that they learned something, that’s not true learning. Children should be allowed to explore their curiosities with the guidance of teachers, of course, because there are basic things that people need to know for higher education. But it can be done in a way that makes children feel very successful, very much in charge of their own learning. And that the curiosity that they were born with never dies away.”

Additionally, Dr. Hutchinson found that the world around us is the best place to discover new information and keep kids wanting to know more. Therefore, the original proposal of the program included the necessity for as many field trips into the community as possible. These field trips included nature preserves, local businesses, historical buildings, and government-run services (the public library and police and fire stations). The heartbeat of the school was matched by the laughter and conversations taking place in each of its classrooms. Everyone in the building worked hard to make sure that the students found success and wanted to come back every single day.

At Aldo, I learned that I should never stop asking questions and seeking out answers. I learned to discuss problems with not only my peers but other adults around me. Teachers viewed the students as partners on a learning journey, one that has them learning together, exploring resources, and coming

back to share discoveries. Another one of the teachers from early in the program described it this way: “We were on a first name basis. So there would be more of an equality in school. We were equal because we were here to learn together.” I learned the importance of motivation and that my success is based on the work that I put in. Throughout my nine years of attending the school, I was fortunate enough to have met and had some truly exceptional teachers who understood how to motivate students.

It is due to the experiences and educators that I had at Aldo Leopold, as well as my educationally driven parents, that I knew that I was going to be an educator from an early age. I was fortunate enough to continue to meet exceptional educators, and I honed the craft of teaching through many of these varied experiences. It has brought me to want to study motivation and how teachers continue to motivate students today. All of it comes full circle to being the lifelong learner, inquisitor through all, and current researcher that I am and for which I am eternally grateful.

The purpose of this dissertation is to tell the stories of exemplary educators. This dissertation will include research of current exemplary teachers and the practices they have in place to motivate adolescents to read. However, throughout this dissertation, you will see the stories of other teachers not studied in this research. These teachers are individuals who shaped the life of this researcher and put in place the seed of this research a long time ago. This dissertation aims to tell their stories.

Personal Statement on the Research

Motivating adolescent learners is a topic that hits particularly close to home for me, the researcher. This is due to the fact that I have been an early adolescent English language arts teacher for half of my teaching career. My chosen career path and examining the direction that current education is being forced into, is what drove me to want to study and research specific practices and intentions when it comes to motivating early adolescent readers. Due to testing and the institutionalization of many public school settings, early adolescents are being forced into a format of learning devoid of excitement and creativity (Alvermann, 2002; Hemphill, 2015; Sandburg, 2010). Instead, it focuses on curriculum, standards, and test scores. (Sandburg,

2007). Throughout my Master's in reading education program, and now my doctoral research, I see and read about the prospects of developing lifelong learners by motivating students to love to read. As Alvermann (2008) substantiates, "To become lifelong literacy learners, children must be motivated to engage in literacy activities. It is not sufficient only to possess the cognitive skills necessary for the reading" (p. 469). It is much more than that, and unfortunately, many educators are losing sight of this in the haze of testing, evaluation systems, and a need to meet a standardized curriculum. Through my ten years of teaching total, eight of those spent in research and further study, a major lesson I have learned is that teaching is not simply a means of delivering content. Teaching is so much greater than that. Teaching is about "speaking to the student," helping the student connect to and understand how the content applies to them. Teaching needs to be about inspiring kids, and the task of reading teachers is to inspire them to love to read. Young adult literature writer Cynthia Rylant speaks of this perfectly when she says, "Read to them. Take their breath away. Read with the same feeling in your throat as when you first see the ocean after driving hours and hours to get there. Close the final page of the book with the same reverence you feel when you kiss your sleeping child at night" ("The Power of a Story"). This quote from an acclaimed children's book author conveys the joy and passion that most can relate to. Reading should be a gift that children yearn for and which creates excitement. Even elementary students who struggle with reading find pure joy when they feel successful with reading. Unfortunately, by the time these same students reach middle school, this gift becomes a chore. It is this fact that has me seeking the study of how teachers plan for and understand motivation—how they foster love and joy by inviting students back to literacy experiences.

Understanding the Problem

Just about any reading teacher would agree that motivating students to read is one of the most critical aspects of their becoming better readers. And yet, as a study by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics identifies, "young people (ages 15-19) read only six minutes per weekday

for pleasure but spend 50 minutes each day playing games or using a computer” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Current reading researchers’ findings are concurrent with the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, recognizing the dwindling motivation of adolescents to read for pleasure (Alvermann et al., 1999; Moje et al., 2000; Vasudevan & Campano, 2009; Wendt, 2013). However, this statistic is a skewed view of the literacy experiences that adolescent students are partaking in. It focuses on reading for pleasure but does not include the abundance of literacy tasks that adolescents engage in on a daily basis. This skewed view of literacy continues into the adolescent classroom, asking adolescents to read for the sake of assigned work with the target of producing results (Connor, Goldman, & Fishman 2014; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008; Rose, 2011). This lack of adolescents reading can be attributed to the struggle of motivating students to read once they have already learned how to or proven unsuccessful at it (Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). According to research by Robert Ruddell discussing the need for engagement and motivation, “reading engagement processes mediate the effects of instructional context on student outcomes. Thus, the instructional context does not directly influence reading outcomes; rather, the effects of the instructional context depend on the levels of student engagement” (Ruddell, 1994, p. 417). Through the practices and environment that the teacher creates for early adolescent language arts classrooms, their decisions become of great importance for motivating this demographic to participate in literacy experiences- inviting them to these experiences. (Alfassi, 2000; Alvermann et al., 1999; Mills, 2011; Rosen, 2010). However, the perceptions of teachers do not always translate to motivating most or even all of their students in their language arts class (Almasi & Gambrell, 1994; Lloyd, 2004). The problem is that teachers do not always know how to plan for and move kids from having to read for product to feeling welcomed into the literacy experiences; therefore, their classroom practices, classroom libraries, and classroom lessons are sometimes ineffective in motivating students to want to read.

Key Background of the Problem

Adolescent students are losing sight of the importance of reading because they feel that it is a skill that they have and possess already (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Casey, 2009; Gambrell et al., 2011; Moje, 2008; Teale, 2013). This is especially true for students in intermediate grades and beyond. Research by Fagella (2012) found that “2 of 3 children transitioning from middle school to high school can be considered at risk for failure because they lack foundational skills for secondary curricula success” (p. 72). The problem is that teachers do not always know how to plan for and move kids from having to read to wanting to read (Almasi & Gambrell, 1994; Lloyd, 2004; Moore et al., 1999). This results in their classroom practices, classroom libraries, and classroom lessons sometimes being ineffective in motivating students to want to read (Moore et al., 1999). To understand this problem, I will outline three essential avenues along which the research will be focused: the foundation of motivation and engagement, teachers’ perceptions of motivation to read, and the practices, routines, and environment that a teacher has in place that either adds to or detracts from student motivation to read. While I am sure that there is a myriad of issues that contribute to adolescents declining in interest in reading, I propose that one major factor is that they are simply not motivated to do so to the strict definition of reading.

Motivation and Engagement

Educational environments for adolescents can be a pretty dramatic change from the elementary level (O’Brian & Scharber, 2008). Typically movement is guided by bells, and a more formal institutional structure is in place that goes against the more relaxed setting at the elementary schools (Alvermann et al., 1999). This formality sets a tone of seriousness rather than allowing the students to feel relaxed in an environment that comprises the majority of their day. This change of tone highlights the students that are struggling, and when students struggle, it creates disengagement for them, typically as a way to avoid embarrassment or looking like a failure (Alvermann, 1999; Barton & McKay, 2016). It also could be a disengagement through lack of purpose for the student: “too frequently education assumes a separation between

knowing and doing, treating knowledge...as theoretically independent of the situation in which it is learned and used” (Gee, 2007, p. 32). And yet, teachers are not always putting into place practices that are motivating because they do not always understand those needs of the adolescent (Almasi & Gambrell, 1994; Lloyd, 2004). Hemphill et al. (2015) also researched adolescents and saw the need to re-engage this group. They acknowledge this, saying, “by the middle grades, it may be critical to engage struggling readers with curriculum units that tap student interest and provide opportunities to talk about text with teachers and peers. (Hemphill et al., 2015, p. 4). Students engaged in their learning are more apt to take risks to find success through participation, rather than bowing down to the difficulties of the task at hand (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). There are ample strategies to implement that can re-engage a disengaged adolescent (Gee, 2010; Kim & Kamil, 2016; Moje et al., 2008), yet not many are in practice in the current educational environments due to the lack of knowledge by the teacher or the institutional setting of adolescent education.

Teacher’s Perceptions

It is the job of and expectation for every teacher to be delivering the content encouraged by the schools in an effective manner for the students in their classes. However, the idea of effective instruction is much broader than merely passing content knowledge from the teacher to the student for students to be able to recall immediately or for an assessment. Many teachers view effective instruction, or whether their students “got it” or not, based on a set of standards laid forth at the district, state, or national level (O’Brian & Scharber, 2008). A student’s understanding of the content and a student’s retention of the content are also very different. When the content is presented in a motivating manner, it helps the students move from retention of content to understanding the content. (Duncan et al., 2016; Wendt, 2013). “Effective literacy teaching requires both an understanding of how language works, and of the social contexts of literacy. It has been popular in recent theories to find contexts for literacy in areas of social life, from workplaces to mobile tweets, and in various modalities, including images and

oral discourse” (Rose, 2011, p. 81). Teachers need to understand both of these contexts—to be equipped to teach the curriculum of the content as well as the social needs of an adolescent—if they are going to be genuinely successful. Many districts invest in educational programs and content to better support their teachers and to help on the curriculum side. Yet, due to the lack of focus on the motivation side, these programs can lack the ability to set the students up with even the most foundational skills (Daniels, 2015; Heath, 2012; Klauda & Guthrie, 2015). This is where the understanding of teachers and motivation becomes essential. The problem exists that teachers’ perceptions of motivational strategies within their classrooms are not always increasing motivation to its highest potential. There are many reasons why these perceptions can be off, such as the traditional style of adolescent education and the teacher’s ability to teach to the social needs of the students.

Adolescent education is known for its traditional style of teaching (Alvermann et al., 1999; Bomer, 1993; Leu et al., 2004; O’Brian & Scharber, 2008). However, adolescents and the research behind the needs of adolescents are more than ready to move beyond this style (Bomer, 1999; Carroll, 2011). Bomer (1999) states,

Those motivational, schemata-activating, preliminary engagements that occupy much space in literature on teaching struggling readers are designed, we thought, to undo the damage done to reading by the authoritative structure of schooling and the sometimes (no not always) necessary reality of teachers selecting reading materials for students. (p. 23)

The research by Vasudevan and Campano (2009) supports this disparity and continues by saying,

On one hand, adolescents are increasingly finding a range of outlets for intellectual and creative expression and acquiring literacy practices that enable them to have a greater sense of who they are as well as whom they may become. On the other hand, literacy pedagogies in school—still beholden to rigid and autonomous models of literacy, in which literacy is

reduced to discrete, learnable skills— result in putting students in narrow categories that often deny their full potential. (p. 326)

As described by these researchers, students are motivated by the intellectual and creative expression that literacy practices can have. And yet this is in contrast to the more formal, learnable skills that teachers expect and are identifiable in classrooms today (O'Brian & Scharber, 2008). Some styles of teaching dictate that the students will either understand the concept or not. This right or wrong got it or not, is a more traditional form of learning, one that detracts from motivating adolescent students (Moje et al., 2008; Unrau & Quirk, 2014). Almasi and Gambrell (1994) identify classroom practices that bring engagement back; these are similar to those previously mentioned by Vasudevan and Campano (2009) and Bomer (1994). These practices include "Participation in peer-led discussions, as described in this investigation, [which] provided students with opportunities to engage in higher-level thought processes as reflected by responses that were significantly more complex and elaborate than students' responses in teacher-led discussions" (Almasi & Gambrell, 1994, p. 43) Use of activities such as these discussions will allow student motivation to be heightened in a classroom, therefore connecting with students' social needs (Rosen, 2010; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). "Where are the connections to the text and the life of the learner? How can learners truly explore the ambiguities to their own literacy journey through a teacher-led discussion that focuses upon the close analysis of plot?" (Hippisley, 2009, p. 224).

Practices, Routines, and Environment Supportive for Adolescents

Research shows that adolescents learn effectively when their routines and practices allow for peer interaction- socio-centric literacy practices (Alverman, 2002; Daniels, Hamby, & Chen, 2015; Gee, 2009; Rosen, 2010). Gee (2007) speaks to this by saying, "Literacy was a social and cultural achievement—it was about ways of participating in social and cultural groups—not just mental achievement. Thus, literacy needed to be understood and studied in its

full range of contexts—not just cognitive, but also social, cultural, historical and institutional.” Adolescents need to be allowed to have a communal learning experience that will, in turn, allow them to talk, learn, and grow from the interaction with their peers (Duncan et al., 2016; Kim & Kamil, 2016). Eskay, Onu, Obiyo, & Obidoa, (2012) describe the benefits of cooperative learning, as “it helps students have higher academic achievements, improved relationships with peers, improved personal and social development and increased motivation” (p. 934). This communicative learning opportunity hits on all of the critical components of an adolescent's life, one that is filled with social stress and constant anxiety on how they appear to their peers. It also allows the students to connect with their peers, recognizing the similarities in their life situations, whether that is the pressures and anxieties of adolescence or the overall events that impact their lives. Finally, it aids students in creating their personal identities, as it fosters the need to connect to others. Practices and routines that support this return the learning to the student (Guthrie et al., 2013). “As students react to a shared reading event, their individual identities and experiences shape conversations and the text being considered while the conversations and texts shape the individual's identities and experience of the participants” (Casey et al., 2009, p. 286). Hippiusley (2009) adds to the environment that is conducive to adolescent learners, saying, “[teachers should] view the classroom as a forum in which these unifying forces between home and school can create and accommodate new communal reading practices” (p. 223). Teachers of adolescent students should strive for these practices, routines, and environments within their classroom to maximize adolescent student learning. They can strive to create an environment where adolescent learners want to “take responsibility for their learning and thus become critical thinkers” (Eskay et al., 2012, p. 937). Achieving this will require immense student motivation (Gambrell et al., 2011; Guthrie & Klauda, 2013; Teale, 2013) and practices that foster student collaboration (Alvermann, 1999; Franzak, 2006; Kim & Kamil, 2016; Leu et al., 2004; Lloyd, 2004; Moje, 2008; Moore, 1999).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this multiple case study is to describe the ways that teachers understand and plan for motivating students to want to engage in literacy experiences, based on the routines and practices for three to five midwestern Wisconsin teachers.

Research Problem

The problem is that additional pressures that tend to detract from the motivation of wanting to read emerge when students reach adolescence (Carroll, 2011). There is no consistent manner in which teachers offer this motivation. Many teachers are continually looking for new strategies for their classroom practices and routines, classroom environment, and planned lessons in order to increase motivation, yet these strategies do not always translate to what is being done in the classroom. Additionally, motivation is not simply about a checklist of what teachers can and cannot do, but rather it is a personalized invitation to engage or re-engage in the classroom and literacy practices. The problem exists in that current literature recognizes practices within an adolescent literacy classroom that should allow for motivation within the classroom, but little research demonstrate on classroom teachers are able to accomplish the personalized nature of the invitation to literacy experiences amidst the stringent adolescent educational environments today.

Research Questions

How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?

Sub questions.

- How does a teacher understand motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher plan for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher's understanding of motivation emerge in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?

Significance

By the time that students reach the adolescent stage of their education, we can already see a decline in motivation (Alvermann, 1999). With this decline in their overall excitement for education comes a decline in voluntary reading. Students' priorities and interests change from reading for pleasure to other social demands (Carroll, 2011). With the decline of voluntary reading comes a decline in overall literacy abilities. According to Wendt (2013)

In order to be successful during high school and into adulthood, secondary students need to develop not only the ability to read but also the ability to comprehend difficult texts and to communicate socially and electronically in effective and meaningful ways.

These skills are paramount to obtaining academic mastery, but also to becoming productive and successful adults within society.

Therefore, when students lack the motivation to read and work on their literacy practices, the educational system does not fully support students to become fully functioning members of society. The research sought here attempts to regain motivation through the practices and intentions of the teachers.

There is an abundance of research that supports the best practices that increase motivation for students. There is also an adequate amount of research that looks at how students perform when they feel motivated to do well. However, there is a lack of research that identifies how teachers explicitly plan for motivating their adolescent students to read in their classrooms.

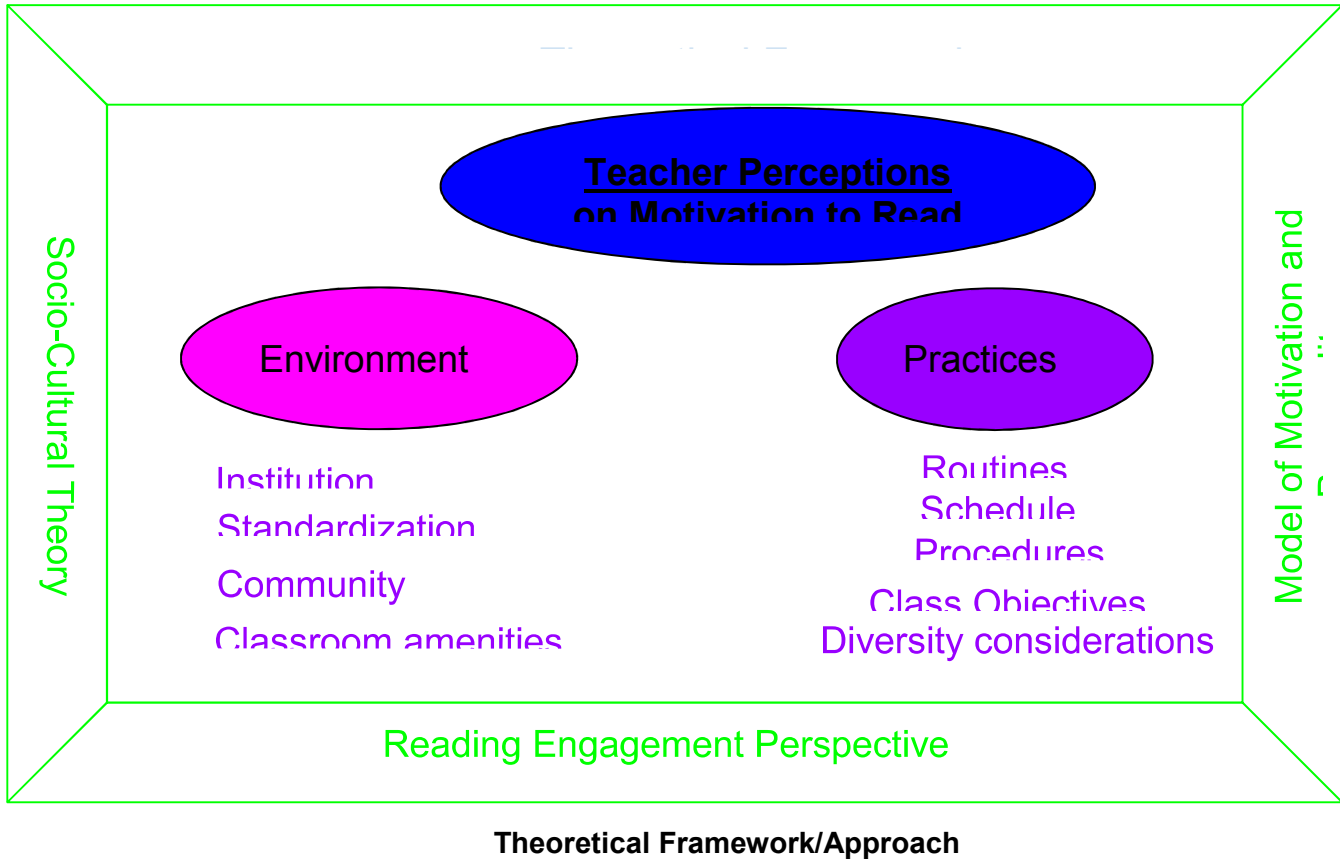


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Understanding the graphic

The graphic above outlines the complex nature surrounding a teacher's understanding and planning for motivation within their classroom environments and practices. It is structured in a framed approach, with theoretical frameworks structuring all of the understanding and research surrounding motivation. This research will be examined from two different angles to obtain the complex structure of a teacher's intentions for motivation. The first lens is the environment that the teacher creates. This would look at the classroom environment as part of the whole school's environment as well as for the individual classroom. Additionally, it would look at environmental factors that the teacher has set up, or lacks, in order to create stronger motivation for adolescents to read.

The next contributing factor to increase motivation to read lies within the classroom practices and procedures that the teacher has in place. This includes day-to-day classroom routines, the schedule that the teacher creates for their time together, the procedures in class for reading, and the overall objectives established by the teacher. Each of these aspects is vital to the functioning of a classroom, and all are unique in themselves. For the purpose of understanding this direction, important definitions are included here:

- Routine: activities that occur with regularity, often involving a series of expected behaviors or responses.
- Procedure: how the activity or task is achieved; expected behavior for how to accomplish an objective.
- Schedule: sequence of classroom activity, often broken down into timed blocks.
- Class objective: the intended understanding at the end of the teaching session; what you hope to achieve.

Each of these aspects forms a comprehensive classroom environment, and each has its own aspects that can encourage motivation for or against students to read.

Understanding the Perspectives

The three perspectives and theories that frame this research will work in collaboration with one another. When the roots of the theories are examined individually, tensions are found to exist between the following concepts. These tensions will be addressed after the discussion on the theories and perspectives.

Reading Engagement Perspective

According to research by Unrau and Quirk (2014), "Reading engagement perspective...is currently one of the most frequently used frameworks for studies of motivation in reading... Engaged readers coordinate cognition, in the form of knowledge and strategies, within a social context to satisfy or achieve motivational ends, such as reader goals, wishes, and intentions." This perspective is based on the engagement model as outlined by Guthrie and

Wigfield (1997), both of whom are leading motivation and engagement researchers. This perspective works off of a core group of understandings:

This perspective consists of the following claims: (a) Engagement in reading refers to interaction with text that is simultaneously motivated and strategic, (b) engaged reading correlates with achievement in reading comprehension, (c) engaged reading and its constituents (motivation and cognitive strategies) can be increased by instructional practices directed toward them, and (d) an instructional framework that merges motivational and cognitive strategy support in reading will increase engaged reading and reading comprehension.

The aforementioned claims support reading motivation as a necessity for student success, with a direct correlation that increased engagement leads to improved comprehension. Students will be intrinsically motivated to be engaged in their reading due to the success it allows for. On the flip side, students who are not engaged in their reading, or disengaged, will not find the same level of success as their engaged classmates. Even though this perspective recognizes the negative, it instead focuses on the positive and what makes students engage in their reading and be motivated to be successful: the intrinsic rewards (Gambrel, 2011). This model outlines 11 dimensions that add to and detract from engagement and motivation. These factors and this model are the basis of the reading engagement perspective and include self-efficacy, challenge, work avoidance, curiosity, involvement, importance, recognition, grades, competition, social purposes, and compliance.

These dimensions and this perspective directly impact the research presented here and will act as a guide to understanding the teacher's attempts at motivation. This perspective helps frame motivation and engagement based on the students and will act as a comparison to the planned components of the teacher's day. Having knowledge of these aspects will allow me to focus my interview questions and follow up responses on aspects that relate to these dimensions. Additionally, this perspective will add to the data analysis step to see if the

teacher's responses are indeed planning towards motivating students to read or creating avoidance. It would be natural for a few of these aspects to stand out more during the analysis portion of this research; however, no assumptions are going to be made for which dimensions will emerge to have had larger impacts. An additional consideration of the analysis will include what aspects of motivation are not directly tied to the dimensions presented above. In establishing the dimensions, Wigfield and Guthrie studied fourth and fifth-grade students (105 total students, almost equally split in half by grade); therefore, the dimensions will be similar in effectiveness for the adolescent population (fifth–eighth grade). However, during the analysis stage, the expansion of these dimensions based on age group will become of particular interest.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory is rooted in the work and research of clinical psychologist Lev Vygotsky. The premise of his work was the connection of human development to the environments that individuals are immersed in. Vygotsky claims that social interaction is pivotal to every aspect of human development, most critically, how the mind develops for individuals to interpret situations and text. These thoughts rooted the development of his sociocultural theory. Unrau and Alvermann (2013) discuss the basis of the theory, saying that “the mind emerges from social interaction with other minds, that activities of the mind are mediated by tools and symbol systems (languages), and that to understand a mental function, one must understand the roots and processes contributing to that function’s development” (p. 67). This ultimately recognizes that an individual’s mental capacity is dependent on the tools and systems available in the social interactions and surroundings of that individual. Alvermann (2016) continues to discuss sociocultural theory as the structure that allows a reader to identify themselves as a reader: “Conceptualized within the sociocultural theory, literacies, and hence literacy instruction, are social practices, and thus they are implicated in how people negotiate their identities as readers and writers in particular contexts” (p. 45). The reader uses the literacy event to negotiate their role in the educational community.

This theory will be an important part of the research presented here. The focus of the sociocultural theory is the environment that the students are a part of. It is the teacher's job to set and foster that environment for the students—either allowing for rich sociocultural experiences or controlling the routines that detract from this experience. Applying sociocultural theory will help make sense of the social and emotional behaviors that result from the environment that has been created. An understanding of sociocultural theory will be necessary for helping to generate useful interview questions that lead to the issue at hand.

Model of Motivation and Personality (3M)

The Model of Motivation and Personality is a meta-theoretical model of motivation created by John Mowen with the understanding that if we can meet our own psychological needs through three constructs we are able to achieve motivation. Mowen discusses his “fundamental assumption that it is possible to integrate diverse personality approaches to a unified meta-theory.” (pg. 12) This approach claims that there are three constructs that allow for ultimate motivation, which are competence, autonomy, and interconnectedness. Mowen admits to pulling from a variety of classic theorists to construct this model. He achieved this by finding the gap in the work of Allport, Freud, McClelland, and Maslow. Additionally, Mowen drew from current theories such as the control theory (Carver and Scheirer, 1990), Evolutionary theory (Buss, 1988), Hierarchical Personality models (Allport 1961) and the Five Factor Model of personality (Wiggins, 1996.) It was the blending of this work and these theorists that the model emerged. An article by E. A. Skinner uses this model to compare student responses based on teacher behavior. They found this model to be a compliment to their research as “ These discussions in psychology and education provide complementary perspectives on the links between teacher behaviour and student motivation. The educational literature serves as a guide for discerning actual classroom practices that influence students’ attitudes and beliefs and the psychological literature explains how these beliefs influence student engagement in the classroom.” (pg. 572) If this holds true, then this model has a natural connection to the research presented here.

Similar to the work of Skinner and Belmont, this research aims to connect teacher decisions with student motivation. Rather than looking at teacher behaviour this research looks at the teaching style and classroom and how that impacts engagement. The model discusses the social contexts of feeling competent, autonomous and connected; each of these constructs directly impacts student motivation to read. If a student deems themselves incompetent in the skill of reading, their motivational factor to read will be low. Likewise, should students not feel that they have autonomy, or the ability to chose the books they like, it again loses motivational factors to read. Finally, the Model for Motivation allows for connection to others. Skinner and Belmont connect this to peers and teachers. When these students foster these connections they might be additionally motivated to read. Using these three constructs provides a lens for analyzing my data and understanding how teachers plan for these components

Tensions Between Perspectives

An unspoken framework that could be present in this body of work is behaviourism; due to its inherent present in education. Grassrooms of behaviourism are infused throughout education, being present in the classroom today. However, placing behaviorism and sociocultural theory side by side, it is evident that these two theories directly contradict one another. One theory says that students are motivated and learn through a process much bigger than the individual—that it takes many thoughts and voices from a community for learning to occur for a student (Alvermann, 2016). The other claims that students are driven to make choices and are motivated strictly on their own accord—with the outside factors being solely extrinsic rewards. It is a “call and response” system—an “I do this, I get that” direct input-for-output relationship. I believe the tension and difference in these perspectives create the lense of which I am truly looking at this research, an escape from one perspective to the other. Sociocultural theory is imperative to understanding how adolescents think, understand, develop thoughts, and learn. This is critical for creating an educational experience that is motivating to these students beyond the formal way of thinking about education. This research hopes to

understand the “how” and the cause, with the hope that the “why” is to motivate their adolescent students to engage in literacy tasks.

Research Design

Multiple case study.

The design of this study will be a multiple case study that seeks to understand how three to five highly qualified language arts instructors motivate their early adolescent students to be motivated to read. According to Cresswell (2018), a case study is “a design of inquiry... in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process of one or more individuals” (p. 14). The in-depth analysis that will occur through this research is the examination of motivating students to want to read. This research will begin by looking at three to five classroom teachers as their own separate entity of study. I will gain an understanding of how the teacher's classroom routines and practices, as well as their environment, are set up in a motivational way that encourages adolescents to want to read. After I have a thorough understanding of the teachers on their own, having created themes and patterns that contribute to their teaching styles, I will compare these to the other teachers'. I will use the comparison to eliminate factors that would detract from motivating students as a whole. After comparing the patterns and themes of the teachers, I will be able to speak to how the phenomenon of motivation emerges in specific classrooms, as well as commonalities between those environments.

Limitations.

The main limitation of this study will be that it is not seeking to make general statements about motivating adolescent readers. This study does not aim to prove what it takes to motivate adolescents to read, nor does it show that following the same patterns in your own classroom will result in every adolescent in the room being motivated to read. This research looks to demonstrate how three to five highly qualified teachers, identified for their ability to motivate adolescents, are able to accomplish this feat within their own classrooms and educational

environment. This research does not claim that every single student in that classroom was motivated by the environment and routines laid forth by their teacher, as this research does not study the effect that these factors have on the students.

Another limitation of the study will be the limitation on timing that the environment is being observed. The nature of a classroom is that every day is different. This is often due to the student personalities, uncontrollable factors, as well as the lessons being different. Even if the procedures of the day looks identical each day, the environment will never look exactly the same. This research looks to get to know the teacher and the classroom environment well through interviews and observations, but this is not research that will be done with consecutive substantial days present. Instead, this research will have a set of specifically chosen observational periods and days that the teacher/participant feels works for them and their classroom. The researcher will gain knowledge of comfort to understand the workings of the classroom and the teacher's planning through this time. She will also see how the intentions of the teacher flows throughout the classroom. The limited time restricts observations on the students' reactions. This is appropriate due to the fact that the students are part of the environment, and an undercurrent to the research, but not specifically what is being studied. This research instead focuses on the teacher and the engaging practices that the teacher uses. Therefore, the planned observational time will allow for a view into the classroom and the practices, yet will restrict the day-to-day nuances of the classroom. It will be through open-ended questions, and interviews that the participants feel comfortable in, that these additional stories will emerge.

Methods.

The primary methods of this research are qualitative interviews and observations. These methods will be used in conjunction with one another throughout the research process. The research will begin with a set of observations to gauge teachers that will be followed-up with for a more in-depth study. From there, interviews will occur, both on their own and as a follow-up to

a series of observations of the teacher's classrooms. The research will conclude with a final interview that will be used in part as a means to triangulate the data collected and to clarify meaning from the previous data collection steps. The final interview will also act to piece together the data collection parts.

Definitions of terms

Research-Based definition of terms

- **Adolescent:** adolescents are the defining target group; a working definition was established by Moje, Overby, Tysaver, and Morris (2008). who provide us with a comprehensive definition that will be used for the remainder of this work.
According to these researchers, “adolescents are youth between grades six and twelve, with an approximate age range of twelve to eighteen. We focus on that age range in order to document how school and community contexts, as well as young people’s changing independent status and their advancing cognitive development, may play a role in their thinking about and practices of literacy.”
- **Class objective:** the intended understanding at the end of the teaching session; what you hope to achieve.
- **Engagement:** Unrau and Quirk (2014) define engagement as “involvement in some activity, such as reading.”
- **Exemplary Teacher:** An exemplary teacher is strong in the effective and affective components of teaching. Allington and Johnston (2002) describe the affective by saying, “Most people would agree that good teachers are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of students, knowledgeable about their subject matter, able to get along with parents...and genuinely excited about the work that they do... Affective teachers are able to help students learn” (p. 329). Borich (2000) explains the effective: “A teacher who is excited about the subject

being taught and shows it by facial expression, voice inflection, gesture, and general movement is more likely to hold the attention of students than one who does not exhibit these behaviors.” Most research shows that it is not one or the other of these two components (Lowman, 1996)

- **Extrinsic motivation:** refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome and, thus, contrasts with intrinsic motivation.
- **Intrinsic motivation:** refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself.
- **Literacy:** Donna Alvermann (2002) defines literacy as “reading, writing, and other modes of symbolic communication.”
- **Language Arts Block:** Due to the fact that language arts blocks look differently in each educational environment, a working definition for this timeframe is; the period of the day where the primary objective is on enhancing literacy skills.
- **Motivation:** Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, and Wellborn (2009) have described the study of motivation as “most fundamentally concerned with psychological processes that underlie the energy (vigor, intensity, arousal), purpose (initiation, direction, channeling, choice), and durability (persistence, maintenance, endurance, sustenance) of human activity”.
- **Procedure:** how the activity or task is achieved; expected behavior of how to accomplish an objective.
- **Routine:** activities that occur with regularity, often involving a series of expected behaviors or responses.
- **Reading:** The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) defined reading as “the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language”
- **Schedule:** a sequence of classroom activity, often broken down in timed blocks.

Watching the Flowers Grow

Joannie

When asked about her teaching philosophy, Joannie responded, “Kids are someone now—not someone who is going to be something one day.” This helped every first grade student who walked through Joannie’s door know that they are important and that their opinion mattered. Joannie started teaching later than most. She had been an instructional aide in an elementary school when the superintendent of schools at the time observed her and told her to go back for her degree. Recognizing the compliment and her overall talent, Joannie decided to do just that. After she finished her program through UWGB she started teaching in a school in December. She described the atmosphere that she entered in that first classroom as cold and over-structured. After two days of “no fun” she sat on the floor with the students and asked them “what should school be.” From there, they decided it needed to be fun. She brought fabric from home and covered the basal readers to turn into a shelf in her classroom. She then bought books from the local Goodwill and garage sales to fill every open spot in her room. She described this process as transforming the room into a place that to the kids felt like home—a space that they were comfortable in. This is exactly how Joannie thought school and teaching should be. Joannie teaches by giving the students “a seat at the table of learning,” helping them to feel empowered and important. Joannie was pegged for an alternative program when one day, her soon-to-be boss Margaret came in for a surprise observation. That day was a cloudy day in April, and Joannie and her students had just spent time at the windows observing the life growing around them. She then had given permission to the students to paint that life on the windows! As Margaret walked in, the students were carrying paint and water buckets and brushes to the windows to start their masterpieces. It was here that Margaret knew that Joannie was a fit for the Aldo Leopold alternative program. Joannie would be invited to start this program with Margaret and a handful of other teachers. She would retire from teaching at that school.

When describing teaching and interacting with kids, Joannie explained that it worked best for her by including the students in the learning and talking to them as an adult. At the start of teaching the students to read, she asked them if they wanted to learn, then asked who knew how already and what they did to learn to read. She then asked what the class should do in preparation of learning to read and set a schedule based on what the students felt was the best way of going about learning to read. This included “drawing on the experts” in the class that knew how to read to encourage everyone around them. She explains that kids need to learn to depend on one another, not just the teacher, to have a positive learning environment. Joannie fostered motivation in her classroom by believing in her kids, making sure that each one of her students knew just that.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE; HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Adolescents' educational experience undergoes a shift in priority, the literacy educational experience for them shifts from learning to read, an engaging educational experience full of exploration and excitement, to reading to learn, a process of procedure and inquiry. Although some may argue that both of these processes are happening concurrently throughout education, the end objective differs greatly by age group. According to research by Erika Daniels (2015), "too many middle school students are not learning to think critically about what they read, write and experience. Nor do they have the opportunity to ask questions about and engage deeply with topics that matter to them" (p. 9). I make the claim that due to the rigid institutional structure of formal schooling, adolescents lose the desire to read, lose the motivation to read. The proposed argument will show that although teachers undergo an abundance of professional development, there is a lack of connection between those training and their plans for the classroom in terms of motivating adolescents to read. This review of literature will look at researched best practices of teachers of adolescents and where the research lacks in implementing these in the classroom.

This review of literature aims to establish the necessity of planning for and implementing strategies that will motivate adolescents to read. First, I will identify key terms that continue to arise in the research surrounding exemplary reading teachers of adolescents. After that, I will examine the critical theories that support this review. Next, I will synthesize the literary themes critical to this review, which include conversation's impact on adolescents, engagement, and

comprehension. I will conclude by looking at the research methods used and the significance of this particular research.

The three avenues of discussion for this review will demonstrate evidenced-based practices that teachers can use for planning and implementing strategies to motivate adolescents to read. These avenues include the environment that the teacher creates, the need for variety and inclusion in their learning, and using conversation as a motivational strategy. The literature that surrounds these three areas will demonstrate the necessity of teachers' motivation for adolescents to engage in literacy experiences.

Scope of the Review

The process through which I conducted this review of the literature was multidimensional. Initial review of the complete concept, how teachers plan for and implement strategies to motivate students to read, yielded no direct results. From there, three main angles were taken: searching for research on motivating adolescents to read (results were heavy on the motivation to read), searching for research on exemplary teachers, and finally, searching for known researchers who explore adolescent literacy issues. The individual searches for each are outlined below.

While performing the search on motivating adolescents to read, I used the following searchable keywords and phrases: adolescent motivation, adolescent engagement, motivation, engagement, motivation and engagement, adolescence, adolescent attitudes towards literacy, adolescent attitudes towards school, academic aptitude, and motivation, engagement, and achievement for adolescents. I then also performed a search for researchers in the field of adolescent literacy education. The following were researchers utilized for this aspect of the search: Donna Alvermann, Richard Allington, Linda Baker, James Paul Gee, Peter Johnston, John Guthrie, and Allen Wigfield. From this initial search, I was able to yield an adequate number of articles whose focus addressed the topics I desired.

To perform the search on exemplary teachers I used the following searchable keywords and phrases: exemplary teachers, teacher effectiveness, teacher-student relationships, teacher's role, effective classroom techniques, teacher influence, classroom environment, teacher attitudes, teacher impact, English teachers, and effective reading teachers. Upon examining the articles returned by these searches, a review of applicable articles was performed to identify articles significant to the research question.

Finally, in search of research surrounding adolescent literacy issues I sought out a combination of researchers in the adolescent literacy education field and keywords and phrases. For researchers, I used Donna Alvermann, Gerald Campano, Shirley Brice Heath, Gay Ivey, Peter Johnston, David Kirkland, Elizabeth Birr Moje, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, Lilita Vasudevan, and Jillian Wendt. I then searched for and found the following keywords: motivating adolescent readers, literacy, adolescents and reading, critical reading, critical literacy, adolescent literacy best practices, engaging adolescent readers, and early adolescence and reading.

Once I finished the individual searches for the separate aspects of the study, I performed a search that would combine components. Keywords and phrases for this portion of the search included: motivating adolescent readers, engaging adolescents in school, engaging adolescents through inclusion, adolescent identity in literacy, exemplary teachers of adolescent literacy, and adolescent students motivated through a classroom environment. Since these terms were much more specific, I did not encounter an overabundance of material that needed to be omitted due to not fitting as well. At the same time, the search results, in general, were fewer than the search results of the broader terms.

Throughout the search, there were articles that strayed from the research objective. These articles were omitted from consideration. Articles were omitted due to a variety of factors, the most common being the specificity of the researched group, which restricts the replication of work included in this synthesis. For example, an article by Chantoem and Rattanaich (2016) was omitted because it dealt with the Thai culture, and the research and program it focused on

is not reproducible for the general audience. A second example of this would be an article by Hoffert (2006) focusing on book clubs and their expanse in recent years; however, the work focused on adult book clubs and only briefly discussed the impact it has had on young adults—not a large enough impact to add to the body of work for this review.

The articles that were most comprehensive and aided in the synthesis of the literature were the articles that used multiple key terms in the claims of their research. These include articles from researchers such as Vasudevan & Campano (2009), Leu et al. (2004), Kim and Kamil (2016), and Duncan et al. (2016). These articles join together adolescents with literacy, with technology, with motivation, or a combination of these. Therefore, I found the most value in these articles, as they sought to answer research questions similar to my own.

Key Terms

A variety of key terms needs to be defined to comprehend the scope of the literature review.

Defining Adolescents.

As adolescents are the defining target group, the meaning of this term is paramount. This term is defined and redefined by a variety of researchers. A working definition for an age group of children is a bit more complicated than a simple age range. This is due to the fact that their behavioral development or emotional understanding might not be up to par with their classmates. Therefore, both of these factors need to be incorporated in our definition. Moje, Overby, Tysaver, & Morris (2008) provides us with a comprehensive definition that will be used for the remainder of this work. According to these researchers, adolescents are youth between grades six and twelve, with an approximate age range of twelve to eighteen. We focus on that age range in order to document how school and community contexts, as well as young people's changing

independent status and their advancing cognitive development, may play a role in their thinking about and practices of literacy.

A working definition was established by Vasudevan and Campano (2009) as “in transition—from child to adult—with little focus on the space that they occupy in their own right, not simply as refugees from childhood or expectant travelers to adulthood” (p. 311). Along with identifying who are adolescents, it is important to clarify and define adolescent literacy, as adolescent literacy can be quite different from literacy at the elementary level. Again turning to Moje et al. (2008), “adolescent literacy begins at the fourth-grade reading level when text demands shift from a predominance of narrative, or story-based, texts to increasing encounters with expository, or informational, texts” (p. 3), recognizing the shift in content for the majority of student reading, the shift occurring with the main objective for the literacy task, one that moves from the primary level of learning to read to a more critical stance of reading to learn or fulfill an objective.

O'Donnell uses a temporary definition from one of the participants in their study to define adolescent literature, different than the process of literacy. O'Donnell found that “young adults read what they like, what they are going through, what they want to know more about, what they are confused about, what they relate to, what they want to relate to, who they are, and even who they want to be. Books are a way for people to escape who they are and become someone else, and books are also mirrors in which they can see a clearer view of themselves” (p. 88). A huge component of this definition is engagement and connections to the text, something that adolescent literacy environments sometimes lack.

Defining Motivation.

There are many working definitions for the phenomenon of motivation, due primarily to the personalized nature of the idea. Unrau and Quirk (2014), two reading researchers, define motivation as “the direction, intensity, and quality of a person's energies” (p. 261) and engagement as “involvement in some activity, such as reading” (p. 264). Additionally, motivation has been defined as “a term that refers to a process that elicits controls, and sustains certain

behaviors. Motivation is a group of phenomena that affects the nature of an individual's behavior, the strength of the behavior and the persistence of the behavior" (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, J. G. (2009) have described the study of motivation as "most fundamentally concerned with psychological processes that underlie the energy (vigor, intensity, arousal), purpose (initiation, direction, channeling, choice), and durability (persistence, maintenance, endurance, sustenance) of human activity". It is this final definition that this work is grounded on in regards to motivation: the understanding that motivation is a direct reaction of student choices, student connection, and student determination to engage in a task—directly speaking, in wanting to read.

In addition to establishing the working definition of motivation, it is crucial to note the characteristics of motivation. Unrau and Quirk (2014) cover five attributes of importance when it comes to motivation; it is internalized, multifaceted, not isolated, flexible, and easily manipulated. Of these characteristics, the one of particular interest for this research is the fifth component. They state, "Fifth, motivation is susceptible to manipulation or shaping. Studies have been conducted to activate motivation and to promote its growth through instructional processes and strategies of various kinds" (p. 263). This indicates that a teacher can have a large role in the motivation that students have to read. It is a process that is manipulated through conversation, boosting confidence, and promoting student success. Although the first characteristic is internal, it does not mean that the process lies solely with the student. Ivey & Broddus (2001) speaks to this as well, saying, "We perceive that motivation for middle-grade readers is not an all-or-nothing construct. Furthermore, we suspect that what happens in school affects how children feel about reading," recognizing that the environment that the teacher creates and the lessons they provide can strengthen or hinder motivation.

A combination of Guthrie & Wigfield, and Wigfield & Baker, along with various other colleagues have done extensive work on student motivation. Wigfield and Baker (1999) have generated a researched list of seven different intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for why

adolescent students are successful in class. This is down from alternative bodies of work that identify 11 (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Each of these motivators is classified based on the source of motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic. Deci and Ryan (2000) provide working definitions of each based on their work with self-determination theory, which directly coincides with motivation.

- Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome and, thus, contrasts with intrinsic motivation.
- Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself.

The extrinsic motivators have an ulterior motive that comes from an external force. Examples of extrinsic motivators, based on the dimensions of motivation provided by Baker & Wigfield (1999), are grades, competition, recognition, socialization, rewards, and utilitarianism. Each of these has a driving force acting upon the student. For example, a student will be motivated to study for the quiz because they want to get a good grade for it. A good grade is an extrinsic motivator. Intrinsic motivators, specified by the researchers, are curiosity, involvement, challenge, investment, emotional tuning, and efficacy. Each of these motivators is manifested within the student and is the driving force behind accomplishing the task. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) recognize that motivating students to read is extremely hard yet beneficial on many levels. They explain that “engaged reading is strategic, motivated interaction with text” and that engaged readers are “motivated to read, strategic in their approaches to comprehending what they read, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text, and socially interactive while reading” (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012).

Difference between Motivation and Engagement

One misconception for motivation and engagement is that the terms are interchangeable. According to Varuzza, Sinatra, Eshchenauer & Blake, 2014, Reading motivation is an individual student’s excitement, enjoyment, and desire to read. While Guthrie

and Wigfield (2000) claim that “engaged reading is strategic, motivated interaction with text and that engaged readers are motivated to read, strategic in their approaches to comprehending what they read, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text and socially interactive while reading. (Guthrie, Wigfield & You, 2012) Even in its definition, we find that motivation is a core principle of engagement, and yet, it is important to recognize that they are separate and current research warns the audience of using the terms motivation and engagement interchangeably. (Unrau and Quirk, 2014) The two concepts inherently work together but should be treated for their own abilities, particularly in future research surrounding each. Unrau and Quirk (2014) recognized that “Designers should become more aware of the risks involved in the commingling of motivation for reading with reading engagement and monitor their use of those constructs while designing items for measurement instruments.” (p. 278) Which recognizes the need to establish research and tools that will measure each for the value that they add. Student motivation and student engagement have a reciprocal relationship with one another. As student motivation increases, a student is more apt to engage positively with literacy experiences. (Varuzza, et al. 2014) Teachers have the ability to increase that motivation for students, which would prove to increase the students' engagement as well. When teachers lack motivational strategies for students, it is up to the student to find that motivation, and oftentimes struggles to engage as deeply with the literacy experience. Unfortunately, research suggests that as students reach this age level, their intrinsic motivators to do just that are significantly decreased compared to at the elementary school level. (Varuzza, et al. 2014) Therefore, the need for re-engagement of adolescents is equally as important. Re-engagement involves motivating students to return to a state where they once were engaged in literacy activities. For some students, this is an easy process, reminding students of the time where they found success and motivating them to get back there. (Skinner et. al 2007) But for others, this is much more difficult, possibly due to the fact that they might never have felt extremely successful. (Ivey & Broadus 2001) Either way, teachers of adolescent students have the arduous task of

motivating students to re-engage in the literacy experiences as a starting point for motivating them to want to read.

Defining Exemplary Teachers.

According to Allington and Johnston's (2002) study in search of exemplary teachers, "Exemplary teachers do more than teach—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they redefine common understandings of what teaching is." This is the definition that we will use even though it does not truly define anything. This is due to the fact that exemplary teaching is highly personal and varies greatly. There is no prescribed checklist that says if teachers do this, or accomplish that, they are exemplary teachers. Exemplary teachers do not focus on a list of best practices but instead allow those practices to influence their teaching and reflect on how those practices play into the motivation within their classrooms. There is an abundance of research on highly qualified teachers, and even though they all provide their own working definitions, there are some very common threads between them, most common being their strength in the effective and affective components of teaching. Allington and Johnston (2002) describe the affective by saying, "Most people would agree that good teachers are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of students, knowledgeable about their subject matter, able to get along with parents...and genuinely excited about the work that they do... Affective teachers are able to help students learn" (p. 329). Borich (2000) explains the effective: "A teacher who is excited about the subject being taught and shows it by facial expression, voice inflection, gesture, and general movement is more likely to hold the attention of students than one who does not exhibit these behaviors." Most research shows that it is not one or the other of these two components (Lowman, 1996) but rather that teachers are exemplary when they can combine their passion for the subject with a compassion for their students (Gabriel, Day, & Allington, 2011; Ivey, Faulkner, & Johnston, 2013). These teachers are not simply teaching from a prescribed program or set of instructional resources (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Lowman, 1996). In fact, researchers such as Gabriel et al. (2011) show that

“fidelity of implementation” of any program, curriculum, or script is antithetical to an exemplary teacher’s practice. Though many of the teachers we interviewed had access to and mandates for using core-curricular materials, no core program could work for all of their students. The kind of professional development and collaboration they consistently cited as most valuable reinforced that view.

They ensure their students’ success by moving past the box programs and creating a system and curriculum that will be both motivating and engaging to their students (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Lawton, 2011). This brings us back to our initial definition: that exemplary teachers do not teach to the content, to the standards-based, educational company-created content, but rather they teach to the student; they redefine teaching to fit the needs of their classroom and the needs of their students (Gabriel et al., 2011; Ivey et al., 2013; Johnston & Allington, 2002).

Allington and Johnston (2002) spent two years studying exemplary fourth-grade teachers. And even though they studied 30 teachers across the country, they choose to highlight six outstanding teachers and tell their stories. These teachers did not just teach basic literacy; they taught thoughtful literacy (Allington & Johnston, 2002). Thoughtful literacy, described as going beyond the basic reading and writing to include thinking critically and utilizing complex literacy practices, engages and motivates students in their classrooms every day. The teachers included in this study have common guiding principles, such as teaching the students to inquire in their learning, forming a community of voices, and the need for personalized instruction. Each of these teachers identified their “classroom” as the community and respectful participants they had among their students, rather than discussing the physical space. This is due to the fact that these teachers put their students first. They do not teach the curriculum to impart knowledge, but instead to inspire questions. They do not set their routines to control their students, but rather to initiate student-driven experiences. These teachers are an exception because they set up an environment where students want to “learn from [their peers], not compete against” (Allington & Johnston, 2002). The research presented here hopes to

extend the thought similar to that of Allington & Johnston. While the research of Allington and Johnston looked at the classroom environment and how the students responded to it (were motivated by it,) this research looks to examine the intentions of the teachers in order to create that environment. Allington and Johnston's research began with the school year, while this research will ask for the purposeful planning that goes into creating an environment that is motivating to students.

Synthesis

Teacher-Created Environment.

Donna Alvermann is a professor of education at the University of Georgia. She has been researching reading engagement since the early 1980s, with her primary focus being on adolescent literacies, including digital and multimodal literacies. Alvermann (2002) proposes that allowing students to discuss text enhances the learning environment and promotes motivation for adolescent students. Some of the research that Alvermann has done relates to utilizing book clubs as a form of motivation and engagement for adolescent students. Alvermann (1999) found, "Consistently, across groups, the adolescents were forthright in their declarations that R&T club discussions should not take on the characteristics of the discussions they were accustomed to in school. Although they initially assumed that the discussions in the R&T clubs would resemble school, they admitted to being pleasantly surprised when that turned out not to be so..." (p. 243). The results from her study show an incredible student discussion, however, her study takes place completely outside the school environment and the students were opposed to it being as such. (Alvermann 1999) She conducted the research through the local library and used student interpretation of the different environments to show that "book club" environments were a stronger environment. Other research by Alvermann indicates that she believes we need to build the bridge between in-school and out-of-school context. An interview David Moore (2011) conducted with Alvermann indicates that "metaphorically treating context as a sieve, rather than a structured, impermeable container, could open up possibilities for noticing

relationships between in-school and out-of-school literacy learning that have been obscured previously. At the very least, a sieve metaphor supports questioning the assumption that literacy learning is qualitatively different in different contexts” (p. 158). Teachers need to explore how they approach literacy learning in their classrooms and ensure that the environment is conducive to how the students learn and understand literacy in all facets of their lives. Research by Alvermann is extremely helpful in providing guidance on evaluating student motivation, yet it lacks a critical component that this research seeks to understand. The limitation of taking place out of school largely impacts a teacher's connection to the study. Understandably, Alvermann can speak to bridging the gap, but direct strategies and implementation tools or how they are manifested within the classroom community are not yet defined by Alvermann. This is what my research aims to accomplish- demonstrating in-class, highly motivated classrooms and the study of what takes place in these rooms.

To compare positive learning environments and success within those environments, we can look to the top countries in the educational world; the Finnish education system. In Finland, education is about the student, student exploration, and innovation. “A typical feature of teaching and learning in Finland is encouraging teachers and students to try new ideas and methods, learn about and through innovations, and cultivate creativity in schools while respecting pedagogic legacies” (Sahlberg, 2007, p. 152). This allows the priority of learning and teaching to be on the students rather than the policy. Finland aims to teach the student that learning is a life process that goes beyond the classroom. It also puts a priority on the learning community and the students within that community rather than on standards, as the United States has: “Many primary schools, therefore, have become learning and caring communities rather than merely instructional institutions that prepare pupils for the next level of schooling” (Sahlberg, 2007, p. 154) One of the major reasons why education is so successful in Finland is the prioritizing of the students as part of a learning community. The three main global educational initiatives throughout the world are the standardization of education, increased

focus on literacy and numeracy, and a consequential accountability system (Sahlberg, 2007). Within the United States, each of these initiatives has been heavily contested. The standardization of education resulted in the common core state standards. After two years of reviewing the standards and accepting them, they were in place for only a year before states began to abandon them (Burks, Beziat, Danley, Davis, Lowery & Lucas 2015). The result of the prioritization of literacy and numeracy has forced teachers to cut time from other areas in their day. According to Sahlberg (2007), "A nationwide study in the USA confirms that 71% of school districts reported that they have reduced teaching time in at least one other subject to allow more time for reading and mathematics" (p. 151). And finally, consequential accountability led to the creation of No Child Left Behind. This law ultimately added additional pressure to standardized tests and created a school society that pitted schools against each other. Ultimately, all three initiatives have been contested and have research that shows their negative impact. Finland has declined to adopt these three initiatives (p. 151) due to the effect that they had on the classroom environments for the students. Finland can, and should be used as an ideal for school systems across the world. The comparison to this system will be used during this research, examining how teachers outside of the institutional set-up that Finland has, are able to accomplish this level of student motivation, or at least how it compares to it.

Hamre and Pianta (2007) explain that creating this positive learning environment in the United States amidst pressures from the educational system will lead to higher student participation in class. This is due to the fact that the students feel invested in their learning and that they can contribute positively to the class. Based on research, "In classrooms with a positive climate, teachers are responsive and caring in relation to their students' academic and emotional needs, create a harmonious and warm atmosphere, and highly value the students' perspective" (Hamre & Pianta, 2007). By creating an environment where students feel included and their opinions important, they will be more apt to contribute to the task at hand and become part of the classroom community. When this happens, those students are able to focus on the

academic aspects of the classroom and their own personal, academic success, rather than becoming part of a classroom environment that is distracting or disruptive (Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Müller, Hofmann, Begert, & Cillessen, 2018). Skinner et al. (2007) explain that the engagement of students is demonstrated in the student's positive contribution to the class, or their negative contributions. When these students are engaged in the lesson around them, they are less likely to fall prey to peer pressures to become a distraction, helping to eliminate the distractions altogether. This fosters a classroom environment where many students are able to find this academic success due to many students participating. Duffy and Hoffman (1999) go as far as to claim that “instructional programs are relatively less important than the nature of the teacher and the teaching that children encounter” (p. 7). All of this comes down to the motivating factors of the classroom environment that the teacher sets (Duffy & Hoffmann, 1999; Vasudevan and Campano, 2009).

Another benefit of a motivating environment is the fact that it allows for better student well-being, both mental and emotional (Konold, Cornell, Shukla, & Huang, 2017; Müller et al., 2018). According to Scrimin, et al. a “‘positive’ and ‘attractive’ environment could reduce individuals’ likelihood of showing an attentional bias toward the sources of stress; conversely, an emotionally negative environment may exacerbate the presence of such an attention allocation pattern.” This indicates that a classroom that has been set up for positive interactions reduces student stress levels, allowing the students to feel more successful (Müller et al., 2018). The student will engage in their academics at a deeper level (Alvermann, Young, Green, & Wisenbaker, 1999). The mental well-being of students is vital to the retention of the content that the students are studying. If students divide their focus due to anxiety or stress, they retain less content and will feel less successful (Shochet & Smith, 2014). Shochet and Smith’s (2014) research recognizes that “Promoting school connectedness and a positive classroom environment is possible at a schoolwide level, and the findings of this study suggest that doing so may have mental health benefits for students.” These benefits that the environment creates

extends beyond the classroom to the school institution as well. Adolescents start to struggle in middle school, as many school institutions at this age have movement that is guided by bells and a more formal institutional structure is in place that goes against the more relaxed setting at the elementary schools. (Alvermann et al., 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This formality sets the tone of seriousness rather than allowing the students to feel relaxed in an environment that comprises the majority of their day. Konold, et al. (2017) identify the need for a positive school environment when they state that “Research has documented that a positive school climate holds clear benefits of promoting students’ engagement and their emotional and social well-being, also across ethnic groups.” Therefore, in order to promote student success in school, specifically in reading, it is imperative that the environment in which the students are immersed is conducive to the positive motivators necessary for adolescents (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Use of Technology

Adolescent learners are motivated by purposeful social interaction with peers and those outside of their immediate learning environment. Providing these opportunities is vital to the success of adolescent learners. “With increases in digital communication such as text messaging, emailing, and social networking websites, adolescents’ daily literacy experiences cannot be measured solely by exposure to books” (Duncan, McGeown, Griffiths, Stothard, & Dobai, 2016). Hence the discussion opens on the integration of technology in education in order to connect to and motivate adolescent learners. Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, (2004) found that the application of the internet saw the internet go from under 5% having access to it to under 5% not having access to the internet in school. Now, according to Vasudevan & Campano(2009), “The current digital landscape is one of increased social collaboration, characterized by social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Myspace), video sharing sites (e.g., youtube.com, TeacherTube.com), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life, Whyville), multi-function mobile phones, and an exponentially growing number of blogs and wikis” (p. 329), all of which

can be used to create literacy learning environments that adolescent students not only understand but also are motivated by.

Technology standards have been added to the curriculum around the globe to keep students up-to-date in a field that is continuously changing. Alvermann (2002) weighed in on adolescents and how our current educational practices are falling short of setting adolescents up for success. Her research showed that “young people’s literacy skills are not keeping pace with societal demands of living in an information age that changes rapidly and shows no sign of slowing” (p. 189). Educators need to change their ways of delivering content in order to better prepare their students for the changing modes of information. One strategy that is motivating for adolescent students is through new literacies. New literacies address this use of technology to support literacy. Leu et al. (2004) support this description: “new literacies change regularly as technology opens new possibilities for communication and information. We see this happening today as people redefine literacy practices while they communicate on a chat board associated with a website, talk to one another using a video cam, or participate in virtual reality role-playing games.” Carroll (2011) found that literacy can be taught much more effectively in the adolescent classroom due to new literacies. She claims “Computer-based tasks in the classroom, used wisely, can provide a series of teachable moments and the opportunity to explore, expand and emerge into new ways of learning, participating and thinking.” In fact, research by Hanson (2008) found that the use of technology increased vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and achievement with its participants, which demonstrates the need for technology included in an adolescent classroom in order to remain competitive in the global markets. Kim and Kamil (2016) asserted that “Computers give adolescents opportunities to develop literacy skills through collaborative work and social interaction with each other.”

While this research in positive learning environments is crucial to understanding student participation and success in school, there is the avenue to teacher intention that is not as explicitly explored. The research addressed here concerns student response and impact on the

student, yet does not address how these environments come to be in the first place. The research that I propose will take this literature and the understanding that these environments benefit students, and will look at the teacher's understanding of it. Then it will extend the teacher's knowledge, to look at what went into creating that environment and how that motivates students.

Re-defining Literacy practice based on student needs.

Based on research by Carol Lee (2001), "In some sense, the most widespread effect of the traditional English language arts curriculum at the high school level for most students is tremendous disengagement." This statement is often true for adolescents, specifically speaking for individuals from a diverse background, a problem largely due to the typical teacher's inability to motivate this demographic group. This same group of students would say that they do not do any reading outside of school, and yet "92 percent of the 716 youth surveyed in this community—one that is described as high-poverty and/or under resourced—report reading some kind of text outside of school three to four times per week or more" (Moje, Overby, Tysaver & Morris, 2008). The problem exists that students and many teachers work off of a traditional definition of reading and writing and have not expanded their thinking to incorporate much of the reading and writing of text that adolescents typically do (Moje et al., 2008). Due to this lack of motivation and traditional definition of reading and writing, adolescents, specifically culturally diverse adolescents, are forced through the motions of school rather than connecting to it, participating in it, and learning from it (Lee, 2001). Lee describes this process, saying,

They came into the class with clear epistemologies about school and school knowledge. School was a place where teachers told you what they wanted you to know and your job was to fill in blanks on worksheets or write single sentence answers that you could copy from the book. The answers were always either right or wrong, and the arbiter of correctness was always the teacher. In classrooms, if you sit long enough, the teacher will tell you what she wants you to know. If you are good, you will sit quietly, passively,

and listen. If you are more aggressive, you will try to institute countermeasures in the form of disruptive behavior to change the agenda of the class to one more palatable to you. These students had experienced school in this way for at least eight long years and had well-established ideas about what you do in school. (Lee, 2001)

This lack of engagement and forced schooling is what continues to widen the achievement gap (Teale, Lyons, Gambrell, Zolt, Olien, & Leu, 2013). It is a disservice to large populations of students across the nation. For this reason, Kirkland calls for a revolution in the way in which we approach our English language arts classes: “We need a revolution in English language arts. This revolution must be as powerful as the systems that sustain human suffering, systems that maintain an entrenched racial caste (deeply rooted even in our curricula)” (Kirkland, Ortlieb, & Majors, 2017). All of this work is rooted in the notion that students learn best from collaborating with their peers and utilizing their background knowledge to create an understanding of the concepts. Through this, adolescent students are invited to be part of the literacy experiences that take place in the classroom, whether on their own or with their peers, but each increases motivation for the student.

The connection between students and literacy experiences is vital in order to keep the student reading and motivated to read a variety of texts. The student has to feel as if they are part of the story, part of the experience, in order to get the most out of the intentions of the author (Hayn, 1996; Martinez, 2013): “One major goal of teaching multicultural literature with contemporary protagonists is to have all students realize that children and young adults from diverse backgrounds experience the same successes and frustrations, struggles and accomplishments, and proud and embarrassing moments of growing up” (Hayn, 1996). This allows all students to make text-to-self connections, text-to-world connections, and predictions. When students can put themselves in the place of the characters, the stories, the experiences of the text, they can watch how the story develops, and compare it to their own lives. The relatability factor of the text is of extreme importance to reviewing and discussing the literacy

experiences, particularly for adolescent students who are trying to find their own identities (Strickland, 2014). With this in mind, current literature being published is doing a grave disservice to students in urban educational environments (Kirkland, 2017; Moje et al., 2008). A closer examination of current literature revealed that the immense lack of multicultural characters in texts is causing students to feel like outcasts in the greater society. Martinez (2013) describes this by identifying how the discrimination affects the psychosocial well-being of all students in the classroom: "This feeling of acceptance and pride increases when students find and read books in which they see characters they can relate to, characters in whom they can see themselves." These connections to the characters create further success in reading and overall confidence in their education as well as personal development. When there is a lack of this literature available, an adverse effect comes into play. Students feel alienated and part of the subgroup in a devalued way. Strickland, in "Where's the African-American Harry Potter, or Mexican Katniss," an article questions pop culture literature, supports this with her own testimony: "As I discovered who I was, a black teenager in a white-dominated world, I saw that these characters, these lives, were not mine," she wrote. "What I wanted, needed really, was to become an integral and valued part of the mosaic that I saw around me" (Strickland, 2014). Multicultural literature could work to fill the gap that is creating the divide in the cultural mosaic. Unfortunately, according to current statistics on books by or about diversity, the books currently being released each year are lacking in a strong multicultural presence. According to an article by Koss & Teale (2009) regarding current trends in young adult literature, only approximately 20% of the current literature being released has characters that would be considered multicultural. This is not the total for main characters, and this is only representative of any character who qualifies. The study shows that this number would be significantly lower if it focused only on characters in a protagonist role. Attempts are being made within contemporary text to fill this gap: "Contemporary selections, in particular, are inherently relevant in that, by design, they are responsive to the emotional and cultural challenges young people face in their

everyday lives... Features of contemporary texts, such as multiple narrators, shifting perspectives, and multimodalities, invite readers to consider varied viewpoints on personal and social problems, including those normally underrepresented” (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). However, it is the classics that most educational environments turn to and that continue to grow the achievement gap (Ivey & Johnston, 2013). Contemporary text embraces the design of a sociocultural perspective on learning, where students are able to share in the experiences of others and connect to the text through common experiences. However, Kirkland (2017) points out, even within these texts, “Rarely has literacy education been rooted in this reality—in realities of trauma, hunger, and poverty, in situations where black and brown boys and men disappear like shadows in the night or vanish from classrooms like light in the cover of night.” These issues are some that affect a wide variety of learners, from urban, to rural, and culturally diverse students. And Instead of meeting the needs of all of these students, the homogenous issues and characters of the classics and contemporary literature still are incredibly limiting to students in an urban educational setting (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Students from subcultures want to see texts they can relate to so they are able to follow the choices of the characters, understand their motives, and connect to situations that they are in. Research by Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, (2003) describes how the lack of diversity in stories does not solely do a disservice to the students from subcultured groups. In their piece “The All-White World of Middle-School Genre Fiction: Surveying the Field for Multicultural Protagonists,” Agosto et al. describes how students from the majority also lack in necessary experiences to better understand other cultures and society in general. Without the presence of racial diversity within the texts assigned, students are being guided into a narrow frame of mind regarding the people of society and everyone’s roles within it: “For many young readers, works fitting into these genres constitute the majority, if not the entirety, of their leisure fiction reading. We must not allow the world that they view through these materials to be an all-White, all-majority group world” (Agosto et al., 2003). Adolescence is a pivotal age for students to form their own

identities through the text that they are reading (Barton & McKay, 2016), and that text should challenge readers to think about and consider choices from a variety of perspectives. This is hindered when the texts all look the same (Hayn, 1996; Martinez, 2013):

If we believe that literature can make us rethink or resee or reevaluate our ideas about others and ourselves, then the portrayal of male and female roles in adolescent fiction is an important classroom consideration. If adolescent literature provides an environment for young adults to see the results of decisions made by characters, and to evaluate their ideas and behaviors, then how males and females interact in those fictional situations can shape thinking by reinforcing stereotypes or by promoting alternative views. (Hayn, 1996)

In order for all students to be motivated to read, it is imperative that representation in the texts reflects the representation of diversity in the country (Kirkland, 2017; Moje, 2008; Rawson, 2011).

Lack of Acceptance Outside of Merriam-Webster

For students to be motivated to participate in literary tasks, they want to feel as though they are being heard, their needs are being met, and they are being accepted for their knowledge and strengths (Kirkland, 2017; Moje, 2008). However, too many adolescents from a variety of diverse backgrounds (cultural, socio-economic, and geographic) find little use for their literacy strengths within the traditional educational environment: “They do read and write, but they may not read and write the kinds of texts that adults value. The host of reasons for reading and writing indicated by the youth of this one community suggest that it would behoove educators, policymakers, and school textbook publishers to attend to the types of texts that young people value and the reasons for which they read” (Moje, 2008), and this lack of understanding between the students’ abilities and what the instructor accepts does more harm to the adolescent than good (Martin, 2014). One of the major consequences of this mismatch is

a lack of motivation for the student and a feeling of being misunderstood (Kirkland, 2017):

“Language, oral and written, is the most dominant medium through which students communicate their evolving understanding. To misread their use of language or to not be able to read their use of language conceals from the teacher a potent window into the students’ thinking” (Lee, 2001). Therefore, in order to bridge that gap in understanding, teachers need to be open to forms of literacy experiences that students have mastered outside of school, whether through communication or what is considered texts (Moje, 2008).

Adolescent students are using complex forms of literacy and language outside of school every day (Martin, 2014; Moje, 2008), some of which have a much more complex system than that which we accept in school (Moje, 2008). Often the students who are struggling in class to comprehend their reading are able to put together and understand coding and symbol systems with their own dialect, be it slang, graffiti, lyrics, or ebonics, systems that they learned through observation and persistence (Moje, 2008). These systems are ones that they find value and purpose in and are motivated to learn, unlike the traditional systems of classical education. Moje studied the alternative literacy practices of gang-involved adolescents and found that “The literacy practices of academics, for example, are useful in a fairly narrow social space. A prime difference between the practices of gang-connected youth and those of academics is that academics operate in a relatively privileged social space (Moje, 2008, p. 682). These findings were similar to those by Martin et al. (2014), who studied Latin American students and their use of hip-hop music. With both the “tagging” of gangs and hip-hop of the Latin American adolescents studied, the students found purpose and connection to the symbols of this language (Martin et al., 2014; Moje, 2008). This is something that many teachers struggle to do within their classrooms. “To most, it is a closed world where the imagination of the privileged flourishes and where the perspectives of the less privileged disappear into the social and historical abyss. Indeed, the English language arts (ELA) classroom has claimed a part in this

grand project of textual oppression, deleting from our galaxy of perspectives a dark matter that might actually hold together the entirety of our literary universe” (Kirkland, 2017).

The need for acceptance of alternative literacy options starts with the recognition of value in the practices and the elimination of power coming from the teacher (Kirkland, 2017; Thomas, 2016). “An important first step is recognizing that language and learning are culturally influenced; we must take this into account when interacting with our students who are coming from all walks of life, all ages, and levels of educational background, from all socio-economic walks of life, all ethnicities, nationalities, and colors” (Thomas, 2016). When European-descended women dominate the education profession, it is easy for power and assumptions to assert themselves in the teaching practice. Yet Kirkland warns,

Power is the ability to express, and thus shape, the world, and it's meaning through one's own perspectives, of having others' sight shaped by what you value and want them to see. We ELA teachers have a peculiar, tortured relationship with power. We want it both ways. We talk about the power of the written word to shift scales of thought while consistently limiting, hence, diminishing, the kinds of texts we privilege in the English classroom. (Kirkland, 2017)

However, when teachers recognize their power and use it for good, they can foster motivation and connection in their adolescent language arts students. They need to understand the cultural influences of their students and not to fight their use in the classroom but foster them to draw the students in (Thomas, 2016). It is also the lack of flexibility in what is considered literary practices that pigeon-holes the traditional way of teaching English language arts. When teachers consider the only acceptable literacy experience, one that involves a novel, and written essays they are missing opportunities to connect to students on their personal literacy levels.

Motivation through the Creation of Identities/Respect

Motivation for a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds comes from formulating their identities and earning respect from their communities (Kirkland, 2017; Moje, 2008). A way that

teachers can motivate their students no matter their background is celebrating their backgrounds and using those to build and develop a culturally relevant classroom environment. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), “The term culturally relevant was first used by educational anthropologists to characterize interactions where students were encouraged to use indigenous languages and cultural practices that preserved, valued, and honored their home and community environments as a scaffold toward academic learning.” An effective way to showcase this is to foster genuine conversations with students and allow for in-depth collaboration (Almasi & Gambrell, 1994; Alvermann, 2002). Research shows that adolescents learn effectively when they are invited into an array of literacy experiences, routines and practices allow for peer interaction and that they can relate to (Alverman, 2002; Daniels, Hamby, & Chen, 2015; Gee, 2009; Rosen, 2010). To this extent, Gee (2007) speaks to this by saying, “Literacy was a social and cultural achievement—it was about ways of participating in social and cultural groups—not just mental achievement. Thus literacy needed to be understood and studied in its full range of contexts—not just cognitive, but also social, cultural, historical and institutional.” Adolescents need to be allowed to have a communal learning experience that will, in turn, allow them to talk, learn, and grow from the interaction with their peers (Duncan, McGeown, Griffiths, Stothard, & Dobai, 2016, Kim & Kamil, 2016). Unfortunately, “Many educators are unskilled at talking about racial issues. Many teachers have had limited opportunity to explore these issues in their own education, and they hesitate to lead discussions about racial tensions for fear that they will generate classroom conflict.” (Tatum, 2000) These experiences will foster personal growth based on the fact that others’ thoughts and backgrounds will challenge their own (Almasi, & Gambrell, 1994, Thomas, 2016). The students will need to find conviction in their beliefs based on these invitations to collaborate and create based on the literacy experiences that they have. This is not guided by and restricted to texts, but opens the door for anything related to communication, understanding, and experiences literacy tasks. Moje and colleagues (2008) suggest “we may be selling short the potential of

literature to positively influence adolescent development because of what we have observed in traditional settings characterized by whole-class assigned readings and teacher-directed instruction.” Instead we need to invite these students to literacy experiences that they are motivated by and find value in, ones that they connect to and will grow from. It is this personal growth that will create a generation that is able to think for themselves and embrace differences (Kirkland, 2017; Lee, 2001).

Kirkland (2017) encourages teachers to “teach literacy as a way to promote freedom and free-thinking individuals capable of transforming their communities and abolishing the multiple states of confinement that bind so many of us to the palings of inopportunity.” Adolescents are already searching for and utilizing outlets that encourage their personal creativity and self-awareness, and often this is not allowed within their classrooms (Thomas, 2016; Vasudevan & Campano, 2009). Instead, they turn to technology, specifically social media, to allow these discussions and conversations to create self-conviction (Kim & Kamil, 2016). Through the use of technology, adolescents are not confined to the classroom walls; instead “young people of varied backgrounds connect online with one another as well as ways they imagine and develop their identities across previously held geographic and social boundaries” (Kim, 2016). Pushing these boundaries allows students to meet, collaborate, discuss, challenge, and interact with others well beyond the range of students they had previously worked with (Kim, 2016; Kinzer & Leu, 1997). Adolescents today are being stretched in their thinking and are motivated by each of these opportunities to socially interact with diverse backgrounds, which assists them when they encounter those same beliefs within their own classmates. Tatum (1997) points out that “As children enter adolescence, they begin to explore the question of identity, asking “Who am I? Who can I be?” in ways they have not done before. For black youths, asking “Who am I?” includes thinking about ‘Who I am ethnically? What does it mean to be black?’” Teachers need to account for all of their students when challenging them to find their identities. And through the invitation to participate in literacy experiences they can do just that. To sum it up, “youth read

and write for social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual purposes. Their reading and writing practices foster communication, relationships, and self-expression among peers and family members; support their economic and psychological health; and allow them to construct subjectivities and enact identities that offer them power in their everyday lives” (Moje et al., 2008). Teachers have the opportunity to invite students into literacy experiences that will allow them to feel understood and included. These experiences will motivate the students to want to interact with texts if it has been redefined in experiences that they understand.

New Identities

It is a common belief that literacy learning simply de-motivates adolescent students, mostly because adolescents are beyond the learning-to-read stage (Allington & Johnston, 2002) and an English class seems redundant. This might be the case if the class is still teaching phonics and word patterns. But as Ivey and Broaddus (2001) found, adolescent students are far from finished learning to read: “Students in the middle grades and beyond are not only still developing as readers and writers but also beginning to explore possible identities and a range of personal interests about the world.” However, despite the concerns and curiosities of young adolescent students and suggestions for curriculum that is more relevant to their thinking and their lives, Alvermann (2002) agrees and puts this back on the teacher, saying, “It is also the case that teachers’ perceptions of students’ motivations to learn influence how hard they are willing to work to instill in them a sense of competence and self-worth” (p. 192). It is not the student’s lack of motivation and engagement, but rather the perceived notion that the teacher is struggling to make the content such that builds the adolescents’ identities. Vasudevan and Campano (2009) recognized this struggle for teachers:

On one hand, adolescents are increasingly finding a range of outlets for intellectual and creative expression and acquiring literacy practices that enable them to have a greater sense of who they are as well as who they may become. On the other hand, literacy pedagogies in school—still beholden to rigid and autonomous models of literacy, in

which literacy is reduced to discrete, learnable skills—result in putting students in narrow categories that often deny their full potential. (p. 326)

Teachers must create opportunities so that adolescents can develop their literacy skills by connecting to the material, material that is often outside of the prescribed literacy programs.

Tatum, Calhoun, Brown, and Ayvazian recognize “It is important to assure that all students see themselves reflected in the environment around them, to avoid feelings of invisibility or marginality that can undermine their success.” (Tatum et al. 2000) One way this can be done is by fostering environments for adolescents to collaborate and communicate with their peers and seeking outside audiences provided to them through technology. “Adolescents’ evolving expertise in navigating routine school literacy tasks suggests the need to involve them in higher-level thinking about what they read and write than is currently possible within a transmission model of teaching, with its emphasis on skill and drill, teacher-centered instruction, and passive learning” (Alvermann, 2001).

In conclusion, teachers have an abundance of power to allow for practices that are rooted in the sociocultural perspective to allow for motivation and engagement to literacy in their classrooms. The research presented here demonstrates how students use their personal backgrounds and social interaction with their peers to allow for motivation and engagement related to literacy practices. However, as illustrated, there are hindrances to the adolescent educational environments that do not allow for strong motivation across constructs of race, class, and gender specifically due to the lack of diverse texts and a lack in understanding of complex social literacy practices of some adolescents. The research suggested in this study will look to see how teachers who are identified as exemplary for their motivation, are able to invite adolescence into experiences that promote self-exploration, inclusive literacy experiences, and include the stories of all learners. The literature explored recognizes these are separate issues. To be effective in motivating adolescence from a wider range of backgrounds, this research seeks to establish how this all is accounted for.

Adolescents need to talk.

Adolescent students deserve exemplary teachers to assist them through a pivotal time in their learning life. Digisi (2010) explains the turmoil by saying that adolescents are

students who are innately curious and ready to learn, students who can read but choose not to, students who avoid reading and students who work diligently but struggle desperately to read. These students come with 10-15 years of reading history and sets of beliefs about what they can and cannot do and what they value. (p.121)

It is vital for the teacher of adolescent students to be aware of their struggles to motivate students in the lessons and use research-based teaching strategies in order to provide successful literacy experiences. To allow for most successful literacy experiences, the best literacy practices need to be in place to support the students. Alvermann (2002), in response to adolescent best practices, calls for motivation and purpose to be a driving factor when planning lessons for adolescents, thinking about their needs and interests to engage them in the learning process. Vasudevan and Campano(2009) mimics this thought but recognizes the need to engage students in a form of literacy that they know well, which includes the use of technology. They add,

Adolescents' literacies are practiced through the engagement of multiple modalities (e.g., pen, keyboard, and camera) across multiple spaces (a piece of paper, an online chatroom, and a friend's bedroom)... Within the same span of time and physical location of her bedroom...adolescents, engaged in multiple forms of communication through the use of multiple modalities (IMing, word processing, and the telephone). For many adolescents, there is little intellectual synergy between their literacy learning in school and their literate identities outside of school. (p. 330)

Educators need to capitalize on motivation and the engagement with practices such as the community feel of their classroom and fostering conversation around books for success with adolescents in their classroom.

[Student success] results from their ability to influence student motivation, a potent direct source of influence. Whether by making their courses clear and engaging or by being positive and supportive of student efforts, exemplary teachers showing the characteristics delineated here make it much more likely that each and every student will be motivated to achieve to his or her maximum ability in a given course. (Lowman, 1996)

Based on research provided by Shirley Brice Heath (2013), students are engaging less and less in conversation with the adults in their lives: “During the first decade of the 21st century, interactional talk time between adults and children in households dropped to less than an hour each week for children under the age of 12, and young people between the ages of 12 and 18 spent about seven minutes each week engaged in extended talk time on the same topic with adults at home” (p. 215). This shows that it is imperative that opportunities are provided to students to engage in conversation with their peers. This conversation should be purposeful and student-centered. This disengagement towards reading is the direct result of the pressures for extrinsic production rather than the intrinsic learning process. Additionally, it is due to the fact that students are restricted in their conversation surrounding what they read (Almasi & Gambrel, 1994). Students noted that the only time they could discuss books in school was to get what they needed to know for the test or assignment. As Almasi and Gambrel (1994) confirm, “[when] the teacher abandons the role of leader or inquisitor and assumes a more restricted role as co-collaborator in the construction of meaning, it results in conversations about text that engage students in higher levels of processing, fosters meaning construction, and evokes conversation that is more natural” (p. 12). If teachers can create an environment where the student views the discussion of the text as part of a collaborative activity, one that is not going to be guided by the teacher but rather engaged in by the teacher, they are more likely to be motivated to take part in the conversation (Alvermann, 2002). Students described forced conversations about a text as guided by their teachers as being like “teacher talk, literal questions, and unnatural conversation” (Almasi & Gambrel, 1994). Students should be able to feel free to discuss their

reading with their peers in the manner that feels natural and on their terms, and teachers need to provide this opportunity.

In research by Alvermann (2011) on a similar concept, she noted that in conversations during a Read and Talk club, “Although the adolescents held various opinions as to what distinguished R&T clubs discussions from those they experienced in school, generally their observations came down to two: club discussions were characterized as being interesting rather than boring, and they were ‘real’ discussions as opposed to talk that is allowed in school” (p. 243). Instead, the best literacy teachers will motivate students to want to read by setting up an environment that allows for and encourages students to discuss text. This discussion allows the students to take their learning into their own hands. Daniels et al. (2015) notes that for adolescents, their knowledge has the ability to be used, filed, or forgotten, and for many adolescents, once it is used for product, it is forgotten. “Using an instructional form of read and recall will develop ‘file and forget’ learners. However. If these students are given the opportunity to converse about text, it allows them to process, develop, challenge, and strengthen their conviction on their own personal knowledge in their learning (Casey, 2009). Ivey et al. (2013) discussed the teacher’s role in fostering this conversational environment when they said, “Our words tell students how we think about them, what we notice and value, what we think we are doing, how we think about literacy, how we relate to one another, what are normal ways of talking and interacting.” Therefore, it is imperative that teachers set up routines and practices within their environment that has the teacher as the first and foremost guide to discussing the students’ success and discussing the text. The students take the lead from what they see being done by the professional in the room, therefore, engaged teachers participating in this conversation, and promoting student thought is a crucial component to classroom practices (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 2006).

The models for these experiences should not come strictly from the teacher, but also need to be encouraged and made more prominent from their peers. Adolescents need to be

allowed to have a communal learning experience that will, in turn, allow them to talk, learn, and grow from the interaction with their peers. Conway and Amberson (2011) found that “Students were observed to learn and work collaboratively, perhaps sitting in groups with a laptop in front of each. Students experienced membership in the learning community and were willing to share their work” (p. 176). This creation of community through discussing text met the developmental need of the adolescent and is a motivating strategy to encourage students to participate.

Additionally, the text the students read acted as the springboard to the conversation that the students had, connecting the events of the story to their personal experiences and making connections from student to student about, to how they can deal with a variety of adversities in their lives. Hippisley’s (2009) work echoes this idea by recognizing the benefits that this conversation with peers has on the home-to-school collaboration as well. Her research states, “In this sense, it is possible to view the classroom as a forum in which these unifying forces between home and school can create and accommodate new communal reading practices” (p. 223). The application of students’ background knowledge, in connection with the events of the text, being processed with their peers will allow for extremely deep processing of the text, leading to hopefully successful literacy experiences for the adolescent population that are navigating the shift in learning expectations while trying to find their place in the social setting of middle school and high school. Overall, the research shows that adolescents will benefit from conversation in their literacy experiences due to academic growth, communal learning experiences, and the social engagement of the conversive literary processing. Practices and routines that support this put the learning back on the student (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013). “As students react to a shared reading event, their individual identities and experiences shape conversations and the text being considered while the conversations and texts shape the individual’s identities and experience of the participants” (Casey, 2008). Conversation surrounding text is a motivating strategy that allows all students of varying ability to be

successful utilizing their own insights and backgrounds to engage with the text and adopt new perspectives based on the interactions with their peers.

In summary, “For adolescents, growing in literacy means being continually stretched. Because of this, adolescents deserve all the support they can get, not only from school but from their families, communities, and the nation” (Moore, 1999). One way to accomplish the support that adolescents need is to heighten the motivational factors within their practices. Adolescents are motivated through a variety of internal and external factors and allowing them to utilize technology to explore and expand their thinking, then come back to discuss it with their peers, is an effective strategy for supporting these students.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this multiple case study is to describe the ways that teachers understand and plan for motivating students to want to engage in literacy experiences, based on the routines and practices for three to five midwestern Wisconsin teachers.

Research Questions

How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?

Sub questions.

- How does a teacher understand motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher plan for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher’s understanding of motivation emerge in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?

Research Gap

Based on the literature presented, there is a need to critically examine how teachers plan for and implement strategies to motivate adolescent readers. As Casey (2009) found,

adolescents need to “have the opportunity to make choices about their reading and their participation while sharing responsibility for learning with their peers and teachers” (p. 286). This review proves that there is current research that supports evidence-based practices for adolescents, but the gap in research exists that discusses how teachers plan for and use these evidence-based strategies to create an educational environment that is motivating and encouraging to students. This body of work was a major factor in the definitions of motivation, literacy and exemplary teachers as provided in chapter one. In summation, motivation was refocused as an invitation to literacy experiences, and literacy was specified as socio-centric literacy. Both of these play a major role in filling the gap in the aforementioned literature. To begin, as recognized here, the literature shows that there is a lack of opportunity for how teachers are running their language arts block. This research seeks to demonstrate socio-centric literacy practices, those that foster communication, collaboration, and creation with their peers. This research demonstrates the critical need for students to be able to learn from and with each other but lacks the presence of strategies to do so. The proposed research will look at how some teachers are able to do this within their own classrooms. Additionally, this research recognizes the need for adolescents to re-engage in literacy practices yet lacks an understanding of what that looks like in the classroom. The primary goal of this research will be to establish the strategies and practices that current adolescent educators use to invite adolescents to participate in the literacy experiences provided in their rooms- socio-centric literacy practices. Based on the literature provided here, a major gap exists in the lack of stories of successful, motivating educators and how they engage adolescents in literacy experiences; and the proposed research aims to fill that gap.

For the Love of Animals

For much of his career, administrators and other teachers asked Greg how he is so good at motivating his students. They would also ask if he would be interested in running professional development opportunities for young teachers to help them hone their craft and manage a classroom. Greg's response to each offer has been the same: that he cannot teach others about what he does and how he does it because there is no trick to it; it just is who Greg is.

From his first day in the classroom, Greg found that he could teach students about respect and love by bringing in creatures for them to take care of and love. His very first classroom included a pet rat named Pete and a tarantula. From that day on, and throughout his thirty-five years of teaching, Greg would have an abundance of animals filling his classroom. By his final years of teaching, when he described his classroom as more like a zoo than a typical classroom. And all the while, Greg justified his almost 1:1 animal to student ratio as being just what the students and everyone needed to maintain a community of support and care. Greg says the animals brought energy and a natural love into the room, providing the students with an outlet to connect to, to care for. The animals also provided the students with additional love and attention that the students might crave from a lack of support at home. Regularly one could see rabbits running around the room, bouncing over students lying on the floor reading, which created a "softness" about his classroom space, one that he and each of his students appreciated.

You see, from a young age, Greg turned to animals to provide the care and purpose that he craved from his disengaged family. He credits his early love of all animals for his ability to read people and emotions, a skill he demonstrates in his classroom on a regular basis.

Greg said that more often than not, he could tell when a student was bothered or worried. He would simply ask a student to take over reading aloud or bring in an aide to finish the lesson, and Greg would take that student in the hall to show his support and see what he could do to help. Greg said he connected with kids because they trusted one another—they connected to one another. He described this as being soul-to-soul; that's what Greg felt allowed him to be a successful educator.

For Greg, there was seldom a lunch break where students—some not even his own—were in his room caring for the animals and sharing stories. Students opened up to Greg because students knew that he would listen when others would write them off. This sincere communication was something all of his students knew to be true; that, and that they could count on Greg to tell them the truth, even when the truth wasn't something they were interested in hearing. Greg said if students were making poor choices, he would tell them about those choices and the impact that they were having on the community. Often, those students were able to make changes to the choices that they were making, which allowed for a respectful, caring community that filled many of the school days. What made Greg as successful as he was? Greg explained that it was about being true to who you are, what makes you passionate, using those convictions to connect to the students and share in their passions while they share in yours.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

The objective of this multiple case study research is to examine how different teachers plan and work to motivate adolescents within their language arts block to love to read. Adolescent learners are at a transitional stage, one that moves from learning to read to reading to learn (Alvermann, 1999; Rose, 2011; Vasudevan & Campano, 2009). The learning to read stage for an elementary student uses their personal interests to motivate the learning process, which increases motivation. The reading to learn stage that adolescent students are entering refocuses the purpose of learning from pleasure to necessity. Students need to read to gain the content and curriculum. This shift in focus tends to diminish a student's enjoyment of reading (Moje et al., 2000; Wendt, 2013).

The research presented here examines the classroom routines and practices of four different adolescent language arts teachers. This was done through a content analysis of their daily schedules and classroom routines. Additionally, the teachers were interviewed to gauge a better sense of their personal teaching style and planning process. Finally, their classrooms and teaching were observed to see how these two pieces come together. This research does not look to generalize student motivation, nor assume that all teachers fit into the category of the four discussed here. Instead, this research uncovers ways to motivate students. It examines how motivation fits with the different teaching styles present within this case study. Additional cross-analysis was done to see the common threads that exist and why they occur. Some generalization occurred at the cross-analysis stage, but that is not the principal intention of this research.

This case-study research was limited concerning touchpoints with the teachers. Unlike other case studies, it is not my intent to gain insight into every facet of these teachers' lives and

classrooms. The questions focus on the planning and intent of motivation and how that materializes in the day-to-day running of their classrooms

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this multiple case study is to describe the ways that teachers understand and plan the best practices for motivating students to want to read, based on the routines and practices for four Midwestern Wisconsin teachers.

Research Problem

When students reach adolescence, additional pressures tend to detract from the motivation of wanting to read (Carroll, 2011). There is no consistent manner in which teachers offer this motivation. Many teachers are continually looking for new strategies for their classroom practices and routines, classroom environment, and planned lessons to increase motivation, yet these strategies do not always translate to what is being done in the classroom.

Additionally, motivation is not simply about a checklist of what teachers can and cannot do, but rather it is a personalized invitation to engage or re-engage in the classroom and literacy practices. The problem exists in that current literature recognizes practices within an adolescent literacy classroom that should allow for motivation within the classroom, but only a few studies show how classroom teachers are able to accomplish the personalized nature of the invitation to literacy experiences amidst the stringent adolescent educational environments today.

Research Questions

How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?

Sub questions.

- How does a teacher **understand** motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher **plan for** motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?

- How does a teacher's understanding of motivation **emerge** in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?

Research Questions and Study Design

Figure 2 provides an overview of the research question and way in which each question will be studied.

Question	Behaviors	Data Collection	Analysis
How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?	Strategies that recognize the dimensions of student motivation, teacher's approach to literacy practices, teacher's approach to student interaction	Interviews with teachers, observational field notes	Inductive Content analysis,
How does a teacher understand motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?	Teacher's impact on classroom climate, student impact on classroom climate, Interaction between classmates, the interaction between literacy practices.	Interviews with teachers	Content analysis, qualitative, comparative analysis
How does a teacher plan for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?	Teacher's instruction of routines/ schedule, teachers' expectations of students during schedule/ routines, student's habits in schedules/routines, the environment the teacher creates, the lessons the teacher plans.	Observational field notes, artifact analysis of imperative documents related to schedule and routines, interviews with teachers. Picture images of classrooms/ environments	Content analysis, qualitative comparative analysis
How does a teacher's understanding of motivation emerge in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?	Teacher's purposeful inclusion of strategies and plans that allow for motivation within their classroom.	Interviews with teachers, observational field notes	Content analysis, qualitative comparative analysis

Figure 2. A descriptive chart on research objectives and methods.

How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?

To answer this question, I looked for strategies that recognize the dimensions of student motivation and the teacher's approach to literacy practices. I also looked for the teacher's approach to student interaction, how students are collaborating, and responding to one another engaged in literacy tasks. I accomplished this through two primary data collection opportunities. The first being the teacher's responses during our interviews. I specifically listened to the strategies and practices that the teacher has in place that allows for the dimensions of student motivation and student interaction. Additionally, I used the time spent observing in the classroom environment to examine how the teachers are motivating adolescents to engage in literacy experience. My field notes included specific ways that the teachers invited their students into the experiences, fostering engagement, and motivation. Finally, the analysis included using inductive content analysis to extract themes from each teacher's practices.

How does a teacher understand motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?

To gain an insight into the teacher's understanding of motivation, I looked at the teacher's impact on classroom climate. I looked at the practices and routines that impacted the classroom environment and how it contributed to student motivation. I also looked at the student impact on the classroom climate. Again, I was watching for practices and opportunities where the student's response supported or hindered overall motivation in the classroom; this included the interaction between classmates, as well as their interaction with literacy practices. I primarily used interviews to acquire this information. The discussions were essential to gaining knowledge for how the teacher's understanding and purposeful decisions led to motivation within their classrooms. Through specific questioning on intent and experiences, I was able to understand the teacher's purpose for their practices and routines. Inductive content analysis used to identify themes, while a comparative analysis helped examine the teacher's practices compared to their objectives.

How does a teacher plan for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?

To examine the teacher's purposeful planning for motivation, I looked at the set practices and routines of the teachers. I reviewed their schedules and regular routines, which highlighted the student's literacy habits. I also looked for their expectations and how those expectations fostered motivation. This involved analysis of the lesson planning process, and the purposeful steps that the teachers took to including practices they knew would increase motivation. Part of the data collection that addressed this question included analysis of artifacts provided by the teachers. Artifacts included schedules, scope and sequence curriculum, family correspondence, classroom menus, and finally, images of the classroom environment, including anchor charts and classroom posters. Along with the examination of artifacts, I also took specific observational notes on the planning and implementation process. Specific questioning in the interviews included the planning process, and the observations confirmed the motivational factors of those plans. Inductive content analysis allowed for theme identification; comparative analysis looked at those themes for consistency in practices.

How does a teacher's understanding of motivation emerge in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?

The final question looked at how the understanding of motivation emerged in the classroom. To see motivation appeared in the practices, I analyzed how the teacher used purposeful strategies that fostered motivation in the classroom. It looked at procedures and plans where students were motivated to engage in literacy experiences and tracked the aspects of the classroom where student motivation was clear. Observations and field notes were paramount for the data on the emergence of motivation in the classroom. Additionally, discussions on the intent of the teachers, before and after the interviews, shed light on the specific plan for motivation. Finally, inductive content analysis showcased consistent patterns of motivation within the classroom. The comparative analysis looked at how these practices compared to the other teachers.

Justification of Research Design

This research looks at the classroom environment and the teachers specifically. To maintain the genuine uniqueness of each teacher, the research takes the form of a multiple case study. A working definition of a case study, provided by Baxter and Jack (2008)—is a “qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources.” This makes sense for this study, as it looks at the phenomenon of motivation and how that motivation is present in the classroom. According to Zach (2016), multiple case studies are “popular in the area of organizational research, where the focus is on understanding a particular work environment or structure and not necessarily on predicting results in other areas,” (p. 6) as is the circumstance with this research. This research seeks to examine the one structure—motivation—and not anything else. Further research could pursue how the research adds to student success and test scores, but that is not the goal for this work. Instead, this multiple case study examines how a variety of teachers and their classroom routines, schedules, and environments are impacting students’ motivation to read. This research seeks to find patterns both within the various cases and in how they compare to the other cases examined. Additionally, as identified by Moss and Haertel (2016), comparative case studies can be qualified as a multiple case study due to the fact there is a common thread. Moss and Haertel leave this pretty wide open by qualifying four common circumstances that connect cases.

For this research, I plan to use “examination of at least similar cases; that is, those differing with respect to all but one independent variable” (p. 153). The common variable in my research is strategies for motivation. This is the aspect for which each classroom and teacher will be analyzed and examined.

Reflexivity

A working definition of reflexivity, as defined by Glesne (2016), is “an awareness of the self in the situation of action and of the role of the self in constructing the situation” (145). I take this to mean that the assumptions on society, or the phenomenon, which I believe qualitative

research seeks to justify or explain, can only be looked at once the researcher has critically examined themselves and their experiences and what that brings to the meaning-making of the research. I needed to find the balance between my role as a motivational researcher and my role as an educator to understand the reflexivity of the study.

To begin, motivational research began while working on my master's degree six years ago. At that time, I read an abundance of research surrounding what promotes and what detracts from motivation. This has enabled me to efficiently identify the different factors contributing to motivational success. I had to ensure that through my data analysis, I was open to seeing results I did not expect. I needed to keep an open mind regarding the teachers' responses and how they identify what is creating motivation for their students. Additionally, I needed to keep my bias in check to know that the teacher is identifying motivation and that I am not just assuming it under pretense due to my research.

Likewise, I understood that research does not fit every classroom and group of students. Therefore, what research tells us could be demotivating could prove the exact opposite for another classroom. To account for this, I included plenty of follow-up questions to understand the components of the teachers' motives and practices. I also needed to be objective in this questioning to ensure that I was not leading teachers towards responses based on what I have read in research.

Another aspect of bias I carried was that of a current early adolescent educator myself. I have been an educator for the past decade--a handful of years in an older elementary classroom and the rest in an early adolescent classroom. I have worked with hundreds of early adolescent students over the years. With each year, I felt I was working hard to practice motivational strategies in my own classroom. This was an issue I paid close attention to in regards to personal bias and reflexivity. To begin with, I worked to keep my researcher "hat" on over my educator one. I needed to put aside what I would do in my own classroom and keep

from comparing the educational environments. Poor comparisons could have lead to misjudgment in the patterns or cause me to miss something in their room completely.

I also put aside any judgments I had of handling situations and students. I could let my own bias for handling a situation or understanding a strategy create judgment towards that teacher. If the teachers would have recognized my personal bias, they might have felt less open to sharing their true classroom practices and understanding of motivation.

This was vital for me to remember during the questioning and follow-up of the interviews. To eliminate bias, I worked to be very objective in my questioning. I felt that being an educator myself, it allowed the participants to feel more connected to me and more comfortable in sharing their educational experience. Often, in communication with other educators, they feel the ability to connect through students or educational environments. However, I have also been in situations where teachers are being critical of one another, assuming that their ways of teaching are better or, worse yet, worried that they are not good enough to share the different practices that they have in place, for fear of being judged. An effective part of the study was looking at the practices from an objective manner, rather than comparing it to my own classroom experiences.

Study Context

Population/Data

To understand how different teachers plan for and implement motivational strategies to encourage students to read in their adolescent language arts classes, I met four exemplary language arts instructors. According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), "To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: 1) a bachelor's degree, 2) full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach."

I would agree but also look to extend this definition to include educators who understand the developmental needs of the students they are working with based on the connections that they have with those students and their drive for those students to be successful. It was based on this definition that I asked the administrators to identify teachers in their schools that they

would consider exemplary educators. I told the administrators the scope and basis of the research and the definition of the candidates that I sought to attract.

Exemplary Teacher Qualifications

After two years of studying exemplary teachers, Allington and Johnston (2002) came up with the following ambiguous definition. “Exemplary teachers do more than teach—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they redefine common understandings of what teaching is.” An exemplary teacher is well-beyond the realms of definition and prescription, and rather than try to reference a term that can mean so much to so many, I would like to propose a set of qualifications that encapsulates the person that this research intends to study. These qualifications are supported by the theoretical framework of this research.

Creating a Community of Learners When teachers exhibit excitement towards students’ motivators, it encourages classmates to do the same, building a space that promotes and encourages one another. Due to passion being an integral part of their classroom experience, these teachers are pioneers, blazing a new trail and looking outside the box to communicate their material. Pioneers are innovative; they seek new strategies centered on the students in an attempt to foster a positive learning environment. An exemplary educator lays the groundwork for student learning that is exciting and fosters curiosity in the student; learning that is an invitation to each student--calling them into the experiences.

Utilizing your classroom amenities Exemplary teachers teach the whole student by utilizing the whole space for learning. This could look different in each classroom, but an exemplary teacher engages students by creating an atmosphere conducive for learning and interacting. Whether this in incorporating technology, interactive bulletin boards, or robust classroom libraries, the tools for learning in the classroom invite students to engage in literacy experiences. Exemplary teachers effectively use their classroom as an extension to their teaching, incorporating amenities the classroom has to support student motivation.

Expanding the institutionalization and standardization of adolescent education.

Exemplary teachers think beyond the standardized curriculum to engage adolescents in literacy experiences. These teachers push past the standards set by their institution and focus on the student. While this learning utilizes those standards, it is not driven by them. Exemplary teachers consistently monitor student progress and success and arrange their pacing and lessons to their students' levels. This extends beyond the standardization of education supports student success focusing on student growth and progress.

Incorporating routines and practices that allow for student interaction Adolescent students in typical educational environments note that the only time they could discuss books in school was to get what they needed to know for the test or assignment. However, Alvermann et al. conducted research that found that when students were given the opportunity to participate in a small group reading club, the students found purpose. "It gave them a place to respond to texts in ways that they believed were intellectually honest and socially acceptable" (Alvermann et al., 1999). Literacy practices must be updated to allow students to re-engage in literacy and carry on meaningful conversations about their literacy experiences. Research shows that engagement with their peers, who are already providing many of the literacy experiences in which they engage, will be a productive strategy in an adolescent literacy classroom (Moje et al., 2008).

Class objectives meet the needs of students An educator that is exemplary at motivating students is not driven solely by the curriculum; rather, they combine their knowledge of the students, their passion for the student's success and their abilities, combined with the passion of their students, to focus their teaching. An exemplary educator develops connections with their students to know what motivates them and what they are passionate about, then uses that to enhance the classroom environment, one that is filled with respect and a feeling of community. These connections allow teachers to understand the different needs of the learners

in their classrooms. They then account for these needs in the planning process to allow for ultimate student motivation and success.

Diversity consideration of texts and differentiation is important in their classroom.

An exemplary teacher acknowledges the essential need for diverse texts being incorporated into the curriculum, as well as being present in the library. Exemplary teachers teach with texts that reflect the background of all of the students and help to expand their knowledge of a variety of backgrounds. Students are most motivated by texts they can relate to in conflicts, culture, traditions, and characters. Therefore, a wide variety of texts are necessary for a classroom that effectively motivates all learners.

Classroom procedures allow for student autonomy. Research shows that adolescent students crave the ability to make their own choices in their learning (Alvermann, 2016). Yet, often, schooling at this age is dictated by practices that stifle student creativity in an effort to cover student material. Students are regularly told what to learn, how to learn it, and when to have it completed. However, the educator who is exemplary at motivating adolescents to engage in literacy experiences breaks this mold, fostering an environment that returns autonomy to the students. This empowers students to engage in experiences they might not have otherwise, having been given the power of choices within the literacy experiences.

Fosters an environment that maximizes the interconnectedness of students and learning Exemplary teachers weave the student learning with the student schema in a way that is purposeful and impactful. Because of this, students can connect to the material and their peers in the process of understanding new material and utilize this connection to deepen the learning experience. This connection between peers and between learning offer search students their own place in that classroom, which motivates them to participate fully and be drawn into the experience. This connection provides a purpose for many students, a sense of understanding of the application of the material, and how it will support their personal and academic growth.

Logistical Data on the Research Participants

Identified below are the logistical qualifications of the participants in this study.

Must teach in the Midwest United States (Brown County) The Midwest United States has a blend of urban and rural cities; this research will take place in a number of school districts surrounding a mid-major city. This size is appropriate as it is not too large for foundational tensions, yet large enough that there are multiple administrators involved in the workings of the schools in the district.

Must teach 5th-8th grade (See the previous definition of an adolescent.) This research seeks knowledge of this early adolescent demographic. These students are no longer considered elementary school students and thus allow for more advanced learning and increased critical thought. There is also a shift in the student's social-emotional change from an interest in school versus interest in social groups.

Must have completed at least three consecutive years of teaching at that age level. This is essential because it is less likely that I will run into as many issues, such as teachers being stressed out by their curriculum or still trying to figure out the curriculum they are expected to teach. When teachers have taught multiple years in their same age group, there is a higher chance that they will have a better grasp on the curriculum and be able to focus on the motivational techniques associated with teaching this age group. It would also be my hope that after three years of teaching at the same level, the teacher might have more regular routines, so they can speak to their success. Newer teachers are typically still trying to figure out the best routines for themselves and their classrooms and do not, therefore, have as settled of practices.

Could span a variety of educational environments (K-8, 6-8, vocational school, private school) There are many different structures of early adolescent schools. Choosing teachers from multiple educational environments allowed for more variance in cases. This will allow for some fascinating patterns if they exist as well as a higher chance of diversity between

teacher's personalities and routines being studied. It is my hope that the teachers are quite different from one another.

Recruitment

My primary form of recruitment was networking and purposeful sampling to find highly qualified and uniquely motivational subjects. Identified below are the steps in selecting participants for this research.

Speak with area colleges for principals to contact. Through my connections at a local private liberal arts college, I identified local schools with principals who might be willing to offer assistance with selecting teachers or to have research take place in their buildings. Additionally, I looked to the college for recommendations of some past students from their teacher education program that fit the above qualifications. I would then reach out to the administration directly asking if those individuals could participate in my research prior to reaching out to the teacher.

Speak with colleagues to connect within a more widespread area. Being in education currently, I used the resources around me to gain email addresses and connections to other principals outside of my direct area. A letter was sent to those principals explaining the process and expectations of my research.

Final recommendations. In the end, I obtained recommendations from one college education faculty, two superintendents of school districts, one director of curriculum of a school district, eight principals of schools, and three literacy coach/coordinators/specialists for school district.

Recruit participants for initial observation. To secure a group of exemplary teachers to study, I needed to observe a broader group first. All of these communications yielded a pool of 23 educators who were deemed exemplary; two of these teachers were recommended by multiple individuals.

During the process of seeking permission from the district to complete research within their schools, one metropolitan district denied the request to conduct a study, citing previous unsuccessful research and overall displeasure with the procedures of the study.

Introduction to the Data Collection

Pre-research survey for sampling purposes (see Appendix A.) The first piece of data I collected was an educational background survey to examine the on-paper qualifications of the potential study participants. I was looking for time spent in their current roles, years teaching, and grade level currently teaching. It also included their educational background and teaching philosophy; however, these two aspects did not disqualify someone from participation. Additionally, this data was helpful in the coding and analysis stage. I alerted the teachers about the recommendation and proposed the primary stage of the sampling- which involved observing in their classroom. I sent participants an initial survey seeking basic background information. This was used to strengthen my knowledge of the participant, eliminating the need for this step in the interview.

Sixteen of the 23 initial educators returned the correspondence and expressed their interest in participating. The remaining seven were contacted a second time beyond the initial interaction but were dropped after not responding.

Classroom observations (see Appendix B). The purpose of the observation was to decide who would be the best candidates for this research. The initial observations occurred between January and March 2019; schedules were based on what would work best for the teacher being observed. Many of these observations had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather in the region. If there was any type of disturbance to the teaching schedule, the observation was rescheduled. This included multiple delayed starts due to weather and rescheduling due to school cancelation due to snow or cold. None of the teachers who agreed to be a part of the initial stage sampling group, however, dropped out due to the rescheduling.

The timeframe of the observation varied based on the teachers' schedules. A minimum of 45 minutes was spent with each teacher. There were three teachers with whom only 45 minutes could be spent due to their teaching schedule. One teacher had a block of 60 minutes. Four teachers have teaching blocks of 75 minutes. The longest observations occurred with three different teachers who have a 90-minute teaching block with those students. The length of time observed did not play a role in whether these teachers would be considered for the second stage of the observations.

The structures of the schools varied as well. Seven schools were visited for this sampling. All but one were publicly funded. One of the schools, attached to a Catholic church, belongs to the Catholic school system; one school was a kindergarten through eighth-grade structure; another was a kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary school structure; one of the schools had a fifth through eighth-grade structure. Two of the schools are structured in the sixth through eighth-grade structure, while two of the schools were a fifth and sixth grade structure. There were no recommendations given for teachers in a seventh and eighth grade only structure, therefore no visits to this structured school were made.

Brief notes were taken during this data collection stage, and those notes were maintained and used during the analysis of the data. Notes were taken using a computer and Google form for the timestamp. Each teacher observed was evaluated based on an observation checklist.

Continuing Study

Having completed all of the observations for the sampling stage, an analysis of the primary data occurred in order to establish the teachers that would be invited to move forward in continuing on in the study.

	Classroom Environment		Language Arts Class Routines			Motivational Tactics															
Participant-Grade	Favorite part of the classroom	Where the students are most	Practices	Transitions	Motivational Phrases	Self-Efficacy	Challenge	Work Avoidance	Curiosity	Involvement	Importance	Recognition	Grades	Competition	Social	Compliance	Other	Uniquely You	Students Hooked		
A-7TH		X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X			X			X	X		
B-5TH	X	X	X	X	X	X				X				X	X	X			X		
C-8TH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X			X	X		
D-8TH	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X				X			X	X		
E-5TH		X	X		X	X				X				X	X						
F- 5TH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X							Co-teach		X		
G- 5TH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X		Connections	X	X		
H-6TH		X	X		X	X		X		X						X			X		
I-5TH	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X						Flexible class	X	X		
J-6TH		X	X	X		X	X			X						X	Menu	X	X		
K- 6-8			X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	Language Only	X	X		

Figure 3. Participants scoring on an initial checklist. (Appendix B)

In order to identify the teachers invited to continue, a multiple-step consideration took place. To begin, the teachers were measured on the initial checklist completed during the observation. A total of the tallies they received was recorded and ranked. Figure three shows the teacher (assigned by letter) and their grade level, and the points that they scored on the checklist. Eight teachers (A, B, C, D, G, I, J, K) scored 11 points or higher; five teachers ranked 11, one teacher ranked 12, one teacher ranked 13, one teacher ranked 14. The highest value was 14.

The eight teachers remaining were then judged based on a checklist category that held priority than the others- the 'Uniquely You' category. The purpose of the 'Uniquely You' category was to gauge whether the teacher's personality and self was evident through their teaching. A 'Uniquely You' category holds more weight due to the fact that it demonstrates teacher autonomy in their own classroom. The theoretical framework used calls for motivation through autonomy, which applies to the teacher as well.

The Category 'Uniquely You' took high precedence due to its personalization, therefore one more teacher was eliminated from consideration (B). At this point in the analysis process, the seven remaining teachers were grouped in possible combinations for study. Three teachers were locked in due to the scores on the checklist and their uniquely you components (C, G, and

K). This already qualified an eighth-grade teacher and a fifth-grade teacher, which would allow for a great breadth of the adolescent grades being covered. It also qualified a teacher who teaches only Language for grades 6-8. The teachers who remained for consideration represented another fifth-grade classroom, another eighth-grade classroom, a sixth-grade classroom, and a multigrade classroom. Based on further analysis of their observational notes and brief follow-up interview, the checklist, as well as the uniquely you aspects of their classroom, it was decided to eliminate the remaining fifth grade and eighth-grade teachers.

Invitation for Continued Study

Out of the 11 teachers who were observed, five were contacted for continued study (letters A, C, G, J, and K) due to their overall checklist, the unique aspects of motivation, the classroom, as well as a review of their initial observation notes and follow-up interview. The demographics of these teachers varied greatly. Each will be further discussed in chapter four, but overall highlights of the whole group include diversity based on gender, schools, and teaching experience. Within the group selected to participate in the study, there was one male and four females. Four of the teachers in the final group had 10 or more years of experience while one teacher was in her fourth year of teaching.

Additionally, there were four different schools that were going to be studied, one school having two teachers present. Out of those four schools, three of them are publicly funded while one is a private catholic school. One of the teachers in the final group teaches only Language skills (grammar) but teaches it to three grades, while the other teachers teach one grade in a traditional language arts block. Additionally, all five of the teachers who were invited to participate in the final study have a minimum of 60 minutes for their teaching block, three of which had 90 minutes.

Each of the teachers was contacted regarding their further participation in the study. Four of the five accepted the invitation. The participant K denied participation since she felt it was getting too close to the end of the school year for the researcher to be able to thoroughly

observe her classroom. Aspects that played into this was the fact that she taught in the catholic school, all three grades 6-8, and the catholic year ended earlier than the rest of the participants. Additionally, her eighth-grade student's year ended even earlier, and there were many other commitments based on the religious affiliation that would restrict observation time. Therefore, she declined simply due to scheduling difficulties. The study participant group was therefore finalized with four teachers.

Examination of artifacts (aim at looking at practices and routines). Look at classroom schedules, regular routines, and units of study. Along with the data collected through observations and interviews, a variety of artifacts were also collected from the participants. These artifacts varied in content, but all included the classroom schedule/routine. Additional artifacts included the projects and instructions of projects, presentations that the teachers teach from, rubrics, mindfulness handouts, lesson plans, menu plans and a variety of pictures of student work. These artifacts were analyzed and categorized for the purpose of telling the teachers individual story, as well as showcasing the motivation picture as a whole.

Interviews with the teacher (see Appendix C). Understand practices for the intention of motivation, classroom routines, and teachers' knowledge about motivation. The purpose of the interview was to get to know the teacher and their practices. The first interview allowed me to understand what teaching adolescents look like for that teacher. I also gained an understanding of the intentions of their motivational strategies. There were ten prepared open-ended questions that acted as the guide of the interviews. There was also flexibility for the participants to go in varied directions based on their responses and the follow-up questions those responses ignited. With that said, the base questions were the same for each participant, each being afforded equal opportunity to share on similar topics.

By conducting the interviews in the classrooms, I was able to see how and why these teachers set up their classrooms in a particular way. Each follow-up interview was conducted based on the teachers' preferences. One of the teachers preferred all of the interviews to take

place in her classroom. For two of the other participants, they took place directly following the observation times. I interviewed the fourth teacher at her home after the school year completed. Each of the interviews was recorded using a recording extension on a personal iPad. This ensured the ability to playback the interview for the sake of transcribing it. Each recording began with the date and the time of the interview for accuracy of the data. Along with the recording, shorthand notes were taken during the interviews. These notes included points of emphasis, or my understanding of a concept I had not heard of before. The notes were in plain sight of the participant, in order to maintain transparency with the participant. It also allowed the participant to add additional thoughts to the points recorded. The interviews were then transcribed shortly after they were conducted and the notes were added to the analysis files of the participants.

After all, observations were complete, I conducted a final interview to have a conversation with the teacher about the workings of their classroom. The questions for this interview were based on different experiences that I observed, but also offered the teacher the opportunity to share aspects of their classroom that were unable to be observed. Examples included their start-of-year practices and projects or units from earlier in the school year. Additionally, it covered broad questions related to themes that were already emerging. It was a sense of triangulation for the data but also gave the teacher the opportunity to talk to that theme. All of the themes were not covered during this final interview, and the ones that were were broad and could encompass a variety of tighter themes. This final interview was used to gauge the teacher's overall view of motivation based on the students that they are currently working with, and goals that they have for motivation as they continued. One of the final questions focused on the teachers' responses to what motivates them in their job.

Classroom observations (see Appendix D). I arranged three observations of the teachers in their classroom teaching language arts. The purpose of the observations was to gauge how the teachers' reflective responses translated into their classroom practices. It is important to have multiple observations to understand that the practices I observe are

commonplace and not anomalies. Additionally, the structures and routines viewed were seen amidst any student behavior or school circumstances of the day. By visiting the class multiple days, I also ensured a genuine experience of the classroom, reducing the likelihood that the lesson prepared by the teacher is not staged for the research.

After the observation, I asked the teacher to explain what I just saw in an effort to triangulate the data and make sense of what occurred, as well as allowing the teacher to explain particular aspects of the lesson so as to be most accurate to the experience. It also allowed me to keep bias out of the analysis process, clarifying an understanding from the teacher's end. With that said, observations were attempted to be scheduled around a break that the teacher had in order to offer the opportunity to discuss.

In the observations, I took shorthand notes using a Google Form that includes a timestamp. This Google Form included nothing other than a "notes" question with the question set to "long answer." This allowed me to add text into the form's response box. I could "respond" to the form as many times as I wanted. I attempted to keep the notes short and quick for easy follow-up. These notes were then printed and filed in the analysis folder for each participant.

After each observation, I held a follow-up interview to ensure accuracy for what I observed. I began simply with the statement "talk to me about what I just saw." This allowed the teacher to focus on whatever part of the observation they felt they needed to respond to. I recorded the interviews using an application on a personal iPad, but the notes were taken by hand so the teacher was able to see that I understand the experience that I observed.

Breakdown of data collection (figure 4). The studies of each individual teacher occurred successional with the exception of one errant observation that had to be rescheduled multiple times. I contacted each teacher to outline the study and time commitment and to schedule the dates and times of the observations and interviews. The study included being in their classroom at least three teaching blocks, preferably seeing blocks back-to-back at least

once. Additionally, there would be a minimum of three meeting points where the teacher sat down with the researcher to discuss their classroom, planning, and philosophies.

For three of the four teachers, this structure worked well. One of the teachers preferred successive visits with one of their classes multiple days in a row to watch the development of the lesson/activity. The structure and the amount of time spent with each research participant is identified in figure 4. Each teacher obtained permission slips for the students who would be in the classes that I would be observing- and the final teacher felt the study would be most successful if he needed to obtain the permission slips from only one of his blocks.

Participant	Observation Struction	Total Observation time	Total Interview time	Total Time
A	Initial Obs. 2-block 1 block	6 hours	2 hours 17 minutes	8 hours 17 minutes
C	Initial Obs. 2-block 1 block	6 hours	3 hours 32 minutes	9 hours 32 minutes
G	Initial Obs. 2-block 1 block	5 hours	3 hours 37 minutes	8 hours 37 minutes
J	Initial Obs. 1-block 1-block 1-block	5 hours	2 hours 27 minutes	7 hours 27 minutes
Total Time:				33 hours, 53 minutes

Figure 4. Recorded observation structure and time spent with participant.

Justification of Discrepancy

As noted, there is a discrepancy in timing with each participant. To begin with observation time, two of the classrooms worked in 75-minute blocks and two of the classrooms worked in 90-minute blocks. Therefore, participants A and C both had additional time in the classroom since their teaching blocks were longer, which adds up to a complete hour based on

the four observations. The lack of observation time did not have a complete effect on the contact time for the participant, however. The interview time also became a factor in the contact time.

During the interview process, certain participants freely shared more than others, so some of the participants' (namely C and G,) interviews got quite lengthy. Participant J was extremely succinct and to the point, and participant A was more careful of her time. This resulted in participant C having almost a full two hours more contact time than participant J; however, due to the circumstances presented above, they utilized the time that they had for the study.

Analysis Plan

Case-Level Analysis

Stake (1995) defines analysis as “a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations.” With that said, the analysis of the data collected had multiple progressions to fully give meaning from the start to the end. The primary focus of analysis for the case-level analysis was categorical aggregation. As identified by Stake (1995), categorical aggregation is the process of coming to a realization of the text and then aggregating the instances in our data. This research will adopt strategies based on Stake's research, which states, “Our primary task is to come to understand the case. It will help us to tease out relationships, to prove issues, and to aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case. I look for corroborating incidents and disconfirming ones as well, not to express them in correspondence tables or in an index of correlation, but to better understand the people.” This philosophy was used in analyzing the data collected at the individualized case level. It worked in tandem with inductive content analysis in an effort to seek out the patterns and recurrence of themes.

The first step in the analysis of the data was to comb the data for recurring patterns within each case. This involved a critical analysis of the individual cases and the set of data

collected for each by reading through the empirical notes, the interview transcripts, and the observation descriptions, leaving descriptive words and phrases in the margins to summarize various points. This step started at the transcribing process. Each of the interviews was transcribed by listening to the interview at a slowed pace and typing the discussion into the text. During this process, if there was something that stood out automatically, I drafted a quick note in a notebook to follow up on. Additionally, I made other notes as I continued through interviews with the same participant. If I noticed that a concept or idea was being mentioned multiple times, I drafted a quick note to record the fact that I had heard the concept again. I completed the transcription as close to each interview as I could. This allowed me to go back and ask questions of the participant when something was unclear in the transcription. Since I had the notes started between each interview, it also allowed me to do some member checking during the interviews, discussing the points that were emerging and asking the teachers to share how they felt they saw that theme emerge in their classrooms and practices.

At the end of the transcribing process, I went through each of the transcriptions line-by-line to allow for the preliminary coding process. The first time during the read-through I highlighted statements that indicated motivational structures, planning for motivation, and aspects that made the teachers unique. During the line-by-line highlighting, the qualities of an exemplary teacher were also considered, and aspects of those qualities were also identified. Finally, quotes from the participant that particularly showcased passion for motivation were also highlighted. Following the highlighting step, an additional line-by-line analysis occurred to identify themes. While reading through the highlighted portions, and at times the content before or after, a code was created to identify that data. Not only was that code written in the margins, but also a sticky note was created in order to start categorizing the codes. Creating the codes led to the first stage of research: the inductive content analysis.

Inductive Content Analysis “Content analysis as a research method is a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena... The aim is to attain a

condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon” (Elo & Kynga, 2008). Through content analysis, I was able to analyze the individual cases for patterns and themes, breaking them down on the categorization and organizational level into broader themes.

This was done by using multiple colored sticky notes. Having completed the line-by-line analysis of the transcripts and written notes in the margins, the analysis of the codes began. I originally intended to organize the codes by color and categorical identification: planning, uniquely you, motivation, curriculum, etc. However, during the process, the codes fell into multiple categories, and it was difficult to track them at this stage. In the case of each participant, the color-coding was abandoned for its own process after the sticky notes were created. However, as the sticky notes were being created, they were grouped with themes and codes that were similar to them. This was the first stage of code grouping.

These codes were then collected and compared with each other. Similar terms were grouped together and specific coding was assigned. This was done to identify themes and patterns for how the teacher plans for and implements strategies for motivation in their classroom. Themes began to emerge based on the patterns in the text. The sticky notes allowed me to manipulate the themes and ideas as new groupings emerged. The groupings were rearranged multiple times. To begin with, the themes were stuck to a wall, with themes similar in nature grouped together. The sticky notes were moved and grouped in a variety of ways until the representation of the point best matched the theme it qualified. The sticky notes did not maintain a strong hold on the wall throughout the full analysis process, which resulted in notes needing to be regrouped. This process solidified the coding step, as I needed to manipulate the groups multiple times as I put the sticky notes back on the wall. Each time a note was replaced on the wall, I was forced to re-examine its place based on the other groupings.

As a final step in the coding and theme process, an examination of the various groups occurred. During this step, a common theme was identified to represent the group of codes

present in the sticky note set. Once those themes were identified, each of the sticky notes was examined a final time to ensure that it did not belong in a different theme.

Those themes were organized based on the structure of the narratives and then written up. The various categories for the write-up included classroom practices, planning for motivation, what helps the students be successful, how the teacher feels about motivation, and what motivates the teacher.

Membership in these themes and content was validated by going back through the data to ensure that its original intended meaning in the open coding stage held true during the categorical stage.

Cross-Case Analysis

The main analytical purpose of the secondary stage of analysis was to examine the cases against one another. For this, a cross-case analysis occurred. According to Khan (2008), “Cross-case analysis is a research method that facilitates the comparison of commonalities and differences in the events, activities, and processes that are the units of analyses in case studies.” The central focus returned to the phenomenon of motivation and how all of the cases relate to that. For this purpose, motivation became the quintain—the category that binds together cases in a collection (a term coined by Stake, 2006). According to Stake, “We study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better” (Stake, 2006). To study the quintain better, I recorded and compared the overall themes and patterns from the case-level analysis. For this process, I used Figure 5, which is similar to the work of Stake (2006). This allowed a comparison of themes, based on overall findings of each individual case. It also maintains the unique findings for the individualized cases, as well as commonalities between certain cases.

Theme	Paige	Owen	Isabelle	Danielle
Emphasis on Progress	X	X	X	X
Constant Sharing/Discussion	X	X	X	X

Feedback	X	X	X	X
Model Everything	X	X	X	X
Make Mistakes	X	X	X	X
Purpose/Application	X	X	X	X
Educating the Whole Self	X	X	X	X
Reflection	X	X	X	X
Professional Learning Involvement/Mentorship	X	X	X	X
Google Slides/Content Creation	X	X	X	X
Literacy as a Lifelong Habit	X	X	X	X
Relaxed Atmosphere	X	X	X	X
Structured Schedule	X	X	X	X
Student Ownership/Autonomy	X	X	X	X
Meeting Students' Psychological Needs	X	X	X	X
Collaborative Learning	X	X	X	X
Build Confidence	X	X	X	X
Build Community	X	X	X	X
Build Trust	X	X	X	X
High-Interest Topics	X	X	X	X
See Themselves as Readers/Writers/Reading Is Cool	X	X	X	X
Constantly Work to Make Practices/Content Better	X	X	X	X
Guinea Pigs	X	X	X	
Job of a Teacher Is to Become Less Needed	X	X		X
Making Connections/Getting to Know Them Personally	X		X	X
Personalizing Education	X	X		X
Best Learning Environment	X		X	X
Promotion of Student Reflection	X		X	X
Listening to Students	X		X	X
Goal Setting	X		X	X
Media/Video Clips		X	X	X
Student Choice	X		X	X
Reading Outside of the Classroom	X		X	X
Book Talks/Exposure to Text	X		X	X

Personal Sharing		X		X
Building Their Background		X		X
Repeated Tools		X	X	
Fostering Joy	X			X

Figure 5. Overall themes and recorded evidence by participant.

To create Figure 5, I recorded each of the main themes from the individual cases in a different line and automatically marked the teacher whose section it came from. After that, I went back to my initial notes of themes. I added any themes from the narratives that were not a primary theme. After each theme had been added to the chart, each of the narratives was analyzed another time, looking specifically for the above themes. For instances where a code was close for a participant but not exact, the participants' transcripts were consulted for further confirmation.

The general themes were then condensed into a final 18 common themes. This again happened through a grouping process similar to that at the case-level analysis stage. Each of the remaining themes was written on a sticky note. From there, the sticky notes were manipulated and adjusted in order to form tighter groups. Themes with similar meanings and understandings were grouped together. Just one example of this would be that the themes of project-based learning, literacy experiences outside of the classroom, and setting purpose were grouped together to form the overall theme of setting a purposeful literacy experience.

Finally, after the new 18 themes were created, I generated definitions grounded in research and based on the data collected. Figure 6 identifies each of the themes, their definitions, and examples. Many of the examples come from the original set of themes that were grouped to create the final set. Once Figure 6 was finalized, I returned to the data, the narratives, and additional notes to highlight specific examples of the themes in relation to the participants. This analysis became the driving content for Figure Seven and the subsequent analysis that follows it.

The final process of analysis involved looking at the data and findings in comparison to previous work. There were two main tasks to discern how this data of comparison agrees or presents alternatives to current research; the first a comparison to Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) dimensions of motivation, which is the theoretical basis of this research. Additionally, it compared to research on exemplary teaching, such as Allington and Johnston (2000), Rudell (1997), Snow et al. (1991), and Knapp (1995). A significant finding of this study was an extension of the research that grounds it. This final step to the research showed how the research adds to the breadth of study on motivation for engaging adolescents in literacy tasks .

Member Check and Inter-rater Reliability

A member check occurred with the participants. There were multiple ways that the members had the ability to confirm my findings and provide additional clarification or evidence. The first instance occurred during the transcribing stage. As material was found to be murky, or not fully understood, I reached out to the participant for clarification on what they meant. This involved sharing with the participant the analysis of the information and asking if the assessment was correct. Another way I worked to triangulate the data was to confirm the findings through the observations and the interviews. It was an important step to see if the practices in the classroom matched what the teacher discussed. This provided validity to the statements of the teachers. Therefore, when confirming the themes, data and comparison from both interviews and observations were used.

Finally, I confirmed my findings with the participant as part of a final interview where I provided the participants with five broad themes. These themes came from generalized analysis of the previous interviews, which found that each participant discussed each theme at some point and to some degree. The five general themes were structured routines, professional development and mentorships, relevance, vulnerability, and creating community. I shared that these themes appeared across the board and asked the participants to share why they feel

these themes are important to their classroom and what impact they have on the students. I then confirmed how I felt those themes fit into their rooms and routines. For some, they felt that the themes were hugely important to their classrooms; for others, they were a bit less important. All participants agreed that each theme was a part of their routines and planning process, but not all immediately identified the same examples from their interviews. This allowed me to gain greater data to support the theme.

Analysis through the inter-rater reliability also occurred to confirm findings. After the codes had been created and the broader categories established, the inter-rater reliability process confirmed the relationships within the data. For this, I took a few pages of the transcripts, already prepared in a confidential format, and asked a post-graduate student seeking similar research to perform cross-check analysis. To aid in the coding process, I provided this individual with the set of 18 themes, their definitions, and examples (not directly taken from the participant). Upon returning these codes, the post-grad student not only returned his findings specific to the codes, but also provided his own narrative as to how he views that teacher based on the transcripts provided. Along with being in agreement with the codes, he also agreed with my assessment of teacher personalities overall, as his narratives were similar to my own. It is important to note that the narratives for the individual participants in this study were written up prior to the inter-rater reliability process.

Importance and Application of the Study

This research shows how exemplary teachers motivate their students to love to read. The need for literacy in the technologically savvy world is increasing every day (Gee, 2010; Leu et al., 2004). “For adolescents, growing in literacy means being continually stretched. Because of this, adolescents deserve all the support they can get, not only from school but from their families, communities, and the nation” (Moore, 1999, p. 13). Students deserve to feel engaged in the curriculum that they are being taught, and it is the job of the educator to motivate them so

that they do. For adolescents, being motivated is not an easy task, yet having a resource that can show how different teachers are able to accomplish this will help.

Additionally, the Department of Education for the United States of America is currently in the process of replacing the No Child Left Behind legislature. The first showings of this replacement—known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (or ESSA)—indicates that student engagement will be a priority. This act will create a formal definition of motivation and engagement and will be the focus of abundant study in the near future. The research done here can contribute to this pool of research on motivation and engagement.

Limitations/Delimitations

One critical limitation of this study was the amount of time spent in the classroom observing the teachers. There were three observations for the researcher to understand how motivation is being brought into the classroom. Although this time was adequate to gauge an understanding of motivation based on what the teacher has discussed, it might not paint the full picture of what motivation looks like in this classroom. This limitation shows that even though motivation will be the focus of the entire time spent in the classroom during this study, motivation for students will be much broader than what is possible to observe. To account for this limitation, the teachers were allowed to “humble brag” about other instances and projects that incite great motivation for their students.

Another limitation of the study was the lack of student participation; I did not collect any data that takes the students’ voices into consideration. Although the students are not being directly studied here, there will still be aspects that will aim to gauge student motivation. The perspective of the teacher is part of the research question at hand, therefore making that the leading voice; however, the addition of the students’ voices might have enhanced the point.

Summary

I conducted a multiple case study through interviews and observation of four early adolescent language arts teachers. This study looked at how different teachers are preparing

and planning for motivating their students to engage in literacy tasks. The teachers, who were chosen through a networking and purposeful sampling method, spanned educational environments and genders. They also represented four different grade levels of adolescents.

Analysis of the data came from the pre-interview, initial observation, three observations, and three additional interviews. These were analyzed through at a case-level as well as cross-case level. Participant confirmation and member checking occurred to validate the data. This study does not aim to report concrete strategies on how all adolescent students are motivated to engage in literacy experiences but instead seeks to observe how this process occurs for specific teachers. The final analysis will be grounded in prior research and look to extend the ideas of that research.

Two Peas in a Pod

Mickey and Renee

Teaching in the 1960s was anything but progressive and innovative. And yet, as the husband and wife duo were starting their careers, that is exactly what they were doing. Hired into an urban school district, Renee moved into her fifth-grade classroom and clustered the desks for collaboration, brought in alternative seating options, and established the learning contracts that she would use with her students. It was nice to have the support of the administration, but when that administration invited other teachers to check out Renee's new way of teaching, the other teachers scoffed at her.

Her husband, Mickey, also began teaching fifth grade at the same school as Renee. Serendipitously, Mickey met the new teacher who replaced him at his previous school. That new teacher called him out for leaving his content and work but taking all of the answer keys. He responded that he didn't have the answer keys, that the learning process wasn't about being right or wrong but about the journey that the students took to get there. The teaching styles and philosophy of both Mickey and Renee set them apart in their profession; but that is why, when they received a call from a new principal in the area and she asked if they were interested in starting an alternative program with her, both Mickey and Renee jumped at the opportunity. The main philosophy of the new school would be that every single child is born curious. In fact, children are able to construct the two toughest yet most vital human functions before most turn 3 (speaking and walking), and yet by kindergarten this curiosity is gone. Mickey and Renee and the principal, Margaret, wanted to capitalize on that curiosity and encourage it as the premise of their new school.

One of the first aspects Renee proposed was multi-age grouping—insisting that students learn best from each other, so utilizing the strengths and knowledge of their classmates makes for a much more successful learning environment.

One of the first ideas Mickey brought to the table was to insist students call him by his first name. Mickey claimed that when students can see their teacher as a person, they are much more apt to respect them and join them in the journey of learning. Both teachers, however, insisted that in order for the school to be truly unique and successful, it was imperative to bond and connect with the students. According to Mickey, the absolutely ideal classroom is two teachers, an aide, and 20 students. In that structure, he believed students would receive a more personalized education. He acknowledged that this structure is almost impossible for schools to accomplish, so instead the idea of community teaching became a crucial part of the structure that Mickey and Renee brought to the new school.

Community teaching included all teachers getting to know students, stopping to talk to them, and including them in activities regardless of whose homeroom they were in. As part of this style, Mickey and Renee started holding monthly taco parties at their home. Each student in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades got to go to their house one time during the year for tacos, volleyball, and swimming.

Renee thought, “How could any student not be respectful or hardworking when they spent last night breaking bread with their teachers?” To this day, many students who attended Aldo Leopold School remember both the amazing tacos and camaraderie

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Retelling Their Stories

Introduction

Four different educators were the focus of this comparative case study. Each identified as exemplary in their own right, but each for different reasons and unique aspects of their classrooms. As Duffy and Hoffman state, “It is time we end the research design that pits one teaching against another” (1999). Therefore, this research sought to share the exemplary aspects of four different teachers practice in their classrooms. In this chapter, I will introduce

- **Perceptive Paige-** who says that she has the strongest teacher intuition of people she knows and that intuition helps her connect with and understand her students.
- **Ownership Owen-** who provides his students with an incredible opportunity for autonomy in their learning.
- **Inclusive Isabelle-** who spends every day building the community in her classroom by including everyone in gratitude and compliments.
- **Deliberate Danielle-** who brings the real world and purpose into every single aspect of her classroom, teaching the students for life, not just this year.

A narrative follows to best understand each of the teachers and their classrooms and practices. However, there were commonalities and themes that emerged slightly differently for each of the teachers. To understand this body of work as a whole, the figure (Figure 6) below outlines the common themes. In reading their personal narratives, it will become obvious how that theme is present and unique for each of the teachers.

Introduction to Themes

Themes	Definition	Examples
Personalized education	Curriculum decisions were made to ensure each student's success. Flexible curriculum.	Personalized education, student choice, promotion of student reflection
Purposeful literacy experiences	Teacher creates literacy experiences that are purposeful and relevant to the student's life.	Project-based learning, literacy experiences outside of the classroom, setting purpose
Educating the whole student	Activities, routines, and structures work to educate the whole person, not simply pushing content.	Educating the whole student, reading as a lifelong habit
Setting the student up for success	Teacher has included practices that allow the students guidance and support so they feel successful.	Building confidence, repeated tools, modeling, gradual release of responsibility
Best learning environment	Classroom atmosphere allows each student to find their best learning environment. It is set up for students to feel successful due to the classroom set up.	Best learning environment, relaxed atmosphere
Emphasis on progress	Classroom assessment focuses on student growth and development over assigning a grade.	Emphasis on progress, feedback
Constant reflection	The teacher engages in practices that constantly question the effectiveness, appropriateness, and student response, in order to lead to best delivery.	Constantly working to make practices better, reflection, guinea pigs
Being vulnerable	The teacher is willing to share their personal selves with their students.	Making mistakes in front of them, personal sharing of stories,
Making connections	The teacher works to get to know the student so that they can create a bridge or a connection between material, or between each other.	Making connections, meeting the students at their level, listening to students
Learning as a partnership	A sociocultural take on learning. Part of a give and take experience with another. New ideas are formed by working with other perspectives, specifically related to the student-teacher learning together.	Job of the teacher is less needed, student ownership, Learning with their peers, learning with the teacher.
Build a trusting community	The teacher actively works to create an environment where students feel comfortable to share. The students feel membership to the group.	Build community, build trust, willing to take risks

Content creation	The teacher works on their instructional material, creating lessons and examples.	Google slides presentations, media/video clips, personal sharing
High-interest topics	The curriculum presented has relevance and interest for the student.	Novels, content, short stories, informational text
Teacher's promotion of students seeing themselves as readers/ writers	The teachers encourage the students and themselves to view themselves as capable in the literacy processes.	Confidence in the content, participate in reading community
Professional learning opportunities/ educational talk	Opportunities for the teacher to experience professional growth and development. Opportunities are guided, and grounded in research and effective practices.	Teacher is part of learning communities, opportunities/ professional development
Meeting the students psychological needs	The teacher is concerned with the student's needs beyond their academic abilities.	Mental and emotional well-being
Exposure to books/text	Students have the opportunity to access books and text	Access to text, access to a variety of text, teacher matches text to student
Sharing/discussing	Students vocally contribute to the conversation around content in the class.	Participating in the learning community, offering input, sharing their books.

Figure 6. Table of themes, definitions and examples

Personalized education emerged as a theme for each of the teachers. Based on the practices of the teachers, personalized education is defined as curriculum decisions that are made to ensure each student's success. Since the curriculum is supportive of all students, it means that the curriculum is flexible, with the teachers able to make adjustments and differentiated options based on the students' needs. Examples of personalized education that are coded in the data include options for student choice in the work—allowing the students to have a say about the structure or topics of their work. It also included a constant promotion of the students' reflecting on their work and on their needs. Through these strategies, the classrooms are conducive to the learning of all students.

Purposeful literacy experiences is a strategy that each teacher uses to create motivation for their students. It is defined by the teacher creating literacy experiences that are purposeful and relevant to the student's life. This can be done through the inherent nature of the project, or by setting up a purpose and goal for the student so they are able to view its application. Examples of purposeful literacy experiences as coded are project-based learning opportunities within their set curriculum. Additionally, this includes literacy experiences and connections outside of the walls of the classroom.

The teachers in the study practice multiple routines that support students beyond literacy experiences. They find that **educating the whole student** is a vital component to having them later engage in the literacy experiences. I define the idea of educating the whole student as activities, routines, and structures in place that work to educate the whole person. These activities, routines, and structures are not necessarily focused on literacy but can include community, gratitude, and mental health. It also includes developing habits to encourage the student to make reading a lifelong habit, just as taking care of oneself is a lifelong habit.

Setting the student up for success is important for students to feel motivated to engage in literacy experiences. Therefore, each of the teachers has different practices that allow for their students to feel successful entering the literacy task. The definition of this theme involves the teacher including practices that give the students guidance and support so they feel successful from the onset of the task at hand. There are a variety of ways the teachers demonstrated that they accomplish this. For instance, the teachers have a high priority of building the students' confidence before beginning tasks. They also use tools that have been previously used in class so students understand the logistics of the work. Finally, the teachers use a gradual release of responsibility, showing the students how to do the work, then encouraging the students to do the work together, before sending the students off to accomplish the task on their own.

The **best learning environment** looked very different for each of the teachers in the study, yet they all spoke to how their environment plays into motivating their students. I define the best learning environment as a classroom atmosphere that allows each student to find their best learning environment. It is set up for students to feel successful due to the physical space. For each of the classrooms, a relaxed feeling was the highlight of that space. For some classrooms, the best learning environment was controlled, specific seating and arrangement, while others included fluid seating with a variety of seating options. Each classroom had space that allowed the students to interact with one another and learn from each other.

Emphasis on progress is the focus of the classrooms studied. This contrasts with traditional grades. As provided by the definition, this emphasis on progress utilizes classroom assessment practices that focus on student growth and development compared to assigning a grade. The teachers are able to do this through providing feedback to their students and asking their students to look critically at their work and growth.

The idea of the teachers constantly adjusting their practices was one that came up again and again. The reason that the teachers were changing their practices was because of the **constant reflection** that they were doing to make their practices better. To qualify this theme, I use the definition which says that the teacher engages in practices that constantly question their effectiveness, appropriateness, and student response in order to lead to best delivery. They do this because of their desire to constantly make their practices better for their students. Each of the teachers discussed getting better at their lessons as the day went on due to the fact that they were analyzing how the lesson went and reflecting on how it could be even better.

Being vulnerable was found to be an effective way for the students to be able to connect to the teachers. This vulnerability of the teachers shows the students that rather than creating a barrier, or power distance, between them, the teacher is more interested in connecting with the students and supporting them through their own vulnerabilities. For its definition, being vulnerable includes the teachers' willingness to share their personal selves with

their students. Their personal selves include their personal reading and writing, as well as personal stories that spurred the aforementioned. Being vulnerable was demonstrated in the classrooms through the teachers' willingly accepting (and making) mistakes in front of the students and editing their own work and plans with the students. The teachers were also heard sharing personal stories about their lives, both verbally and written, as ways to spur ideas for the students in their writing.

Making connections to their students is a vital component in each of the teacher's classrooms. The teachers in this study felt that if they can connect to their students, they will be able to motivate the students to engage in literacy experiences. Making connections is defined as the practice of the teacher working to get to know their students so that they can create a bridge or a connection for the students to themselves, and to the material. This was evident in the classroom by the way that the teachers worked to get to know their students. They were attentive listeners to the interests and needs of their students. They then used these interests to their advantage when making examples regarding the content and curriculum.

Learning as a partnership reinforces the sociocultural grounding styles of learning that occurred within the classrooms studied. It is defined as having a give-and-take experience with another person. New ideas are formed by working with other perspectives. The partnership creates a learning experience that is two-way, with both student and teacher invested in the success of the learning experience. Examples of this theme emerged in statements from the teachers that expressed their roles as becoming less and less—allowing the students to take a greater lead in their learning process. Other examples include collaborations with their peers that allow the learning experience to be developed through working with others.

Building a trusting community is important to each of the teachers in the study. Building the trusting environment allows the students to feel that they have a safe space in their classrooms. Due to this, the teachers actively worked to ensure that they could provide it for their students. I am defining this theme as the teacher actively working to create an environment

where students feel comfortable sharing. The students feel membership to the group, which allows them to engage in the literacy experiences. The teachers do this by building trust in the community and in one another. They also foster the students' confidence to allow them to take risks and be vulnerable with their classmates.

Content creation allows the teachers to bring their own knowledge and creativity to their classroom. The teachers in this study value the lesson planning process, ensuring that the material they present to their students reflects the backgrounds and interests of their students. The definition of content creation is the teacher works on their instructional material, creating lessons and examples. The teachers in this study do that through their planning on Google Slides, incorporating media and video clips relevant to their students, and being vulnerable and sharing their own stories through their examples.

High-interest topics became a theme due to the fact that each teacher discussed the importance of content that hooks their students. This would be material that the students find relevant or topics that are new and interesting to them. I define high-interest topics as the curriculum presented has relevance and interest for the student. This curriculum could have been the novel choices that the teachers offered, the content of the short stories, or varied informational text that was presented.

The **teachers' encouraging their students to see themselves as readers and writers** was a large part of the students' connecting to and being motivated in the literacy experience. When the students are able to see themselves as readers and writers, they are more apt to engage in their books and participate during class. The definition of the teacher's promotion of students seeing themselves as readers and writers is that the teachers support and encourage the students to see themselves as capable in the literacy processes. Viewing themselves as capable gives the students confidence in the content that they are working with, which in turn leads to participating in their learning communities.

Professional learning opportunities/educational talk is a way that the teachers work to stay current in their practices and teaching strategies. Professional learning opportunities and educational talk is defined as opportunities for the teacher to experience professional growth and development, opportunities that are guided and grounded in research and effective practices. Professional learning keeps the teachers motivated to teach, constantly honing their craft, and working to be the best that they can be. Examples of this are the teachers being part of learning communities, following educational conversations, and constantly reading articles. The teachers also discussed going to various professional development opportunities and conferences where they can hear from reading researchers on research-based strategies they are publishing.

Meeting the students' psychological needs recognizes that in order to teach the student, they need to be emotionally and psychologically well. The teachers each recognized that mental health has a large role in the classroom, and they work to lessen the barriers that poor mental health creates. This theme is defined as the teacher is concerned with the students' needs beyond their academic abilities, and it is demonstrated through the teachers' active planning for mental and emotional well-being. Whether through the environment they create, student collaboration, or support through student connection, the teachers are constantly attempting to help their students be emotionally and psychologically well.

Exposure to books/text is evident when looking at each of the classroom set-ups. There is an abundance of texts in the rooms, both picture books and novels. There are also reminders of texts around the rooms, from anchor charts about the books to book characters on the walls. Literature is present in the classroom. The definition of this theme mirrors this; it is defined as providing the students the opportunity to have access to books and text. Again, this access varies in content, structure, and style. It also is present in a variety of ways across the different classrooms. Expanding on the idea of having access to texts, the teachers also work hard to match their students with the best texts, texts of interest for their students.

Students' sharing and discussing allows for each student in the classroom to have their voice and opinions heard. This makes it an important aspect of the classrooms studied. The teachers in this study encouraged their students to share and actively participate in the learning that happened in the classroom, and a great way they did that was through the discussions that took place. Sharing and discussing is defined as students vocally contributing to the conversation around content in the class; the teachers fostered these conversations every day. Examples of this theme emerged through the students' sharing the books that they were reading, discussing their opinions, offering input on the content and examples that were used, and finally supporting conversation from their peers as well.

Each of the themes presented here are interwoven through the narratives of each teacher. Through the retelling of these narratives, I invite the reader to experience literacy how the teachers teach it, love it, and use it to inspire and motivate their students.

Perceptive Paige

Demographics of Paige

Perceptive Paige is in her seventeenth year of teaching. Paige has had a long and fruitful career in only two different districts, each that has provided its own wonderful experiences.

Paige began her teaching career in a small faith-based parochial school, not publicly funded, in a small rural area adjacent to a larger Midwestern city. She began her teaching career in second grade. She taught every subject including language arts, math, science, social studies, and religion. Paige taught second grade for 11 years.

After that time, she worked with her principal to begin a multi-aged looping program. This involved her teaching a multi-aged class, starting with first and second graders together in her class. At the completion of the first year, she would teach a second and third grade class with the same students from the previous year. Paige describes this first two years of looping as "Wow, so many new takeaways from teaching with that type of style teaching methodologies

that I had to explore” (PP1, 7:18). Paige continued this looping format for only another two years. At that time, she recognized that her school’s population was getting smaller and class sizes were shrinking. Even though she had been teaching at the school for 13 years, she began to worry about her continued placement there and started exploring additional opportunities. The new opportunity came in the form of her current placement, a two-grade intermediate school consisting of fifth and sixth graders. Paige teaches fifth grade, which she has taught for four years. Paige described this move to a more suburban school as “a culture shock for me in the sense that there were more students in the house that I taught in, a three teacher house, compared to the whole school I just left” (PP1, 7:51). However, her new placement allows for professional conversations, additional resources, and options for grants. Paige has been teaching for four years in the fifth grade.

Paige describes her teaching philosophy as, “A teacher who progressively makes herself less needed.” Paige fully believes in “build(ing) solid and healthy relationships with students based on trust and mutual respect in a welcoming and accessible learning environment. I equip my students with the essential tools to be goal achievers and successful in an information-rich and literate ever-changing society. I allow my students' opportunities to have choice and voice in their innovative and personalized projects which will showcase their mastery of the instructed materials and standards. With enthusiasm and passion, I motivate my students to sharpen their skills, utilize their strategies, and coach others to realizing their potential, I model my love of learning and share my failures to show how life provides endless opportunities to extend one’s knowledge, carve new paths, and make positive change happen! (PP5)

Demographics of Paige’s school

Perceptive Paige teaches fifth grade at a suburban intermediate school (fifth and sixth grades only.) The school is located just outside of the third-largest city in a Midwestern state. There are 900 students between these two grades. Paige teaches in part of a house concept;

she works with another teacher to divide up the school day with both of them teaching different subjects to the same group of students. There are 55 students in her house, between herself and her partner teacher. Paige teaches the language arts and Social Studies portions of their day, and her partner teaches Math and Science.

The school utilizes one-to-one technology; each student is given a school-supplied iPad provided through the school. With the use of this technology, teachers can post content on multiple platforms, including Google Classroom and Schoology.

The school is also a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) school, that rewards positive behavior at the teacher, staff, and administrative levels. School extrinsic rewards are given based on the collection of PBIS tickets.

Welcome to Paige's Classroom



Figure 7. Collage images of Paige's classroom

Walking into Paige's classroom, it was easy to see why one of her students has deemed Paige the Anchor Chart Queen. Paige has student work, mini-lesson notes, and thinking points hung all over the room--whether they are on large white anchor chart paper or hanging from a clothesline she has strung across her back wall. There is obvious learning in this classroom.

There are only ten traditional desks in Paige's classroom. Flexible seating helps to accommodate 25 students. There is one small table enough for two people at a time. Additionally, she has four high-top tables, two of which are two-person, two are one-person tables. Another table features balance balls as seating. Seating also includes two rocking chairs, Papasan chair and two floor rocking chairs. Next to the rocking chairs are small end tables, one made from a crate. This flexible seating environment faces a set of bookshelves used as storage, with an interactive whiteboard in the front of the room. In the back of the room is a kidney-shaped table with five balance ball stools around it. Lining the wall of the back of the room is a whiteboard that has a mixture of notes and her class "Hot Reads" board. On both whiteboard ledges, books line the shelves. There is more space being taken up by content and work than empty walls. Every space in her room is a workable space. "An effective classroom is a classroom that's going to use the best use of your time" (PP3, 27:0.6).

Paige greets her students at the door each morning. As students filter in, they check the interactive whiteboard for directions. They "take a look at what they need to succeed" (PP5, 4-22) for the day. Then they find their seats and get started. They choose their own seats and stay in them for a week before their seat changes again. Paige says it is important that the students choose a "profitable and healthy" spot for themselves—always aiming at finding their best selves in their choices (PP1, 14:57). Paige's fluid seating is incredibly important to her and her students for multiple reasons; it helps Paige know her students as learners, it meets their personal needs, and it allows student choice. One of the reasons Paige says she is an effective teacher is because of the connections that she forms with her students, really getting to know them well (PP4, 22:54). For Paige, one of the ways that she gets to know them is through their choices of seating. "I noticed that if their bodies tend to be on the go, with a little more energy they just need a little bit more input and use the rockers or the camp chairs... I know some only prefer the desks and some prefer to be by the window; some prefer to be by the door and some up close" (PP1, 16:06). Observing the students choose their seats for the next week and

watching for the pattern or strategy in those choices (PP1, 13:18) provides an insight into how her students learn best. That allows Paige to meet the student's needs better. Paige is able to provide the support and environment to her students with “bodies who tend to have more energy” by allowing them to sit in seats that move. Additionally, Paige knows if certain students need certain spots and can allow them to stay in those spots as long as they are successful. According to Paige, “If there’s a special circumstance like for him that has been his best place to learn and I just let them (the students) know if somebody is not moving or somebody has to be in a certain spot. That’s a conversation that person and I had for that person to be the best, you know, where they are. So they’re (the students) totally cool with it” (PP1, 10:50). Finally, Paige feels that her weekly flexible seating change up is important to her class because it allows the students to choose what is best for them. It empowers them to know what they need, and what will be a seat that meets their personalized needs (PP1, 9:50). Paige says this choice “gives them a sense of their place where it can work in the classroom that's best, makes them shine” (PP1, 10:06). This sense of choosing also brings about a stronger community in her classroom. Paige notes how students will come to class on Friday (seat change day) with “an idea in their head, but then they have to work with the 25 other students who might want that spot too” (PP1, 10:35). That creates the need to problem solve and collaborate, building their classroom’s sense of community. This option for flexible seating allows Paige to create an environment where the students can be successful and are taking it upon themselves to make sure that they are just that.

Planning for motivation in Paige’s Classroom

Paige takes great pride in planning and the work that she does to prepare each lesson for her students, working hard to make sure that she is setting each up for success. According to Paige, “I am researching and constantly saying, ‘What am I going to do to bring this to life?’ And so that takes a lot of time. And other teachers have commented, ‘You spend way too much, like making your lessons even better than what they are like.’” (PP2, 25:24) Due to this, the

success of the planning for motivation in her room is due to her reflection on each and every lesson, her emphasis on project-based learning, and her guiding success through progress over grades.

Reflection For Paige to truly be effective in her teaching and engaging of her students, she is constantly reflecting on her practices and their effectiveness. Paige says that she “spends a lot of time thinking, okay. How am I going to make this even better than what it is on paper? What am I going to do to reach twenty-eight (students)? I’m constantly doing that “ (PP2, 25:13) Paige’s end goal is to make her students shine, so she needs to make sure the delivery of her content is fostering that. This can be difficult when her school literacy practices are based on a set program the students must complete. However, Paige feels that it is important that she is not teaching the book, but instead teaching her students. This is why critical reflective thoughts such as, ““What can I do that’s going to get a majority of my students engaged in, not just being passive by sucking in information, you know so they’re lethargic at the desk or... they engage because (of) what I’m talking about.”” (PP2, 27:43) This is why Paige finds herself going through the material, making adjustments to the mini-lesson as she sees fit. This personalization of education helps her feel like she is reaching her students. It is also a process that she will do both before and during the lessons, or even in the middle of a unit. Paige is thankful she gets to teach two blocks of language arts because she finds she uses her first group to improve as the day goes on. Paige noted that “I am able to re-evaluate, reassess and say ‘OK did it go well? Is my block B probably gonna react the same? What do I need to fine-tune to make black B better than better? or what am I going to do tomorrow for Block A?’” (PP2, 28:27). At times, this reflection causes her to throw out her whole lesson and try something new, sometimes on the fly. Other times, it helps her fine-tune the lesson. Either way, she feels that because of these reflections, she can show the students that she cares about them, their well-being, and their success.

PBL/Purpose. Paige finds it vital that her students understand and find purpose in the projects they complete in school. Sometimes this is very difficult, knowing she is constricted by a guided reading program. However, since Paige has a respected relationship with her literacy coach, as well as her principal, she works to make sure that her curriculum, guided by the program, also includes plenty of hands-on, project-based, and purpose-driven learning. Paige says it is known and accepted that “I am going to tailor (reading curriculum) so I can get in those personalized projects which I kind of did this year (having it accepted by her principal). But now gives me total ownership to be able to do that” (PP2, 38:30).

An example of this would be her work by hosting a business expo. Paige found that “For the informational writing unit. In the end, they are just supposed to write an informational report on the subject they've been reading about. But I changed that too for a part of a PBL (project-based learning) in a way” (PP3, 59:23) She wanted the work that her students were doing to be much more impactful than a final report. She liked the fact that the end product of her curriculum provided the students choice on the topic, but she wanted to add relevance. For this, she created a project that would involve the students choosing a local, or favorite, business to research and report on. Many of the students chose the local gas station, bakery, zoo, hospitals, and pet sanctuaries. A few chose national brands such as Nike or Under Armour. Having chosen their topic, they needed to research the company's history and brand. Paige found that her students just soared throughout the project. She even supported one of her higher-achieving students in finding the company's motto, mission statement, and 15-year trajectory. Paige was struck because her students were so intrigued that it turned into a conversation that could have been “a whole unit like slogans and figurative language in businesses like that could have been a whole new writing unit” (PP3, 1:01.15). The energy of these projects and engagement in it is incredibly valuable to Paige's classroom. Having finished their reports, Paige staged a business expo, where she invited the administration of the businesses her students researched, as well as the administration of her district, and her students “writing buddies.”

Paige wanted to showcase the students' work with a genuine audience. Knowing that those businesses might be viewing this final project prompted the students to put more work into their research. Paige noted that the students just loved the project, even though it was fused with a bit of disappointment; not one business was able to attend the expo. "They were bummed. But I'm like, 'Let's talk about why, why might they not have come'...But I was disappointed (PP3, 1:00.46). To Paige, this disappointment will not stop her from trying again. She cites this being the first year, and that she will continue offering her students these project-based learning opportunities, as project-based learning is just that important to her. She will continue to "infuse even more PBL projects and personalize projects in your curriculum" (PP2, 38:07).

Rubrics/Grades Paige uses the curriculum rubrics in her classroom regularly to provide the students with a vocabulary for their goals as a way to measure intrinsic growth and to keep the student learning for a purpose beyond grades. According to Paige, "When they look at the rubrics, that's where I see the motivation coming into play for them to see their progress in setting their goals and actually reaching it" (PP1, 33:47). Paige feels it is vital that the students understand what their achievement goals should look like and sound like. For this reason, she makes sure the students regularly see and are reminded of the reading and writing rubrics. Paige has the students create a new reading goal every six weeks. She then meets with each of her students to assess their individual paths and directions. Paige does this so they learn the technical vocabulary that will carry on with them as they get older. "We use cardstock paper to write their goal on. And then I use that goal sheet as a bookmark in their books." This becomes a constant motivator for students. For Paige, these rubrics are far more important than any grade her students earn. She also works diligently to communicate with her students' parents. She "always reminds them (the parents) to just make sure to have a conversation with their child about their goals and then look for the rubric or have a conversation about the rubric and if they met their goal."

Encouraging familial involvement in the progress, helps parents view student growth compared to simply seeing their end grade. Paige has reminded parents that grades and rubrics aren't everything? Progress is what matters. "It's showing them something they did in the beginning of the year, towards where they are now you know. It's me articulating what I can see in that student that can't be shown on that rubric. You know, and It's me then looking at and talking to the parents and saying, 'What are you valued at for work that you don't get documented on, in a good or bad way?'" (PP3, 35:05) For Paige, it is the 21st-century goals, such as communication and collaboration that are so important for her teaching, even beyond the rubric. This is why even the rubrics are sometimes put aside. Paige says, "I don't want to see the rubric. I want to see the students. So I had to have that conversation with myself and say I need to teach the standards, and I need to grade them with this rubric so it is clear. And it is. Clearly, it shows that this student has met these standards and here's the goal according to the rubric. But then how do I see my students."

What Paige Believes Helps her Students be Most Successful

One of Paige's main goals is to make sure that every student in her classroom is successful. She does this by meeting the individual needs of her students, providing literacy experiences that extend beyond her classroom, and empowering her students.

Meeting Students Needs Paige wholeheartedly believes that students need to be ready to learn before any learning can take place. With that said, Paige has practices in place to make sure that all of her students' needs, emotionally and academically, are being met for them to be most successful.

She claims to have one of the more intuitive "teacher's guts" out of other teachers that she knows (PP3, 20:46.) Following her teacher's gut, Paige is able to recognize how her students are doing, and more importantly, if something is impeding a student's success. For example, Paige recognized that a boy in her class was starting to struggle. He didn't come in

loving language arts, but now was starting to struggle and push back even more. She quickly discovered that his parents were getting a divorce. From then on, Paige was very perceptive to see how she could support him in her room. There were days when he would come in and she would be able to tell that he was going to have a hard time. “If they’re not emotionally set, or if their basic needs are not met, I’m not going to meet them academically anyways. If they’re not emotionally well, they’re not going to be academically well no matter how much that curriculum matters. It’s not going to matter to that student on that day anyways” (PP1, 21:55). On those days he was troubled, she was not going to push him. Instead, she sat down and talked to him. She said it was important that “showing them that you care and sometimes it’s just letting them be there, in that space, and saying ‘you know you don’t got to. Let’s get it tomorrow because this is where you are right now,’” (PP1, 24:00) She knew that even though this student might be in her room, his mind might be elsewhere. Allowing the student to take some space alleviates stress and anxiety.

Another component to Paige’s classroom that allows her to support her student’s needs is a timed mindful rest time right after lunch, designed to get the student’s brains ready for the rest of their day. After lunch, the students weren’t always ready to learn. So Paige implemented some time where she allows the students to come in and support their needs by getting ready. “I had found it was just essential. And so sometimes it’s shaving cream that comes out, sometimes it is just crafting. Other times it’s read to self, and that’s a part of my day that we look forward to with that, just calm, that calmness” (PP1, 25:02). The purpose of Paige’s mindful rest was to allow the student’s brains to be calm when most feel stress and anxiety. Paige notices an abundance of anxiety and depression in her students more now than there has ever been (PP4, 27:16), and she feels this mindful rest helps quell their anxieties.

When planning for helping students be most successful, Paige constantly thinks about students struggling, thinking about her “teaching methodologies, her practices, is the student not ready yet, developmentally or something else, is the student not equipped to get it that day, or what’s

happening?” (PP3, 22:26) To help the students be the “best version of themselves” that day, she needs to make sure she is meeting all of their needs in her classroom.

Literacy Experiences Outside of the Classroom Paige is constantly working to expand the literacy experiences, even outside her classroom. She does this to create purpose and to show the students that the content and curriculum are much bigger than them and her classroom.

To accomplish this, Paige uses reading and writing buddies, student treasure books and by creating an authentic audience within their community and outside of their community. To begin, Paige has set reading and writing buddies for her students. Both of these buddies are classrooms in the neighboring elementary school. Her reading buddies are first-grade students that Paige’s students “mentor and coach (the kids) throughout the year.” The students also read their own books to showcase fluency (PP3, 52:09) Paige hoped the coaching would help her students feel confident and comfortable in their own skills to help the younger students. She also found that even her struggling students were able to mentor and coach because as they are working to become fluid readers on their own they were also helping the first graders in decoding; the students felt skilled and confident, allowing them to thrive in the process (PP3, 52:30). Paige recalled that it was awesome to watch each of her students blossoming with their buddy. “Fifth graders love it too because of first grade, as I know when I taught it, they grow so many levels. And the fifth graders get to see that growth and we reflect on that” (PP3, 54:05). Allowing students to see the progress their buddies made helped them feel successful recognizing that their efforts were truly helping others. It can be argued that this confidence motivated the students to continue to improve their own skills.

The students in Paige’s classes also had third-grade writing buddies from the neighboring elementary school; they met five times throughout the year. The goal was to inspire the students to write. At the start of this project, they treated their writing more as pen-pals, “So

like September would be a 'get to know you' paper type of thing. And then November "what we're thankful for" Top 10 list. So there was a theme of what we are writing about" (PP3, 58:26). But as the year progressed and the guided curriculum became more demanding, they became more authentic audiences for one another. The third-grade buddies wrote extensive informational text projects and then the fifth-graders had the opportunity to hear and critique the reports. Paige found that the writing projects became "so much better" when they had a purposeful audience reading them.

Another method of reaching students was through a publication of a student treasure book. The students all contributed, and Paige then published the hardcover book of their work through an online resource. This allowed the students to see themselves as readers and writers, as contributing to something at a bigger level than for themselves- to "publish a book and then open up and see their illustration and their page" (PP3, 1:04:22). Parents told Paige this was a "rewarding experience." to have their child's work published in a hardcover book (PP3, 1:04:33). The book also showed students that not only are the students in the class unique and different, but also that their writing, and all writing, can look different. Some wrote stories; some created lists; others added jokes, riddles, and comics. This process " allows that writer who says, 'I hate to write' to see that writing can take all forms. It can be a list of top 10 things you would do when you're an adult. That's right. You know as long as you can illustrate it, it's in the book" (PP3, 1:06:31).

Everyone ends up being so proud of their work, and so proud of their community for what they accomplished, that it allows them all to be excited to share it with their families. Paige said all her students enjoyed this opportunity. It "pump(s) them up to know that everybody in here plus their parents maybe their grandparents and even their gerbil might be seeing this book. That allows them to feel they have a purpose and this book that motivates them to participate (PP3, 01:10:06).

Finally, Paige pushes the literacy experiences beyond themselves by opening up many avenues for students to share and discuss their work. Both boys and girls are eager to share their stories. Paige attributes the students' drive to share due to her passion for literacy and her enthusiasm to listen to them (PP3, 11:57). Paige says students want to share because they know that she is listening and will be thankful that they shared.

Paige laments having to sometimes cut students off. According to Paige "I hope that I always show them that I am (excited); I do care about the responses and it does matter to me. So sometimes it's just I don't have enough time to get all to all of them because all, sometimes it's all their hands (are up) and I'm like another 28 hands you know and it's like oh my gosh. And sometimes you need to kindly tell them OK. You know we get to wrap up your thoughts or they will go on" (PP3, 12:13) The fact that the students so willingly share their reading and their writing with their classmates shows their motivation to engage in the literacy experiences to showcase it beyond themselves. Providing this purpose for the student goes back to Paige sharing in the student's success, and celebrating a community of literacy learners.

Empowering her Students Finally, Paige feels that for each of her students to be successful in her class, and in education, they have to feel empowered. She does this by teaching students to advocate for themselves, building their confidence, and being vulnerable with them.

To inspire the students to advocate for themselves she acts as a partner in their learning. She empowers her students to find the learning environment that is best for them. She shows them that she has trust in their decisions, which empowers them to continue to make positive choices for themselves in choosing their seats. Knowing which spots are best for them, and knowing her high expectations for learning, help them to see that they have a stake in their learning, that their learning is what they make out of it.

They are invested because they have power in their learning. Additionally, she empowers them through helping them know that they are partners in this learning together and

that she will always want what is best for them. This empowerment is a combination of personalized learning and meeting the students' needs; however, it is more than just that. It is helping the student understand that they can express these needs and that she will "deeply listen" (PP3,11:57). According to Paige, "I always tell them to approach me, please talk to me about something you are feeling." Paige is able to cite many instances that this advocating for themselves, allowed many students to feel that they are learning and how they express that learning.

Consequently, by allowing the students to advocate for themselves, Paige needs to be able to build their confidence. She works regularly to build the confidence of each student. "I am always searching for ways to show them that they can change the world... Showing them that they do matter and that they have things to offer to everybody else" (PP3, 1:12:01).

Paige shows her students that they are valued in this community and that they can do whatever they set their minds to. This inspires her students to reach above and beyond the expected assignment constructs. She had many students approach her because they worked hard to meet the rubric, then ask how to exceed it. Students take her feedback and work to personalize their learning, knowing she has confidence in them (PP1, 32:33). Paige is constantly conferring with each of them along with their rubrics, setting new goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on how they are doing (PP4, 14:32). This provides them with the confidence they need to continue to progress, which in turn breeds success.

For an example of this progress, Paige sites a group of low readers that she had in her class this past year. Paige learned through surveys and reflections that this group did not feel successful in learning up until this point. So she put them together in a group to feed off of one another and support one another through the reading process, specifically because of fostering conversations. "It fosters conversation within the groups, and I think that pumps them to be more engaged readers. It wasn't necessarily me having conversations with them that fostered their reading. It was within themselves because they would even leave the table and say, 'Can

we go talk over by the window now?’ So after I got done with them and it was time to meet with another group ‘Can we go? Can we finish?’” (PP4, 18:51) She continues on to say “it’s fostering the confidence within themselves to actually have a conversation they couldn’t have in the past about a book...that urgency to have a conversation with each other, not necessarily me, but with each other about what they were reading. So that was phenomenal” (PP4, 19:20).

Connect to her Students Finally, Paige believes that to connect with and inspire her students, she needs to be vulnerable. She does this through her name jar, being a lifelong learner, and sharing mistakes through writing.

Paige has a name jar in her classroom. Whenever Paige calls a student the wrong name, she puts money in the jar; when the money gets high enough, the students get a prize. Paige loves it when her students recognize her blunder, and she holds herself accountable. Her students will say, “Paige, at the beginning of the year you were so good and now look what’s happened to you, you are self-destructing (PP4, 30:43).

Additionally, Paige showcases her vulnerability by showing the students that she is a learner right along with them. “I constantly have a conversation with them about what I’m doing to continue to further my skills and strategy, so they get that it’s not just something that I impose upon them, but it actually is something that makes us (both) better.” Paige wants the students to see that learning is important and something that we will always have to do. She shares her commitment to learning through online communities as well as discussing the school’s evaluation process. She is part of many online communities to better support her practices in the guided curriculum. She isn’t, however, just a participant who harvests other patrons’ ideas. Paige takes pride in sharing the work and plans she creates with the online communities. “I do a lot of online work with professional chat groups or just bounce ideas. And just see what they’re doing and their commentary and (what their) practices are, and I think that helps me foster mine” (PP4, 28:33). Paige then shares this practice with her students by telling them she is taking photos or videos to share her students’ success online. Activity in the online professional

community shows her students the need for support from other people to “sharpen her practices” (PP4, 28:54). Paige also says that “I talk to them constantly about my goals and what I am doing to share with (the school principal.) I don’t use SLO and PPG (evaluation systems) but I’m like ‘You write goals and so do I” (PP4, 29:34). Paige wants the students to see that setting goals and working to achieve them is something that they will spend their whole lives doing. Paige is teaching the goal-setting process as a literacy experience, something that will allow them to be literate when they grow up. Finally, Paige also shares her vulnerability when she shares examples, allowing for mistakes.

”They need to know that you have flaws too. I share that with them all the time. I don’t know how many times I’ve said, ‘I’m sorry, you know, or I’m going to regret this, or I made a mistake because they need to know that teachers are not perfect and that we do make mistakes” (PP4, 31:04). She lets her community know that it is okay to make mistakes and that she does not get upset about them. Instead, Paige celebrates these mistakes. Paige uses this vulnerability with her students to empower them to be better to continue to learn and learn from their mistakes.

How Paige Feels about Motivation

Paige believes that motivation stems from making connections with her students, personalizing their education, and fostering joy in her classroom. Due to this, Paige actively lives out a spirit that does these three things in her classroom. They are fused in her routines and practices, they are planned for in her teaching and reflecting on her lessons, and are embodied in the passion she brings to her classroom daily.

Making connections. Paige believes that connection is one of the most vital ways to motivate her students to engage in literacy experiences. She states, “It’s one of the top things that I really stress and focus on. And that’s through connections with students, and then you can find out how they’re motivated because each student is probably going to be different (PP4, 21:27). Paige wants to make sure that each student in her class is motivated and ready to learn.

She does not want students who are “Just sitting as a passive (learner)” (PP4, 27:29), but instead, she is going to work to form connections with students. “I have 90 minutes with them. What am I going to present to them that I can get all of them on board with me? and make them want to learn.”

For Paige to do this, she believes that she needs to connect with them. And she cites making connections and understanding how students are motivated as her number one continued goal in teaching. Paige feels that “If the students are not motivated, there’s going to be behavioral problems. I think it’s one of the most critical things we need is to find out how a student is driven and motivated because if you can’t find that out, you’re going to have situations” (PP4, 20:56). Paige recognizes that to find this out, she needs to form connections with her students at “a personal level...through conversations with them” (PP4, 22:54) and by observing them in her room and truly listening to them.

Paige shared a story about a child in her class whose mother was very sick. The child had not found success in school and didn’t like reading. His mom emailed Paige to share what an impact Paige was having on her son, who had previously not found success in school, and did not like reading. That mom shared “you know school has always been a struggle for him. In math this year he on this struggle. But he loves your classroom and he loves to come to your classroom. Loves your cheesy jokes, Loves reading.” Paige’s reflection of this connection recognized that not only does he love reading, which is new, but “that he’s sharing with mom that he has something in school that he can look forward to” (PP4, 11:54). That was what a connection with a student can truly do.

Personalizing education. Paige feels that a large part of student motivating comes from her students knowing that she is doing everything she can to personalize their education to make them successful. Whether this is personalizing the book choices and groups that they are in, or discussing learning environments and needs for those students, they know that Paige will

“allow you to soar with your own wings, and not expected you to fly somebody else's wings” (PP3, 32:33).

Paige starts this conversation with her students with a lengthy discussion of the definition of fairness. She connects fairness to choosing a book, and how a good fit book is right for some students and not for others. That’s the same for learning (PP3, 29:54).

Paige had been working with a student to make sure that he was prepared for his debate speech. When it came time to present, each of the students went except for that student; she had offered him to present the following Monday. “I guess it comes down to what do you want the students to learn. You know, granted there are deadlines in life, and as adults there are deadlines. But what (does) that students deadline need to be for that student to be successful” (PP1, 27:43). Paige knew this student has been giving his full effort but that he was unable to complete this work on the deadline. She weighed what she wanted from the project, and in the end, it came back down to that student being successful; therefore, she extended his deadline. Not a single student questioned the teacher on the action or the fairness of the deadline extension. This is due to the fact it is just a way of her classroom, a routine, an aspect that the students understand about Paige’s room. This adjustment was made so Paige could ensure that each student was getting “what they needed to be the best version of themselves” (PP1, 28:38) and that was readily accepted by the students.

Paige also demonstrated personalized learning with a student that had come to her just for his language arts class. He did not attend any of the other classes with his house. This student had specific documentation with a goal that he could just be present in one of his classes. Paige welcomed him into the room and invited him to be a valued member of the community.

Based on his goal, Paige did not need to work with him academically, and he was not to be assessed and expected to work like the other students in the class. Paige was thankful for being able to provide him a “safe space” in her room. Paige described him as being in the room

one day and before she started with her read aloud he came up to her and told her he noticed that she had some science materials in her closet, and would she mind if he experimented a bit. Little did she know, that pretty soon she would have a full volcano erupting in her room while she was reading (PP1, 26:47).

Yet, Paige recalled the other students not being distracted as they knew he was learning how he needed to. Pretty soon Paige noticed “he might be making sounds, and then I’m like, he is in my classroom and that’s what he needs. And he’s hearing conversations in his mini-lesson in the hearing us talk. And then I’d be reading out loud and he began to contribute to the conversation” (PP1, 28:04). As the year went on, he participated more in class activities. To the extent that at the end of the year he came to her room the “last hour of the last day of school. with tears in his eyes. When asked how he was doing, Paige recalled that the boy responded with “How am I going to make it next year? I am not going to be able to see you” (PP1, 25:45). Paige had tears in her own eyes when she recalled telling the boy “Oh you’ve got this bud! Look at what you’ve done this year. You’ve got this bud.” Paige met this student’s needs as unorthodox as the situation was. She gave him the ability to find his own way in this learning community and she supported each of those needs without forcing her agenda. Without personalizing his education, the boy most likely would have struggled as he had in the past and would be unable to be present in the room. This boy’s story was similar to multiple other stories that Paige shared about individual students or groups who benefited in the personalized options they were allowed. Paige puts her students before her curriculum, returning to her goals for the work. Is it to learn, or become a puppet replicating what is asked? (PP4, 11:44). For Paige, it always centered on the students.

Creating joy. Upon entering Paige’s classroom, students, teachers, and even researchers feel joy. Paige works to bring joy to her students during the lessons that she teaches. She uses this need for joy in her daily routines, as well as the opportunities that she presents her students.

Joy is felt from the very start of her day. Along with greeting each student at the door, Paige begins her morning with a trailhead question. It's "a funny question, sometimes it's really off the wall question, and sometimes it's related to content" (PP1, 48:39). One of the days that I observed this practice, Paige had a picture of cute baby chicks and she asked, "What could be cuter?" Another day, the question tied to their argumentative unit and asked their opinion on wearing school uniforms.

But as the question is up on the board, Paige calls each students' name and says "Good morning," and the students respond sometimes with their answer to the trailhead question, with "Good morning" or with both. Paige is starting their day with this joy. This joy is continued after their workshop reading time when Paige asks the students to share their reading. Just about every hand goes up as the students want to play catch with her fidget that she tosses back and forth as the students share about the plot or predictions in their books. This year the fidget is a squishy toy that they laugh about when she fails to catch it. Her joy for the students sharing their reading is contagious to them. Whether it be the joy that Paige has created in the sharing, or the chance to catch the squishy ball, Paige works for the kids to see her joy, which encourages them to share the joy of their stories with her and the class.

Finally, another major routine in their week that sparks joy is Friday afternoon GLOW Time. It's a time to see students "Just shine, like glow, shine" (PP1, 31:56). Paige plans activities that allow her students to see their house as a family, not just as individuals (PP1, 30:25) and to work together and challenge one another in activities and games. Paige says that sometimes these are content-related, but more often than not, they are team building. The GLOW challenges might be a scavenger hunt around the school, a freeze challenge, or a dance challenge. One GLOW activity was a paper airplane/craft contest, where points were awarded for creativity, as well as farthest flight. Paige loves the joy GLOW times brings her students, but particularly loves how it continues to build her community year-round (PP1, 32:03).

Paige also affords her students many literacy experiences that spark joy, like a Read A-Thon. Every six weeks, Paige holds a themed Read-A-Thon every six weeks, where students read for 45 minutes. Themes have included “read around the world,” which included reading and pizza; “pop into a book,” including popcorn or Popsicles; and GLOW with books, where they turn off the lights and read with glow sticks. Students are welcome to bring in their blankets and pillows to get comfortable while reading. This fosters an additional joy for the students, creating the literacy experience as one that they look forward to. Paige also looks forward to the time to just sit and read. She is also able to get lost in her book during read-a-thon time as she does not find herself having to do too much behavior management since the students are engrossed in their books (PP3, 1:18:22). According to Paige “It’s just something” how the students can be completely hooked in their book for the full 45 minutes because we are just setting it up for a time to “read for pleasure” without any other purpose (PP3, 1:22:12). Paige also notes that the time that they have for their read-a-thon just “flies by” whether it is the 45 minutes or the hour that they have.

Whether it is GLOW time or one of the many activities similar to her read-a-thons, Paige truly treats her class as a place for celebration and joy. One that invites students into the literacy experience because of the fun and excitement of being part of those experiences.

What Motivates Paige

When asked about what motivates Paige, she responded with; “I think what motivates me is that students like (love) to come into my classroom and learn. And it’s this joy of being in my room I think motivates me to continue to find best practices and best resources for my students” (PP4, 38:28). Paige goes on to say that she knows her students feel and experience joy by “their laughter and then just the high fives or just the Hi Ms. Paige, or just even the emails. ‘Do you have a recommendation for this’. I think it’s just the joy in them. Brings up the joy in me.”

Ownership Owen

Demographics of Ownership Owen

Owen just finished his seventh year teaching, the past six in his current teaching position. Owen went into education after a mentor and high school teacher encouraged him to pursue a teaching career. He began his career in a rural school in the middle of his Midwestern state. He was hired to teach English at the high school, but due to small enrollment, he taught English to each grade at the school. While his sophomores and juniors classes were strictly English classes, his freshman class was English and Social Studies combined; his seniors class was homeroom, but also an enrichment period for him. He team-taught with another teacher for his freshman section. He then taught two of each his sophomore traditional blocks and junior traditional blocks. For a first-year teacher, he found it is overwhelming doing three separate preps for three different developmental age groups.

After his first year of teaching, Owen took another job teaching sixth-grade language arts at another rural school. Owen got the job and is currently still teaching in that sixth-grade position. When Owen started, he was given a textbook and told that was his curriculum. Owen felt the pressure of being a second-year teacher, as well as having to live up to previous teachers. Owen remembers “I knew that the teachers that were here before me had done a really good job with the kids, and the kids liked them a lot. So I felt pressured to do that” (OO1, 4:35). He notes that he has been building his curriculum since then and enjoys changing it and making it better every year. During Owen’s third year of teaching in his current school, he was nominated for and received a Golden Apple Award, given to six teachers in the county, out of hundreds of nominations. Owen found that experience to be extremely special and continues to feel that everything “has been just awesome” (OO1, 5:03) since then.

Owen says his teaching philosophy is “I believe in an Interactionist Approach to Learning. Developing meaningful connections, rooted in empathy, allows educators to promote the highest educational outcomes from their students. Student motivation blossoms intrinsically

as a result of strong relationships with teachers and a shared trust and commitment to learning in the classroom environment” (OO6).

Demographics of Owen’s School

Owen currently teaches in a rural middle school (fifth through eighth grade) in a Midwestern state; fewer than 400 students attend, with 20 percent coming from economically disadvantaged households. The school configuration is a fifth-grade through eighth-grade structure that is run in a traditional middle school philosophy. There are grade-level teams with core teachers for the core subjects. The school supports a philosophy where each core team meets every day to discuss students, curriculum, and district goals. Owen is the only language arts teacher for his team, so he sees each student in the grade throughout the day.

Welcome to Owen’s Classroom

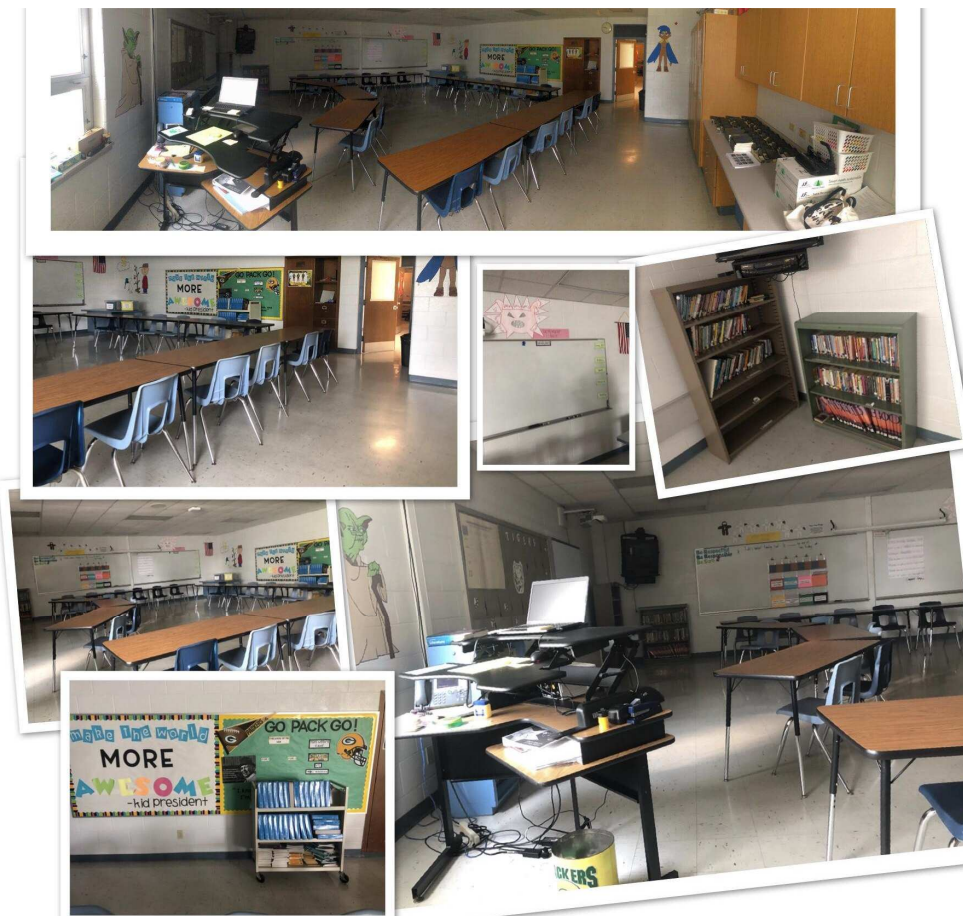


Figure 8. Picture collage of Owen’s classroom

A quiet calm settles in as I walk into Owen's classroom. Maybe this is the fact that the lights are all off or the fact that there is quiet music playing in the room; today that music is from the video game *Zelda*. It could also be that every student is working. Whatever it is, Owen credits his lack of need for behavior management on his classroom environment, and setting up a calm environment is what makes his job easier (OO2, 0:22).

Twelve tables in the classroom are in a U-shaped arrangement—enough for 24 students to sit on the outer ring of the classroom. Owen believes that this is the best seating arrangement because “I can walk around while I'm talking. If there are presenters in the middle, they have a great audience around as opposed to weaving in between. No one is directly across at a table from a person across the room” (OO2, 02:03).

In the front of the room Owen has an interactive whiteboard, and sitting right next to the whiteboard watching over the students is a painted image of the Star Wars Jedi Yoda, which Owen painted. This is only one way that Owen shares his personal life with his students, through some of his favorite things. Other paintings include Arnold from *Hey Arnold!*, his favorite cartoon, Charlie Brown and Woodstock from *Peanuts* and Geno, from Super Mario, his favorite video game. This small, yet creative touch gives Owen clout with his students, particularly the “real big gamers” who knows who Geno is.

Brightly designed bulletin boards and a classroom library enhance the room. Instead of a traditional teacher's desk, Owen works from a ‘stand-up’ desk. There is a long counter and storage along the side that has books lined up in numbered spaces. In front of the counter is a cart with a class set of Chromebooks. The interactive whiteboard is on and has displayed a model of a writing project students are currently working on. Students are all in their seats, writing in the notebooks with a few taking glances up at the board to use his model as a guide. None of the students in Owen's class are affected by having me in the room, watching their practices and routines; in fact, since Owen introduced me as an educator myself, two groups of

students approached me with questions about ideas or the content. This demonstrates the type of community that Owen has built, one that is resourceful and welcoming.

Schedule and Class Routine

Sitting in on a mini-lesson, I witnessed an abundance of student participation and positive feedback from Owen. Owen typically starts each class off with a mini-lesson, but he feels that the students need to have control of the lesson as well, so he asks students to read his examples and directions off for the class. “I need 1-2-3-4-5 reading volunteers to start us off” (OO6, 2-28).

The students take turns reading information about the lesson. They read one after another, no stopping, demonstrating the familiarity of the routine for their class practices. Owen interrupted them at one point to tell them to be sure to add details, to help build up the students’ writing, saying that their writing “is like a movie that I don’t get to see the ending,” (OO6, 2-28) if it doesn’t have the details.

After the students finish reading through the directions, Owen pulls up his own example of the writing. This involves showing the tool that he is providing the students and then using the tool to craft his writing. His example is on what makes his family unique. He includes incredibly rich details into his own family, including their pet frog, Bianca, and tales of fishing with his grandfather. As Owen finishes reading he states that “I can see it in your eyes right now, that your thoughts are already going,” preparing the students for their writing and drawing them into their task. As soon as Owen finishes his directions, the students get to work, writing about their own families. Owen’s ability to connect, be vulnerable, and engage help students to feel more successful.

Following the mini-lesson, the students have an “open hour” where they can engage in reading, writing, grammar, and technology tasks. It also includes some group work and some individualized work. The mini-lesson directly correlates to one of the tasks on the menu.

Now that the mini-lesson is finished, the students may move onto whatever task they would like to accomplish while Owen meets with small groups for direct small group instruction. These lessons are centered on work that Owen noticed certain students struggling with, allowing him to personalize the content for individual students. Owen considers this strategy grouping time where they can learn and build skills together. He might say, “Hey bud, you didn’t get this concept or what we were learning with pronouns, so let’s strategy group, let’s figure out and tackle together and rebuild those skills” (OO2, 27:49). Small group work lets him “bond with those kids because that’s three on one time, right, where you can laugh a little” (OO1,15:07). He feels he can blend in with the kids, showcasing how everyone is in charge of their own learning during that time. According to Owen, “When I’m in the mix, I have a different role than they are seeing me more of an equal when were interpreting... I get lost in the crowd” (OO2- 5:48). Owen gets to work with all of his students in these small groups during the week, and while working in the small group, the rest of the students understand that they are working on what they need to get done.

Owen considers his room a “workroom” where students are accomplishing a lot in a week. But through that accomplishment, students are following their own growth and feeling good about what they are doing (OO4, 13:38). Finally, this structured schedule seems to work for Owen’s students because they know exactly what to expect out of their day. Owen noted that a student might not have structured routines at home, so that they thrive when they get structure at school (OO2, 19:05). “I think a lot of the kids appreciate it. They know what we’re doing each week and how it works” (OO2, 17:07).

Planning for Motivation in Owen’s Classroom

Confidence in tools. Owen uses concepts and tools multiple times throughout the year to help engage his students in literacy experiences. He also uses strong gradual release of responsibility that hooks each of his students into the activity and set them up for success. To begin, Owen talks on multiple occasions about using graphic organizers multiple times to

ensure success for his students. One such example was the work that the students were doing with inventors. They were using a tool that Owen describes as something they are “very comfortable” with it (OO3, 2:29). Accounting for this comfort level not only allows for a higher chance of student success but also for that success to occur when they are working on their own on the menu.

Additionally, Owen purposefully plans for a gradual release of responsibility to foster confidence and success in his students. After hooking the students into the assignment with the shared reading of the direction, Owen will always show a model of the expectations before allowing the students to get to work. “Modeling so that the kids understand. Here's what I need to do when I'm on my own. Here's what I need to do in my group. I think you just spent some time building those expectations up, showing them what that looks like” (OO2, 27:08).

His models are always work he has created on his own. These models typically allow him to be vulnerable with his students but deepen the hook in the lesson for the students. During the reading of these models, the students take turns reading the work and participating in the directions (OO6, 2-28). Having completed the example, and refreshing the steps ns, Owen reminds students that the model will stay up on the board and can be used as a starting point for their work (OO6, 5-20). This allows students to return to the structure of the expectations. I was able to observe multiple students cast their glances back to the board for assistance on how to start, how to transition, or how to conclude. Owen leaves this model on the board to provide his students with every resource that they need to be successful, including his own personal work.

Data-driven. Owen's school has invested in software that provides the teacher and student constant updates on their students' reading success, and Owen uses this data to group his students accordingly. The school has had two different individualized reading programs at the time Owen has worked there. Both programs operate through individualized learning plans, with activities and lessons that students work on by themselves (OO2, 9:00). The school

expects Owen to make time for this program in his class, so he incorporates it into a task on his menu. The program helps him group his students for their strategy groups, in their group triads as he refers to them. The students constantly have group mates that they work with, and Owen groups students with similar abilities together. This allows the groups to work at a similar pace and push each other based on their personal strengths (OO1, 9:49). This data also provides great information that guides his mini lessons for his strategy groups

Building their background. Finally, Owen places a priority on building the students' schema on a topic to offer the greatest success to his students. Sometimes this occurs through simple statements such as, "Let's jog our memory from yesterday" (OO6, 5-21) or "Like we did with the Dawn dish soap to save ducks lesson" (OO6, 5-21); other times he does this through his supplemented nonfiction topics, as well as through technology clips.

One student shared how Owen covered a lot of information about Norse mythology prior to starting their current book, *Loki's Wolves*. While the student shared her book, she referenced multiple parts Owen had provided in the background. "So we did a lot of pre-teaching with the Norse gods. I taught them about Thor and Odin and the whole Northern world. We've done info text on Vikings. So they understand kind of that whole background. We even do info texts on female Vikings and how the gender roles a lot of times aren't represented fairly; that there were a lot of women warriors too. So you've got a bunch of background knowledge. They did a crossword puzzle on all the gods and all the places in the world. So when we got into this book they already knew like, Balder's character is based on the God Balder which they'd read about. So the background knowledge was there" (OO3, 5:31). To then hear the students reference this background knowledge illustrates its impact.

In another example of added background knowledge to support the students reading comprehension, Owen pairs it with an informational text. Owen shared information about snake venom; that was important because a character in the novel they were reading came across some snakes on their path, and Owen did not feel that the students understood how snakes

could be helpful rather than feared. He felt that providing background information on snake venom was a good way to do that (OO1, 16:41).

Owen also uses technology and video clips to build background but also to engage them. For example, Owen had the students write crime cases, including planting evidence clues amid a complete narrative story. Owen felt that the students might have lacked the background information on how court cases and evidence worked, so he had them watch the movie *12 Angry Men*. Throughout the next day's mini-lesson, Owen referenced different parts of the movie and court tactics with his students. When it came to the students writing their own creative court case, they had already seen the process in action, read multiple examples of court cases in print, and were ready to go off and write their own (OO3, 10:46). Owen believes that building schema is necessary to empower his students to engage in literacy activities.

What Owen Believes Helps His Students Be Most Successful

Vulnerability. Owen uses personal stories and modeling to connect to his students. Due to his vulnerability with his students, they are welcomed into the literacy experiences and are able to find success. Owen says that to be a successful teacher you need to “share your life with them. Be real with them. Do not do it in an awkward way; instead, just be real with them. Be vulnerable. I use a model for everything, a real model from my life” (OO6, 5-20). Owen does this to show the students that he is a reader and a writer. By using his own personal models, it helps the students realize that he did this same writing that he is asking them to do, and he is willing to share personal information about himself, just as he is asking for it from them. This motivates his students to share their vulnerabilities as well, through their journals and their writing.

Owen recalled seeing a student yawn during class. He approached the student noting that he, too, was tired and was up multiple times throughout the night with a young son (OO5, 6:27). Sharing who he is as a teacher is important because Owen finds that students appreciate the humanization in it. Showing his students that they are all human, helps eliminate power struggle and increase appreciation for one another.

Additionally, Owen demonstrates his thinking. During an observation, Owen walked his students through the thought process that he was taking to choose an inventor to investigate. Owen shared many of his interests, saying, "Right when I find something that I really thought I wanted to do, I found someone else who was even cooler" (OO6, 5-20). moving on to reference the inventor of the atomic bomb. Owen shared that he chose a topic that students might not have explored initially, just to demonstrate the many compelling people on the inventor's websites. Along with sharing his thought process, Owen will also share his flaws through his modeling, showing he's imperfect. Owen will purposely share his flaws because "I want the kids to never feel like that's the perfect example. I'll say this could have been better or I didn't spend enough time on this, but I'm going to go back. So I correct my work in front of them" (OO5, 6:58).

Owen says he will specifically share his students' work as work that is even better than his own-in hopes that he can build up those students and increase the feeling of community in the room. Owen feels strongly that students need to see themselves as writers, and when a teacher's model is too good, students miss out on the process that many authors go through. Owen shared that "I think your models should be corrected in front of the kids because that's how authors work. So they are rewriting things, and to give them this expectation that I'm just going to type this perfect thing right away, that's not good teaching" (OO5, 7:36). Owen realizes that not all teachers are willing to be vulnerable. However, he finds this practice imperative to motivating his students as writers and readers.

Trust. Owen feels that for students to be successful, his students have to trust him. Trust, according to Owen, is a vital component to their everyday schedule, critical to motivating students. "To build a good motivation, they have to trust me" (OO2, 19:58)

Owen has faith and trust in his students every day. He trusts that they are going to negotiate their menu and work hard each class. Owen trusts that his students will work together to learn from one another and to support the learning of those around them (OO4, 3:36). Because of this

support by Owen and their classmates, his students are willing to share in class. “They're not afraid to take a chance. They're never gonna be critiqued in front of everybody” (OO2, 13:22). Instead, Owen expects his students to be active participants, and that is just how it is. Students willingly participate because they know everyone will have their chance to share, and they will never be criticized for sharing. Instead, they are engaged in the lesson, constantly participating, because that is the climate of the classroom (OO5, 6:42).

Additionally, they trust Owen to make decisions that are best for everyone in the class. “I have to be honest, and to try to sell them a junk story is going to lose credibility (OO5, 20:06).

Owen strives to make smart choices about the topics and novels his students will be reading. He does not want to waste their time with stories that they will not be interested in. He also proves that he knows his students through the book options that he provides (OO2 21:43). He understands what the students will like and tries to ensure that those are the options present. That way the students will be “Then they trust me; they're willing to engage” (OO2, 21:49).

Ownership. To help his students be most successful, Owen provides many opportunities for his students to take ownership of their learning and their work by using a menu of tasks. Each week, Owen creates a new menu, including individual and group tasks. The rest of the hour is an open hour, in which students can work on what they need to.

The next day, students' options included taking a quiz, reading, and a writing project. Each student could start with whatever task that they choose to do. There will be no time where everyone is reading, or everyone is taking the quiz. Instead, some will be read and start with the quiz. Others will be finishing up their reading in preparation of the quiz. Owen said more likely than not everyone will end in the writing project, but some might not even get there. This is just how it works, and this is the ownership that Owen gives to the students (OO6, 6-3).

Owen does this to empower his students to be confident individuals. Owen believes, “The teacher's job is to become less and less needed. My job was to find them the resource,

give them the tool, and give them the inspiration to be able to do this independently. If you look, they are also teaching and sharing with others what they found” (OO6, 6-3). Teaching the students to be resourceful, and in charge of their learning, results in greater buy-in for his students, which in turn, helps them to be more successful.

How Owen Feels about Motivation

High interest (topic choice and book choice). One of the features of Owen’s practices and routines that he believes are most successful for motivating his students has to do with high-interest material. Owen’s emphasis comes from the informational articles he presents, as well as the novels and writing projects he assigns.

While Owen was given a reading textbook to use, he found the stories dry or boring (OO2, 16:06). So he began supplementing with non-fiction stories. He recognized that during planning he would “start with something I’m interested in” then Google the Common Core Standards that would fit with that content.

When choosing topics he found interesting, he found the students were just as passionate. For one lesson, Owen had the students reading about “the hottest pepper in the world” and then attaching his reading comprehension work to that article (OO2, 23:37). Another time, Owen used an article on snake venom to accompany a book with a snake in it. h. Owen believes that due to the high interest of the topic his students are engaged, they are having discussions, and they are reusing the information that they have (OO1, 16:41). He states “Kids are going to engage in them ... and be hooked by the topic of the info text... so I try to picture interesting non-fiction... There are tons of cool things that kids want to read about, and I think a lot of kids know this generation choose non-fiction as their top choice of reading because” (OO2, 23:37).

Owen also finds it vital to meet the student’s interests when it comes to novels. “High-interest novels are going to be the best chance, no matter what you do (to motivate kids to read). If the book is boring, they’re going to give up on them” (OO5, 17:10).

Owen consults experts in children's literature to help him find the best books possible for his students. A past college professor sits on the Newbery Awards (The John M. Newbery Award, one of the most prestigious literary awards for children's literature) panel and reads 300 books a year, so he provided Owen with some suggestions (OO3, 3:53).

Owen has the type of relationship with this professor that he can send him an email describing what he would like, and the professor writes back with some book suggestions that he can try. One of the most important qualifications for Owen is high-interest reading for boys. I build them (the novel choices) around the boys; that is who my audience to motivate is. My girls are going to read it; it is the boys I need to create that added hook" (OO6, 5-23). Owen makes sure his books are diverse in Lexile reading level, race, and cultural factors, as well as topics. So he works to find books that are unisex in interest factors.

"*Coraline* (by Neil Gaiman) is creepy, yet its main character is a girl. So they both like it, boys and girls. *Loot*, (by Judy Watson) you know robbing and a gang of robbers is made up of two boys and two girls. You know, kids associate well with gender. *Fever 1793* (by Laurie Halse Anderson) is grossly full of imagery which keeps the boys interested. Yet the main character is a girl, which keeps the girls interested. And you know *Loki's Wolves*, (by KL Armstrong and Melissa Marr) we have multiple heroes; boys and girls with superpowers. So those four I've kind of fallen on in the sense that the kids a lot of them haven't read them and a lot of them are interested in the characters and can relate to it and I think that's huge." OO2, 21:42) These are all of the books he assigns as group novels throughout the year. He has the students read, discuss and complete related tasks as part of a group. Owen feels a team reading approach ensures all of his students are not only successful but motivated to complete the reading. Being part of a group keeps them accountable and successful. He says "The team reading approach... is because to give a kid a book who doesn't read, tell them to just read quietly, your readers are going to love that, but the kids who don't read are going to fall behind again. So it's a team approach with an interesting novel and then you give them fun activities to do and fun

connections" (OO5, 17:36). To Owen, this is the key to motivating his students for the novels that they are going to read in class.

Finally, Owen motivates his students by ensuring that their writing projects build real-life skills. "I think that they're in sixth grade becoming aware of the fact that there's such a thing as just fantasy, that's just like 'oh that's just fantasy literature'. And I think when you hit them with real-world and you even if you mention this is something you're going to do someday in your job. This is their start. It is effort that, it matters more to them because they don't feel it's a little kid. You know...really writing that the real world" (OO5, 11:39).

One such project is his *Consumer Reports* project. Owen tells his students that they won *Wheel Of Fortune* and get to pick out a car based on the *Consumer Reports*. During the student's project, they need to learn to read and analyze the magazine (or online) to gain information on various cars. They also need to be able to understand the ranking system and different qualifications. After they finish analyzing the site, they need to write a persuasive piece on the car they have selected and why, based on evidence (OO2, 25:15). Projects such as this one motivate his students to look at informational sources they will use in their future, learning how to navigate and comprehend the information and be able to share it with others.

Students also work on a project where they need to create the next National Football League team for either Alaska or New Mexico (two states that currently do not have teams.) The students need to read non-fiction to research both locations and decide which would be a better locale. "They (read) some informational texts on the states to learn why they should have a team. What would they offer... then they had to create the team logo based on history" (OO1, 8:26). Students then wrote a letter to the commissioner of the NFL, making their case for that given state. After polishing up the letters, Owen proceeded to send in a few of the student's letters to the commissioner (OO1, 9:00). This project allowed for each student to use reading to build a case and provided a purposeful, real-world audience for their writing; both were highly motivational to the students.

Due to making high-interest topics a priority, Owen is able to motivate his students to engage in these literacy experiences, reading, writing, and sharing their experience in genuine fashions.

Good people. Owen's goal is to support growth and confidence in his students to t make them really good people. According to Owen, "They need to learn this and that, but it's really more about learning how to be good students and good people. They're very impressionable on their learning. In sixth grade who they're gonna be, they're starting to do that" (OO5, 24:01).

Owen works hard to make sure that his students have the confidence and tools that they need to be successful in life. He believes that he is doing his job if he is making himself less and less needed (OO6, 5-23) for if that happens, he knows that his students are independent, resourceful, and critical thinkers.

Owen discusses one of the benefits of working through the autonomous menu being the fact that if a student is stuck on something, they move onto another task. His students do not simply sit there waiting for his help. They either seek out others around them or move on with hopes of getting clarification later (OO2, 5:48). This was obvious during one of the observations when students were analyzing court cases to find the guilty party. They had multiple cases they were looking at and their group was split on the guilty party. Instead of moving on, or putting that court case aside, they consulted a group around them, looking for details that they had missed (OO6, 6-3). The two groups worked together to compare evidence and ration out the final decision. Owen knows that his students are motivated by working with one another, and he loves to listen to the conversations that they have about their tasks- that is what truly shows him how engaged they are in the lesson or task at hand.

Owen believes he will teach them to be good people by hopefully teaching them to love to read. "In middle school, it's more or less you want to build skills and love reading. The worst

thing you can do is send the kids to the next grade and they don't want to read because you killed them with textbook stories" (OO2, 19:52).

Owen accomplishes this love of reading by pointing out everyone's strengths in reading. The students are all grouped together based on ability, but Owen makes each student's abilities important to his group, Owen claims, "I always tell them that each of them has a reading strength from their testing and so they're mixed (as a small reading group) with what they can offer... Everyone thinks I'm contributing even if I am a slow reader, but you might know a lot more about plot than the other students; someone in here is really good at info text" (OO1 10:33).

Owen points out the strengths rather than emphasizes the weaknesses within his groups. This also creates a purpose for his students, allowing them to recognize an area of strength and contribute more. Owen finds that when the students can use their strengths to "reach their full potential, or they accomplish a really great task, they feel good" (OO5,18:58). Owen seeks to capitalize on this by offering compliments, making more of the students work, and continuing to guide them to be stronger, more mature students (OO5, 22:12). But in the end, Owen recognizes that with this age group, "It is much less about understanding how pronouns work and more about being a good person. Growing up learning life skills. I think middle school is so much more about that. These kids growing up and becoming good people. And developing good habits as opposed to content" (OO5, 23:43).

What Motivates Owen

According to Owen, he is motivated by the fact that "Kids love being here. I think that's what got me out of high school that the kids, no matter how fun the lessons were, you always the kids just hated it. So what makes me want to be here is when we have a really fun time. And the kids are engaged and if they're having a good time, learning is great. But I want the kids to be in real-world skills. I want them to be growing up. And I want them to have fun doing it. If that's happening, it's a great day. And it could be that I didn't get through nearly what I wanted

to do in my lesson or. But if the kids had a great day and we shared some cool moments and I feel like they really grew, that's what keeps me coming in (OO5, 21:46).

Inclusive Isabelle

Demographics of Isabelle

Inclusive Isabelle is in her 17th year as an educator, and her experiences and opportunities have been vast and expansive. Isabelle double majored in Music Education and language arts education in college and began her teaching career as a music teacher in one of the largest metropolitan districts in the state. Having spent only the first year of teaching in the larger district she moved to a smaller, rural school, not far from the previous district. Again hired as a music teacher and only working part-time an opportunity arose for her to help that current district. When a seventh-grade language arts teacher needed to go on emergency leave, Isabelle stepped into that role, along with maintaining her music responsibilities. During her second year of teaching in that same district, she was still hired part-time as the music teacher when another opportunity arose. The principal wanted her to support and coach third and fourth-grade teachers in language arts. As a third-year teacher, she did not feel she had extensive training in this, yet her principal gave her a *Fountas and Pinnell Guide to Guided Reading* book and told her to study, that she started in two weeks.

Isabelle jumped in head first in this position, again split between music and reading, two areas that she truly loved. However, she realized that she lacked some areas of knowledge, so she decided to pursue her Master's degree in Reading. Isabelle completed two more years in that district (part-time Language Art and part-time music) as she finished her degree. After five years in that district, having completed her degree, Isabelle moved to a district in the suburbs of another larger district in her state. At this new district, she would focus on literacy as a high school and middle school reading specialist and literacy coach. She did just that for her first year in the district but then proceeded to pick up a reading recovery class of seventh and eighth-graders.

Recognizing that this reading recovery workshop class was unmotivating due to the pull out nature of the program and limited timing, she requested that she be able to create a block for this group of readers, running a traditional readers workshop with them. Over the next six years, she would teach the same structure. Some of the years, she co-taught with other teachers, other years she was on her own, always focused on working with struggling seventh and eighth-grade readers.

During her fifth year teaching in the district, Isabelle was also hired district literacy coach for kindergarten through twelfth grade. She maintained teaching courses while she assumed the role of the coordinator. Looking back at it, Isabelle cannot imagine the role any other way. She does confess that “the person who is doing the coordinator job now doesn’t teach. But that wasn’t me, that was them. Like, I felt like 1) I like teaching. I like kids and 2) I felt like it gave me a level of credibility with the teachers I was working with that a normal person (meaning a new literacy coordinator who does not teach) who does staff development and isn’t in the classroom, doesn’t have” (II1, 3:55).

After seven years at her new district, Isabelle was hired as the CESA 7 literacy specialist. This allowed her to work with literacy educators from all over the county, hosting various trainings at CESA as well as being contracted out through schools to do in-house training. This also allowed her to continue to read research on literacy and discuss with like-minded literacy people. Isabelle worked for CESA for three years before she accepted a position in her current district, teaching seventh-grade students in a workshop model classroom. This is her second year in her current placement.

Isabelle describes her teaching philosophy as such, “That all children can learn, and as educators, it is our duty to ensure this happens. I also believe that school is about much more than just learning and that we need to work to make sure our classrooms and schools are warm, welcoming places where students feel safe. Finally, I believe that as a teacher, our learning should never stop. We should constantly be continuing to refine our craft and learn new things.

If we do not model what life-long learning looks like, how can we expect our students to become life-long learners?"

Demographics of the School

The school is located just outside of the third-largest city in a Midwestern state. It is a sixth through eighth-grade school with 90-minute language arts blocks. The school has approximately 800 students in the school and this teacher is one of four on her language arts teams per grade level. The school is run in a traditional middle school fashion with the teachers being specialists in certain subjects; the students are attending multiple classrooms throughout their day. There is a traditional administrative team of a principal and an associate principal. About 34% of students receive free or reduced lunch.

Welcome to Isabelle's Classroom



Figure 9. Picture collage of Isabelle's classroom

In Isabelle's classroom, three sets of long tables stretch perpendicular to the door. Around each of the tables are seats, but not typical school chairs made from plastic set to go under desks. These chairs are armchairs with cushions on the bottoms and the back. There is also a long cushioned bench underneath a dry erase board. In front of the room are bookshelves with a comfy chair in front of them. The rest of the bookshelves form an L shape in the other corner of the front and extended along the far sidewall. This corner has a comfy chair in it as well.

The very front of the room has an interactive whiteboard mounted on the wall with a director's chair next to it and a table with a document camera on it. Isabelle keeps her room in this format throughout the entire year but will change up the students' seating every six weeks or so. On the day I visit, one student has been called on for her "90 seconds of sunshine," in which classmates take turns giving a peer compliments. These compliments range from "You are a good friend" to "You are really talented in band." They also include "You had a great lead in your quick write last week" and "Thank you for being my partner in math and helping me understand how to do the problems" (II6, 5-17).

Isabelle just sits at the front of the room, occasionally checking her watch. She is not leading the class at this moment, yet everyone is dialed into what is going on. At the end of 90 seconds, Isabelle tells the student that "she is a great student to have in class because she is always willing to try to improve her work based on the suggestions she receives from herself (the teacher) and her classmates" (II6, 5-19). She also shared that she appreciates the humor and interesting characters she tells her about in her stories. And then the moment passes.

Isabelle begins her mini-lesson, students take out their notebooks, and Isabelle shares the objectives for the day. Isabelle notices the smile on the student's face who has just had 90 minutes of sunshine, but many other students also have smiles on their faces. Even though the content of the 90 seconds of sunshine does not emerge again during her lesson, it provides a feeling of welcoming and community and inclusion that stays the whole block. This room is a

place where everyone can find success, and engaging in the literacy experiences is the cool thing to do. According to Isabelle, it is also a room where “there is a culture and expectations. That this is the class of readers and writers” (II4, 25:56). and to be a non-reader is (II4, 9:54) “not cool” in this classroom. Isabelle has invited her students to engage in literacy activities by showing her love of reading and writing and by making reading and writing simply the way of the classroom

Schedule and Class Routine

Isabelle describes her classroom routines as a structured schedule. Each day starts with a 10 to 15-minute quick activity, being either Word of the Week, Sentence of the Week, and then Quick Writes. From there, and for the bulk of the 90 minutes, she runs a workshop model in her classroom. This involves a mini-lesson, independent work time, and share time. Her block concludes with reading out loud to her students.

This workshop model comes from a curriculum expected of her with a series of support documents and guides for effective use. Isabelle uses this curriculum as a guide but infuses her style and resources.

But this structure and curriculum are nowhere to be seen in her first few weeks of school. For Isabelle, these first few weeks are the most important, when she lays the foundation for the culture and community in her classroom. Isabelle always starts out a new school year with students talking about the importance of reading. She does not plan a structured unit but instead does many activities to foster a reading environment in her room.

One of these units is her Textual Lineage project. The students get to choose books that have been part of their foundation for reading. For Isabelle, this is an opportunity to get to know her readers at a deep level. Do her students have so many books in their lineage that it is difficult to whittle them down? Or do her students have a hard time coming up with *any* books? Do they like mostly fiction, non-fiction, science fiction, or graphic novels? Is there a rhyme or reason to the books that have stuck with them or is the collection pretty random?

This project “immediately lets me know who the kids are that I’m going to need to work with right away to get them in a book because they don’t have many books that have turned them into the reader they are today. So it’s kind of a nice way for me to get to know immediately who I’m going to need to put my energy into” (II4, 5:18) to build that love of reading and the culture of reading in their classroom.

During this time, Isabelle also does a book talk every class to introduce her students to some of her favorite literature. She does this to hook her readers, introducing them to books they haven’t heard of, and leaving them to think about books. Isabelle does this because “I know the books they will like. Like, the minute I book talk *Long Way Down* (by Jason Reynolds), that’s where my reluctant readers are going to go because one) it’s a super engaging topic and two) it’s a novel in verse. So I have five copies of it, and it will be one of the first book talks because those kids who don’t know what they like, I can hook them with that” (II4, 13:10). Having established book styles, and a conversation on books, Isabelle moves into one of her most important “units” of the year. “I don’t have a unit, like that I’m teaching them for reading in particular. I think that is so foreign to them like that in and of itself is such a novelty that they’re like. ‘whoa like she’s just going to, like we’re going to read and not have to like (learn things)’ and not that they’re not doing stuff’ because they are but it’s not what they’re used to I think. I think that hooks kids” (II4, 24:35). Isabelle wants to instill in the students that they will be reading a lot in her class. And they will not only read to achieve a certain score on a rubric or a grade but rather they will be reading so they can share their books, they can think about their books. Isabelle uses a strategy called ‘BHH- Book, Head, Heart’ where at the surface level, thinking about what the author is trying to tell you, get you to think about the book, and think about books for the emotional connection and response that you should have.

Finally, Isabelle invites her students to participate in Global Read Aloud (GRA), an initiative guided by reading researcher Pernille Ripp (n.d). According to Ripp’s website, “The project was created in 2010 with a simple goal in mind; one book to connect the world. From its

humble beginnings, the GRA has grown to make a truly global connection; more than 4,000,000 students have participated.” For Isabelle and her class, this means connecting with two other classes around the United States to discuss and interact with the book. One of their partner classes in South Carolina became writing buddies with them, exchanging online letters about the book every other week. Other times, Isabelle’s class and her partner class would add their thoughts to a Padlet or a Flipgrid (online technology tools), and watch or think about the questions and analysis coming in from their partner classes. Participation in Global Read Aloud gives students a purpose for reading beyond themselves, beyond their classroom walls. It shows her students how books can connect us to others.

Isabelle does not grade this reading nor does she give the students book quizzes or other assessments; it simply allows the students to listen, enjoy and connect to the story. The experience motivates her readers to participate with their partner classes. “It was something that the kids love... The book she (Ripp,n.d) picks are so, I feel like, so good because they are things that kids don't really know about... so I just feel like it's a really, it's an empathy builder for them more than anything else. And it's, I feel like it's worth the time that we spend on it” (114, 15:13). Isabelle finds that the resulting intrinsic motivations behind participating in Global Read Aloud are a perfect way for her to begin a year. She hopes most of the students’ reading will be done for the joy of reading itself. Isabelle starts this year with low stakes read aloud and continues read alouds in similar fashions. She ends her day with the chance for students to simply sit and listen to the book, never having to worry about an assessment.

Once the reading culture has been set within her classroom, Isabelle offers built-in time to connect with her readers on a one-on-one level. She accomplishes this by conferencing with students during their workshop independent reading time. This is an important way to build the student's ability to talk about text, while also showing students that she cares for them and their opinions. “I'm just like ‘What are you working on’ ‘What are you thinking about’ if we're deeper into a new unit. I'll ask them about the work we're doing in the unit, but I just try to keep it more

like, “What are you liking about this?’ How do you feel about yourself as a reader that kind of stuff? So yeah it's not. I just think that one on one they don't get that very often I don't think in other areas. So I think that helps” (II4, 31:52).

Isabelle only meets with each student for about three minutes, it is not for the purpose of remediation or skills building. She has no prepared mini-lesson for those students or reteaching for these students. Instead, she begins her conferences with statements like, “Tell me about what you are reading now” or “Talk to me about your goals with reading this book.” She is not looking for summaries, but rather she is looking to see how her students are thinking about text and understanding the author's purpose and craft. Isabelle has found that at the start of the year some of her students seem confused by her questions as if no one has asked them to talk about their books and their thinking before. By the end of the year, the students are more familiar with discussing their texts so their conversation can be quite a bit more in-depth.

Planning for Motivation in Isabelle's Classroom

Isabelle deploys many tactics that help her plan for motivation within her classroom. These include reflecting on engagement as a whole, seeking out resources, and seeking student feedback.

Voice in the classroom. Isabelle wants her students to feel included in their learning. She wants them to feel that they have a voice in her classroom and can share with her what they feel is working and what is not. Isabelle is constantly looking for feedback from her students. She believes her students know that their opinion matters and counts in her room; she asks them to fill out feedback surveys regularly. Isabelle starts this after the very first month of school; it's her 30-day evaluation on how the year is going. She also does surveys after units and at the midpoint in the year. “At the end of the year, I have them write me a letter where I asked a bunch of questions just like ‘What was your favorite thing about language art?’. Like what can I do differently, just to get feedback from them about how things are going and what I can do differently here what they think is going well” (II1 23:56).

Isabelle uses the feedback to adjust her teaching as well as for future groups of students. Isabelle feels that gathering feedback “lets them (the students) know that I care what they think, which I think that in and of itself is like a huge piece of engagement” (II1 24:44) and helps her continue to plan for that engagement piece in her lessons.

Seeking outside resources. Isabelle is not shy about using outside resources for just about everything that she does. “I’m not some genius churning out these ideas; other people come up with them and then I’m like, “Ohh, that fits into what I think would work” (II4, 51:41). Isabelle is a learner right along with her students. She is constantly turning to multiple sources to help her plan better, find new ideas for delivery, and keep up with current research practices. Isabelle credits this to her role as a literacy coach for the region, where she had the opportunity to discuss education with some “amazing people,” some of whom are educators she met when she was completing her master’s degree and spent quite a bit of time with. She admits to bouncing ideas off of them all of the time. Isabelle is also constantly on social media and reading the newest research in professional texts. On social media, she follows researchers and groups specific to the content that she teaches, and she receives daily emails from two different education-based blogger groups. A large reason for being active in educational research, and ‘teacher talking’ platforms, is to “think about my practice and if I can change things” to make them better (II4 51:48).

Seeking student feedback. Finally, she said she doesn’t necessarily plan with a particular student or two in mind. She is “just thinking overall what is going to be the most engaging way for me to get the most out of them through this content. And then if that doesn’t work, I might try something else with those couple of kids” (II1, 15:39). She is constantly taking notes on a Google Doc to remind her of changes that she wants to make for the following years. These notes are about resources that she uses, as well as notes regarding her delivery. She also discussed how she and a co-teacher will get together “before each new unit just to kind of review like what we thought went well the year before and what we want to change.” She

describes this reflection process for her planning as a “constant process... I am always thinking about how can I make this better. Is this the best way to teach this? Are the kids engaged? If they’re not, how can I change it?” (II4, 55:19).

What Isabelle Believes Helps Her Students Be Most Successful

Every day, Isabelle works to achieve students’ motivation. Three practices help her students feel most successful--having continued examples and modeling, having witnessed growth, celebrating their successes.

Examples and modeling. Isabelle believes that constant models and examples are paramount to the students feeling successful. This can be seen in the modeling of her notebooks as previously mentioned, as well as constant examples before starting work. “I’ve had kids tell me the amount of examples they see, like my examples and my models, and then examples from other kids have really helped them” feel successful (II1, 19:14).

Isabelle starts each writing project by showcasing examples of previous years. She says that some of these examples come from past students, from her own examples, and even some she finds online, (II1, 20:41) but the important thing is that the students get a good starting point for trying on their own. At times, these examples even come from the students themselves. Isabelle says that she will have the students draft three examples quickly- with no strings attached. Then they will discuss what makes a good example, and she will ask them to return to their examples to see if any fit the qualifications or how just one can move forward as their starting point. These examples are the springboard to engaging students in being successful in their writing.

Students Viewed Growth Another push for student success comes when the students can view their personal growth. Isabelle does this with both their work with reading as well as writing. With reading, she encourages her students to partake in a 25-book challenge created by reading researcher Pernell Ripp. According to Ripp, “Our work has been centered on developing their reading identities through personal goal setting and it starts with the

introduction of the 7th-grade reading challenge. What used to be a quantity based challenge is no longer “just” that but now asks students to really think of the reader they are right now and how they would like to grow as they move through 7th grade” (Ripp). Isabelle encourages her students with this thought but also encourages the students to find what will work for them.

Some of her students set goals of 10 books; some of her students match her goal of 50 to 75 books. Their priority is to track their progress and evaluate how they are doing. Tracking and evaluating happens more frequently than viewing the progress of their writing; however, many students view their progress in writing as a more dramatic change. According to Isabelle “I think if you ask kids they'll tell you that their growth was more in writing. If you read my kids' letters every year, you would think I only taught writing. You know I don't know if that's because that's easier for them. It's more concrete to see the growth” (II4, 1:01.02).

One way students see this is by returning to work from the start of the year, as they prepare to write their final piece. Isabelle wants the students to be able to see the transformation of their writing over time.

Celebrating success. Finally, Isabelle celebrates these concrete examples of growth. To Isabelle, it doesn't matter how much her students have grown--just that they feel successful. “So even if you read 25 books and I read five like we're readers. It's what we do in here” (II4, 1:01.13). In fact, Isabelle notes that for most of the students, it is the student who only reads the five that need the celebration the most. “If they say to me, ‘I read two books last year, and this year we read five,’ we are going to celebrate that, even if two of them were book club books that I made you read. We are still going to celebrate that” (II4, 10:08).

Part of the fun for Isabelle is when the students did not even realize the growth that they have made but are able to celebrate it when they do. “Some of them, I don't think realize that until they get my first feedback back and they're like, ‘Ooh, like she said I'm doing good on this’ or ‘I did really well on this.’” (II1, 18:09) Many feel that they are not great writers because they

have not received the feedback back that tells them otherwise. This is why, to Isabelle, it is so important to celebrate the growth and successes when she sees them.

How Isabelle Feels about Motivation

For Isabelle, motivating her students comes down to three basic ideas—a relevance to her material, the opportunities to share, and providing ample choices to students.

Relevance of the material. To begin, creating relevance and purpose in her curriculum is a vital component to motivating her students to engage in literacy tasks. To achieve this she pushes her curriculum, establishes routines for her students, and eliminates grades as a driving factor. Isabelle works with a curriculum guide that provides many resources and plans for her class. However, she often finds this curriculum lacking in motivation and relevance. Isabelle supplements her material with content that she believes will be more applicable to the students. For example, the program has the students researching and forming arguments for competitive sports. To Isabelle, this concept was too rudimentary, and not as applicable for her students. Instead, she did a whole class practice about police and schools. The school shooting in Parkland, Florida, had just occurred, so she found her students interested in the topic. This current event was the motivation that her students needed to complete their writing. She was so impressed that she wanted to continue this topic in future years. “I was like, I’m gonna do that again (the Parkland concept) because... but not that it’s not relevant, but it just wasn’t as current. And then I started seeing all these articles about potential harm from active shooter drills, and it’s like well this is something we do all the time. So it’s interesting to see their take on it, but I think that is one thing that helps” (II2, 9:06).

Isabelle also incorporates TED Talks as a form of literacy. “I try to use TED Talks or other videos instead of like traditional text... And I can pick stuff that I know is going to be interesting to them” (II2, 7:59). She credits these curriculum changes with motivating her students to think more critically and discuss the topic at greater length.

Isabelle also engages her students by performing tasks right along with her students. She does not ask her students to take notes on something unless she is taking these notes right with them. “If I’m modeling something for reading, I’ll add it in my notebook or for like taking notes, I’ll take notes... So I’ll do three of everything (for each block)” (II4, 39:23) Isabelle wants the students to know that if this is important enough for her to write down, it is important for them to write it down. Notes are not just a form of punishment that teachers make their students do.

This goes the same for writing tasks and modeling thinking of her reading. Isabelle’s reading and writing notebooks are set up the same as the students, and she does just about everything that she asks the students to do.

Finally, she wants to push the students’ purpose of accomplishing tasks beyond the grade. “I work really hard when kids say to me like, ‘Is this graded?’ Like, don’t say that to me. It doesn’t matter if it’s graded. Just do your best work” (II2, 11:25). She does this to push the students towards the intrinsic value of learning and to show the importance of these skills as they get older.

“I try to really get kids to realize, ‘like you will write like this in some form. I don’t care if you’re working at your dad’s car shop, you’re gonna have to do some kind of reading and writing. And so having these skills like gives you power.’” (II4, 57:58) Therefore, Isabelle is constantly focusing on relevance and purpose so students are driven to gain that power for their futures.

Opportunities to share. One of Isabelle’s priorities is to allow her students to share about their literacy experiences. This includes sharing and discussing the text, as well as sharing and discussing writing. Isabelle has purposeful sharing scheduled into her day, every day. In fact, the students consider these “times when we’re sharing, it’s the time that we’re the most like a community”—when they’re sharing out (II1, 17:25).

Each student has a reading partner and a writing partner. Her students are taught to discuss their current work with these partners, sharing what they are doing well and seeking advice for improvement. However, that's is not their only sharing time. They also share their examples for their Sentence of the Week and Word of the Week. They share their leads and ideas in their quick write time, and they are constantly discussing and sharing their thoughts in their mini-lessons during workshop. Adding additional sharing time during workshop is one way Isabelle expands her guided curriculum. This was not surprising to Isabelle as she is fully aware of the research surrounding providing an audience beyond the teacher, but she was surprised at how the students recognized it as well. "Kids have told me that the amount of sharing of their writing that we do" helps them "engage more in their writing" (II2, 20:41).

Finally, after each writing project Isabelle's students complete, they can share with their peers, as well as with students for a neighboring language arts class. "Sometimes they leave feedback on sticky notes just so that they're getting feedback from someone else and they visit like four or five different students. And so everybody gets feedback from multiple people." They do this by either completely switching rooms with the other class, or simply switching half of the students. But either way, students are given written feedback from their peers which increases their drive and motivation to produce better work. Isabelle finds she has students seeking out her feedback before a due date to make sure that it is their best work (II1, 11:12).

She finds that her students are sharing aspects of class outside of class with students that she will have later in the day. Isabelle specifically cited a time where students came into class forlorn because of a consequence the class had incurred and immediately stating "I know....(implying that she did not even need to tell them about the consequence)" (II1, 14:43). Not only is sharing a vital component to the motivation of engaging in literacy tasks, but Isabelle also views it as a community-building opportunity. "I try to make sure that if you're gonna be brave enough to share and that's like the type of community we're trying to build, then I'm going

to make sure to take time to say “good job” or to laugh” (II4, 25:46). Sharing with others and the community just becomes an expectation for being an active participant in Isabelle’s class.

Opportunities for student choice. Isabelle believes the number one factor in motivating her students is giving her students the opportunity to make choices in their learning. This emerges in her classroom in a variety of ways, including choices with their books, in their writing topics, and in their learning environment.

Isabelle does not restrict students when it comes to the books that they want to read. “So for the kids who have traditionally read Captain Underpants, I let them read that. I mean we have conversations, but I do let them read that then we look for their next step.” Isabelle wants her students to feel empowered to choose, and if their choices are books that are just a bit too easy or just a bit too hard, it doesn’t matter, as long as they are willing to think differently about their books and talk about them.

Isabelle jokes that even if they are doing a unit on fiction she can only “highly encourage” them to read fiction during this unit. Isabelle shared a story about her student who loved nonfiction but did not like to read fiction. Isabelle brought him the book *The Ancestor’s Tale* (by Richard Dawkins) and “He was like a genius, I brought him the Ancestor’s Tale, which was all about evolution, a book that I don’t even understand as an adult, and he read it in a week!” (II4, 8:29)

Even with the ability to choose books, Isabelle’s students respect her opinions and options and usually take her recommendations for other titles to read. Isabelle also allows students many choices in their writing through modeling and projects. During one observation, Isabelle was running through the Sentence of the Week with students. Multiple students were sharing what they noticed about the sentence, and it came time for Isabelle to mimic the sentence structure with her own sentence. Immediately multiple hands went up—even before she called for ideas. The student she called on provided her with the topic of tables. Isabelle proceeded to write a compound-complex sentence all about tables. Isabelle laughed as she

recalled a few of her sentences of the week models this year. “This year the things that had me write about, really. Oh, but it's good for them to see me struggling; there was one day when I hated what I came up with, and so while they were writing (their examples) like I went back in and erased” (II4, 27:33). She said it was fun to share with the students that even she doesn't always know what she is doing (showing her vulnerability) (II4, 28:18).

Isabelle starts each year, the very first day, allowing the students to establish what they feel will be their best working environment. She asks students to respond to a variety of questions on expectations. Isabelle believes “Right from the beginning, I'm listening to you because I am not going to tell you what the classroom rules are. My only rule is that you respect each other. You can tell me what this classroom needs to look like” (II1. 23:10). Since the students have a role in deciding some basic expectations, Isabelle believes that she is able to reference those expectations if things are going awry, since they are the ones who voiced them. She uses these expectations to help students be as successful as possible. “I can't say enough about the power of choices and how I think that impacts student engagement” (II 2,9:16).

What Motivates Isabelle

What motivates Isabelle? She simply responded, “I just really love my job. Even on those days, (the hard days) I never was like ‘I don't want to go to work’ you know? , I really like what you do. I love kids. I love reading and writing and that's what I get to spend all day doing, and helping kids do and they're just. And I love that. I don't sit at a desk all day. That was one of the things that I hated about when I worked at CESA, and not that I was at a desk but it's just different. So yeah. Like there's and it's always, like I'm always like, I never feel like even if my units are the same like I'm always changing things and I definitely need that I tend to get bored easily and so yeah I just I love it” (II4, 1:07.37).

Deliberate Danielle

Demographics of Danielle

Danielle has wanted to be a school teacher her whole life. She remembers playing school with her younger sister in their basement, modeling behavior from their mother, who was a school teacher. Danielle has always considered herself a leader, having played and coached volleyball for many years. Danielle remembers being a young player, explaining the game and imparting lessons for the players around her on the court. Now 17 years into her teaching career, Danielle still coaches and plays volleyball. Since she graduated from college in December, Danielle began her teaching career as a substitute; she was living in her fiancé's parents' basement, subbing for the local school districts as she waited for her fiancé to graduate. The district was a suburban school district, neighboring a large school district in a Northeastern Midwest state. Danielle received her first full-time contract that April to teach eighth-grade language arts the following year. She also accepted a varsity coaching role for the district's high school. She also set up a youth volleyball summer program. Danielle taught eighth grade and coached volleyball for two years before she took a fifth-grade position at the school.

Danielle recalls her 11 years of teaching fifth grade with very fond memories. The school she taught at operated on a house model, with two teachers sharing one group of kids, dividing out the courses between the two teachers. Danielle was part of the "High Five" house that ran in a business model with "high five" money for receiving or paying educational penalties and constant appreciations. Danielle recalls having a "goofy colleague" (DD1, 12:51) who inspired her to be goofy and have a lot of fun with the students. Danielle recalls multiple incidents of doing the worm (a dance move that has one laying on the floor to start, then swaying their bodies in a worm motion) or completing back round-offs down the hall when her students all turned in assignments or had permission slips returned.

These goofy tactics have carried into her current placement of eighth-grade at another suburban school district. Throughout her five years of being back in eighth-grade language arts, she still works to pump up her students through a variety of motivational tactics, including

breaking out in the floss (another current popular dance) and using the student's lingo with them.

Danielle's teaching philosophy includes teaching the whole student mind, body, and spirit; making connections and truly caring as if they are your own children; having their back and advocating for them; constant reflection, lots of analyzing, and diagnosis to reach them at their level (interest and cultural backgrounds,); paying attention and listening to them to relate, reach, and connect with them; and build trust and relationships with parents. Other avenues that are important to Danielle are teaching about how the brain works and how thinking works to help them understand the learning process, help them with self-monitoring, teaching relevance and purpose (big purpose) first. Danielle works to ensure feedback is timely and directed towards student progress. Finally, she's constantly reflecting, and utilizing professional development opportunities to build a legacy of ideas backed up by strong research.

Demographics of Danielle's School

The school is located just outside of the third-largest city in a Midwestern state. It is a sixth through eighth-grade school with 90-minute language arts blocks. The school has approximately 800 students in the school, and Danielle is one of four language arts teachers on her grade level team. The school is run in a traditional middle school structure with the teachers being specialists in certain subjects; the students are attending multiple classrooms throughout their day. There is a traditional administrative team of a principal and an associate principal. About 34 percent of students receive free or reduced lunch.

Welcome to Danielle's Classroom

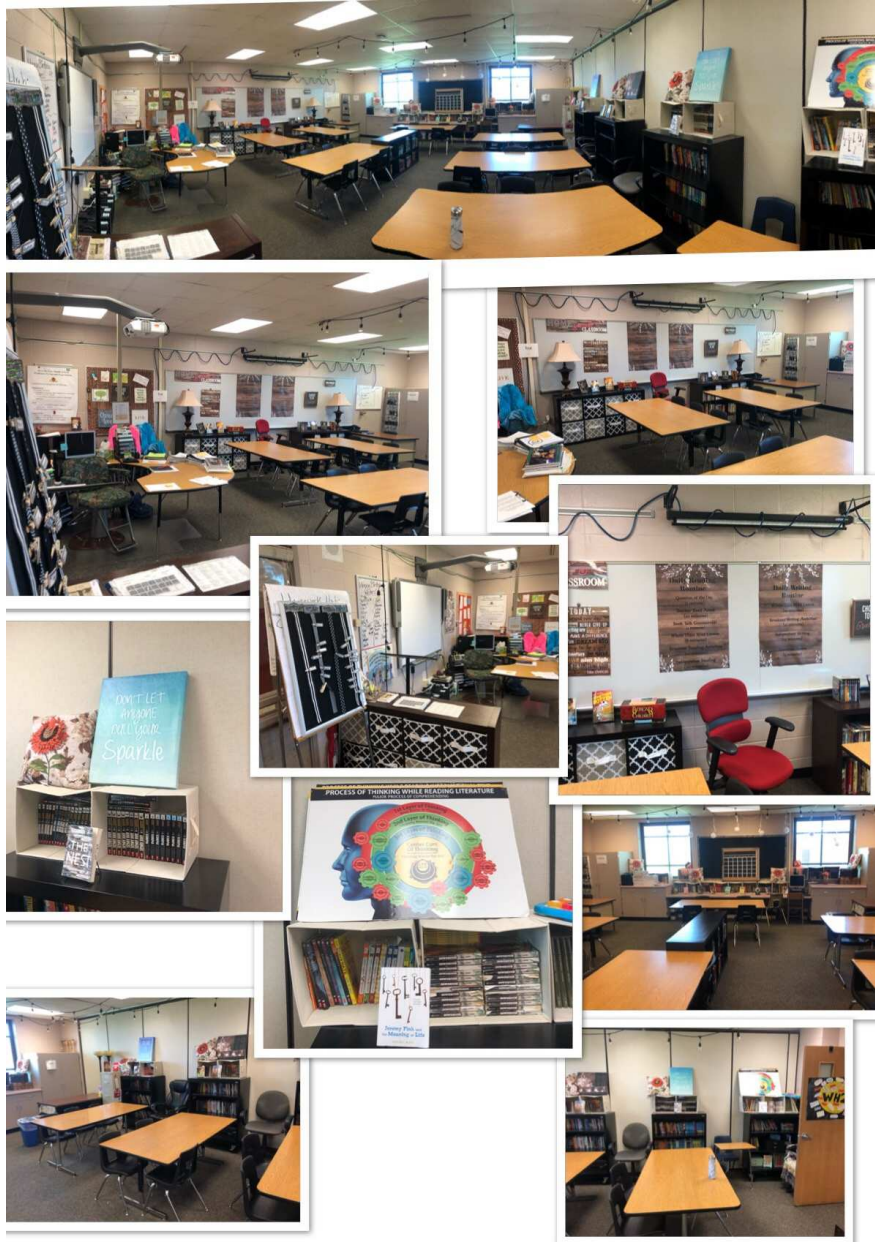


Figure 10. Picture collage of Danielle's classroom

When I walked into Danielle's classroom, students were seated in chairs in a circle, pulled over from their spots at their tables. The students faced one another, with Danielle in a chair pulled into the circle as well. The students intently listening as Danielle reads aloud from *Cinder* (by Marissa Meyer.) The classroom is arranged with the library bookshelf directly in the middle of the classroom, with three tables on one side, two on the other; one table is parallel in front of the bookshelf and one is perpendicular behind it. Other bookshelves line one whole wall

of her classroom, and a whiteboard spans the length of the other. Danielle has a kidney-shaped table in the front of the room, adjacent to her desk. An interactive whiteboard and bulletin board are in front of the table. Danielle's decorates her room with inspirational posters. One of these posters she created herself, and she feels is a pillar to her teaching in class. It is the levels of thinking, a graphic that is represented by gears. Danielle noted that students reference it throughout the year (DD5, 9:31).

As Danielle is reading out loud, the students are focused on the book she is reading. A student sits at a computer in the back of the room with Google on the search screen. When Danielle used a word the student did not know, he Googled the word, and dictionary.com popped up with its definition. It was a quiet resource for students looking for clarification on vocabulary in the book. As Danielle reads about the main character, a female cyborg who is a mechanic worried about the plague taking over her community, the students are engrossed in the story. This is obvious by the vocal groans and protests that emerge when Danielle announces they will need to pick up there on Monday. Danielle says that this is a regular occurrence in her classroom and that there are also times that the students work to negotiate reading time, proposing taking away from other times in their day (DD2 3:16). Danielle loves starting her class with this; she finds it is a calming way to begin class and draw them into the reading experience (DD6, 4:48).

Schedule and Class Routine

Danielle runs her class with a structured routine. "The routine and structure have been set up knowing it works and it's research-based, and I know it's a good system to fit all the balanced components in. And then from there, I think of them you know always have them at the forefront" (DD2 29:40). Unique components of her schedule include community circle, energizer time, and use of Google slides.

Community Circle. Danielle believes that one of the most beneficial times in her class is community circle when she gets to know her students, "So I find it you never know what's

going to come out or by the information they share which may be in a normal classroom that doesn't do this. You would never know this about students but I learned things. So then I can better match a book with them. They've gone through this experience or all they're showing their interest in this because they're always sharing about this, so little secrets" (DD5, 24:37).

Danielle feels these "secrets" are the keys to helping them succeed in class. Her community circle is an important time for her to be a listener, taking in the information. "You learn so much from them in just that amount of time, that it's so valuable. Things that you can, I feel, joke with them on an inside level and we're used as a class-whole joke like you become something that we can share together" (DD6, 1:28).

And since Danielle also loves to analyze and evaluate, she takes in their information and watches for patterns that will help her. Community circle also builds trust in her and the classroom environment. Danielle loves to watch this level of trust unfold. "They always have a right to pass. They don't have to share. It's neat to see some kids at the beginning here who pass. You know for a while until they feel comfortable and until you can tell that they trust of the community and then they open up and start sharing" (DD6, 1:28). Danielle has worked to create a judgment-free zone, which adds to the trust and allows students to open up and share. "I think I'd feel so lost without it with knowing them" (DD6, 2:12).

Energizer Time. Danielle includes a time in her schedule just for the students to "celebrate and have a bit of fun" (DD1, 18:30). She does this building, what she calls, Energizers into her schedule. Energizers are a way to continue team building throughout the year, as well as to allow the students a chance to refocus and reset. Danielle started them because she found that "kids need movement and they love them and look forward to them" (DD1, 14:49).

Energizers are sometimes tied to content, but not always. Instead, they are a period for the students to relax and be carefree. She always tries to account for the multiple intelligences when planning her energizers. She reflects "'Did I hit (each multiple intelligence) when I'm

picking 'em.' 'Did I hit on a kinesthetic?' 'Did I hit on...' you know I'll have Playdough and I'll do something with that. Or they'll draw which I'm like, it used to be Dragon Art that I used to use but now I just use like Art for Kids where I'll play music or it'll be a guy kind of going through and they'll create" (DD1, 7:32). She has also shared playing a "king of the court" version of Rock, Paper, Scissors.' I also observed a partner work Energizer where the partners had to guess what each one changed about themselves while their backs were turned.

Google Slides. Danielle uses Google slides as an instructional tool and to keep her class organized. The creation and development of the curriculum is very time consuming, but it's something she loves doing (DD5, 45:23). Her slides have all of the content and curriculum for three months at a time. She finds this system easiest because then she does not have to use multiple folders to find the material that she wants. Danielle uses the slides so she can help her students through the visual guide of them. "I'm realizing when I explain it to the kids, to make it come alive- your tour guide- for throwing in a picture of a girl or a guy, you know, and then that'll be an icon that whenever they see that, I used a little visual (association)" (DD5, 46:21). Danielle is constantly creating these visuals using Google Draw, and then incorporating them into her slide presentations. Looking at Danielle's examples and presentations, there is almost as much visual representation as there is written texts to help hook her students and help them find the direction and purpose of the slides.

This content is constantly changing based on the needs of her students. "I think (about) the things that work, and the things that I really like those days. Sometimes they change or I'll make a copy and then kind of delete out what I end up changing... Sometimes I'll think of a new analogy when I'm going for example with that argument" (DD5, 45:29). Danielle revisits her lessons regularly to make sure that they have everything that she wants, and she enjoys the ability to quickly move back a few slides to review with the students what they had previously covered. "Google slides are amazing" (DD5, 45:23).

Planning for Motivation in Danielle's Classroom

Reflection. Danielle feels that planning for motivation in her classroom has to be purposeful and planned through reflective practices. She is “always reflecting on my teaching and how they’re receptive or how they’re receiving it” (DD5, 49:10). For Danielle, the reflective process starts as she is planning her lessons. Danielle finds she is most successful at planning for motivation if she “goes through the process myself. So when I create the (lesson key)... I’m experiencing it so that I can think of, it helps me on how to word my instruction, it might help me to know where someone might get stuck, and then I’m paying attention to my brain” (DD2, 16:13). Danielle purposefully goes through the experience and reflection and analyzing process during planning, so she knows how to best support her students during the lessons or know which parts to tweak. This gives her a sense of the timing it will take students and that the components of the plan are what the student can handle.(DD1, 20:17). As a lifelong learner, Danielle feels that her job as a teacher is never done, and that “it can always be better” (DD5, 14:55). Danielle is constantly reflecting on and critiquing her teaching, using current research practices to boost her work. “I guess there’s always that lifelong learner in me just knowing that there’s always something I can do better. There’s always a way that I can do it better. So by reflecting, saying what went well, strengths and weaknesses (emerge)” (DD5, 14:55) This is why her curriculum is constantly changing; she is always working to make it better, coming up with new creative ideas to hook the students (DD6, 1:42).

Extension/personal. Danielle seeks to personalize content for her students. While she has a curriculum guide, Danielle is not afraid to use practices that she had confidence in. Danielle provided the example of a read-aloud from the set curriculum. She stated that “the (curriculum) models a quick example of these ponies... Which as a choice I decided not to go with. I just didn’t think that eighth-graders, I mean it would get done, but I like, I think it’s more powerful for them to experience a read aloud at their level and just for those that don’t read very much or just to experience and then to use that. I find that a really powerful (motivational tool)”

(DD1, 18:00). Instead, Danielle connects the already highly motivational read aloud that they were doing to the mini-lesson guided by the curriculum.

Danielle also extends the curriculum by offering students more choices. Danielle believes that she can “get the main kinds of rocks (building stones) in there, then she will start building in the choice” (DD2, 10:13) for her students to extend the lesson.

Finally, she uses her extension of the curriculum to differentiate for her students. Throughout her teaching career, Danielle has found that students who do not like reading do not have the opportunity to experience it “as a movie in their head” (DD6, 31:09). She wants to provide opportunities to rebuild this process together, starting slowly to piece together the aspects of elementary reading that they might have missed (DD6, 29:45). One way that she does this is to break down the process even further, whether it was from steps or expectations, she allows the students to start at a place that they will feel successful. Consideration of the guided curriculum is not part of this process, as she feels it's more important to be their coach and teammates, working through their struggles together (DD6, 38:08).

What Danielle Believes Helps Her Students Be Most Successful

In the zone reading. Danielle runs her classroom as a workshop, including a mini-lesson, independent time for practice, and time to share in the end. Danielle works hard to help her students get “in the zone” during their reading time (DD4, 4-18). She turns off the harsh lights and turns on quiet music to create a relaxed atmosphere. Additionally, she uses the example from the movie *Avatar*. She teaches her students to “go under” (DD4, 4-18), which is the connection to seeing them in their “pods,” completely uninterrupted by the world around them. She wants her students to focus on their reading, and not be distracted by everything around them. Once Danielle found that her students were successful, it was hard to break them out of their zone. She cited many times where students would be “begging to read, they’re asking to read; it’s so cool to see” (DD5, 10:28).

To ensure successful book choices, Danielle provides ample exposure to texts in her library and the school library. Danielle does a book talk every day, introducing the book and creating a hook for students. She loves being a 'matchmaker' between student and book. "I always try to be kind of this matchmaker because I know so much of the motivation and engagement to kind of get it at that. I know it's going to be finding a book of interest, so you really need to know their backgrounds and who they are, along with their levels" (DD5 2:56).

Teaching the whole student. Danielle believes that "It's not all about learning. It's learning the whole self. Like everything" (DD1 18:46). Therefore, Danielle works to build up the whole student through positivity and care. Danielle finds that this is one area of growth throughout her teaching career. At the start of her career, she was much stricter, sometimes creating the power struggle, which is not helpful to the teacher/student relationship (DD5, 36:49). And now, she finds working with them and respecting them as a whole person, not just as a student (DD1 32:31) gets her much further. "I value them as people and students, so the more I can get to know them and just the community of mutual respect, just kind of building it that way" (DD1, 32:31). Danielle believes that it is her job to "build the students, their character and everything, and how it all works together as a system" (DD1, 29:47), and she does this through being an inspiration to them, pumping them up with positivity, and meeting them at their level. Danielle accomplishes this by leaving her students positive notes or comments (DD1, 49:33) or by pulling up her chair by their desks to give them positive feedback (DD4). Danielle works to "be inspirational any way that I can" (DD1, 32:31). "If I can motivate or teach them along the way... like other little extras that help with relationships and their self worth and confidence, there so much" (DD5 44:30).

Learning psychology. Danielle ensures that her students' psychological needs are being met. "I just love anything psychology wise, and that's why I really like mindfulness because they start at this age to mature enough to understand" (DD1, 30:49). Two main

projects in her class focus on the students' psychological needs--the Quality World project and Organized Layers of Thinking.

Danielle's Quality World project comes from researcher William Glasser, whom she has quoted many times. Danielle describes it as "the idea of filling your needs... filling your tank... like the collection of people and activities, this is their quality world of what they want in their life. They talk about the caring habits that can get you there. These are the needs of your tanks... and then there are harmful and deadly habits which can take you off course" (DD1, 34:06).

Danielle introduces the projects to the students by sharing Glasser's two main beliefs; 1) Humans have needs and motives, 2) Humans should accept responsibility (DD7). She walks the students through the various psychological needs that they might have, realizing that unless their needs are met, they will not be at their ultimate wellness. She then asks each student to identify what their own personal needs are as well as identifying the harmful habits that will get in the way of reaching the ultimate wellness. Danielle "wants them to absorb it and translate it to themselves" (DD1, 35:06). She feels that starting the year with this adult concept- the student's psychological needs- and presenting it in a way that treats them as adults, sets the tone for her room. She also will come back to the project throughout the year if students are struggling. "That is something that then I can pull this out too with students that are struggling may be in the reality of the earth like in the middle of the year and say, 'oh let's go back to your quality world'" (DD1, 35:06). Returning to the students' needs reminds the students that they are in control of their own environment and their actions and that they have the power to change the path that they are on. No matter what other curriculum and instruction she has going on at the beginning of the year, starting with the psychological needs in their quality world project is a "staple" and something that she would "definitely do" no matter what (DD1, 36:28).

Additionally, Danielle has her Organized Layers of Thinking which delves into the realm of psychological components. Danielle found that "reading, I think a lot of it has to do with attention and focus, and if the kid's brains aren't organized, it's hard to know where that

information goes in as a file cabinet and where it is.... Where does that go or when do I use it. It's just floating in space" (DD5, 4:22). So she designed an organizational structure so students understand how their brain works and how the information should be grouped and organized. Danielle designed the graphic to look like gears, with three levels to it, the levels representing thinking within (the reading,) beyond (the reading,) and about (the reading.) Danielle felt that gears were an appropriate visual due to the nature of one gear working with another in order to move forward.

Danielle will point out to the students that "(I'll show) them that if this gear isn't working, then you can't get to the next layer. And so much the gears how complex it is" (Final pt. 1, 8:05). That readers can get stuck in one gear and unable to move past that until that gear is fixed. Danielle says this analogy is helpful, especially to some of her male readers who struggle (final pt. 1, 8:26). She also finds that students will return to this analogy throughout the year, bragging about the fact that they have reached their "next level of thinking" with that book, or set goals to reach the final level of thinking with this book (final pt. 1, 9:31) which makes the graphic all the more purposeful and powerful. Danielle finds that she is constantly tweaking this tool based on the feedback of her students, and the usability in her classroom; she hopes to publish this tool and continue to present it to other educators (DD5, 6:19).

How Danielle Feels about Motivation

Meeting the students at their level. Danielle feels that motivation happens when she is working and teaching at the level and relatability of the students. She demonstrates this through the building of her community, the value of modeling and examples, and really knowing her students.

It is critically important to create an environment in her classroom where her students feel comfortable and appreciated. The culture of her classroom is similar to the culture of any socio-environment. She is working to "build the foundation of any relationship, of you know, what relationships need with a community of neighbors, need of respect, appreciation, and

empathy” (DD6 22:02). It is a community of neighbors that she strives to create in her classroom.

A poster on the wall of Danielle’s room outlines her four community agreements of attentive listening, appreciation and no put-downs, the right to pass, and a space for mutual respect. These demonstrate the importance of respect and the “Judge Free Zone” that Danielle works incredibly hard to create (DD6, 23:19). For Danielle, this judge free zone is the invitation to her students to contribute to discussions, as well as to share their personal “bummer and brags” in their community circle time. It is this judge free zone that “makes them feel so willing to take more risks and read, you know, like read or write and share because you’ve made it, you’ve created that culture that’s that’s good” (DD6, 19:01).

Additionally, Danielle feels that she meets the students at their level by showcasing her personal models and sharing multiple examples of past students’ work. During one of the observations, Danielle was discussing the narrative structure, and she shared her memory of skiing with her uncle. She was so detailed and students were so intrigued that when she finished reading her model, (which wasn’t complete) students turned to another student in the room to ask if “it was true, and ‘then what happened.” Danielle shared with me that her son was in that class, and that is the students the others went to confirm her story. That being said, the students felt invited into the writing experience through her model; that they did not want her story to end (DD4, 4-18). When modeling her writing, Danielle feels it’s important to not come with a perfect piece. She wants the students to see her mistakes and see her editing, to know that the writing process is ongoing (DD6, 19:06). Danielle believes that the “greatest learning will take place” in the mistakes and being built from the failures (DD6, 18:12). For her students to view her as vulnerable, she needs to share in her mistakes as well.

Danielle also shares student work to showcase expectations. She starts with her example, but after years of student work, they replace her example (DD5, 46:21). Danielle cited one example from a current high school senior. Students recognized his name as being one of

their middle school football coaches and were immediately intrigued. Danielle believes “that’s the kind of thing to engage them” (DD1, 40:20). Connecting with past students, seeing examples of what the work will and could look like, as well as Danielle being vulnerable to share her mistakes.

Finally, Danielle feels it is vital for her to get to know her students well. She does this in her community circle, but it does not end there. She gets to know her students at the start of the year with a survey and interest inventory. “I do surveys at the beginning of the year. Those to me are so important to just read through. And not that it’s a grade. But it’s just all like treasured information; I feel that’s the key” (DD5, 33:38). She then uses this treasured information to connect to content and hook students all of the time. She learned that multiple students were interested in the Marvel series. Around the time the final movie—*End Game*—came out, I heard her use *End Game* as a jeering threat for putting in maximum effort, that she would share spoilers any time they needed to stop (DD4).

Danielle tries to use jargon her students use; she said she noticed students intonation with the words “what are these” that was circulating around her students as a popular response. When Danielle used the terms her students had an actual reaction such as “Oh My Gosh, She KNOWS!” (DD1, 14:09). “I love listening to their lingo or how they talk to each other and I’ll use that” (DD6, 27:25). This demonstrates the strong feelings that Danielle has towards listening to her students and using the information gained in her instruction and interactions with them. She feels that getting to know her students helps her pick and choose the battles that she fights with them to create a stronger bond.

Danielle believes that her job as an educator is to get to know her students and what makes them engage. She mentioned one student who challenged her throughout the year. He was a transfer in after the start of the school year, and Danielle recalls that he missed quite a bit

of the initial community building in their class. Danielle recalls struggling with him the first few days. “His head would be down, and I couldn’t even talk with him” (DD1, 43:12).

As this continued a few more days, Danielle recalled that she could have sent him to the office for noncompliance. But instead, she reminded herself, “I haven’t built a relationship with him yet” so how could it be fair to punish him for that. Danielle communicated with his family to find out more about him and began leaving him small positive notes at the start of class. Slowly he began to come around. Danielle worked to meet him on his ground, relating to him how he would be comfortable, and making sure not to put him in a position where he could be disrespectful.

She also believes that if they refuse to do homework, it is not because they are being lazy or uncooperative; she believes there is a deeper root cause. “They still want to save face with everything so a lot of the things that they’re acting is not always how they’re feeling, that comfortable in their skin. So just really knowing the age and trying to bypass that as best as you can just really building that comfortable classroom,” builds that engagement and shows that you care (DD1, 46:29).

This is why Danielle recognizes the importance of community building and creating an environment where her students know that she cares. It’s important to Danielle that she gets to know each of her students. “when you can reach them, maybe you just feel like whatever gifts or special way that you can use your talents to reach them whether it was the connection that I made with them or the bond and relationship or somehow how I presented it, it got through to them at some point... and then just seeing that light bulb” (DD1, 42:43).

Analogies/rigor and relevance. Deliberate Danielle’s initial pseudonym was Analogy Anne, due to the connections and analogies she regularly makes. It was changed after a bit more analysis, but the use of analogies remains an integral part of Danielle’s philosophy on motivation for her students. Danielle believes, “I feel my learning takes off sometimes if I can

make connections or analogies (DD3, 8:43). Danielle's analogies are most prevalent through her use of technologies, her drive for the big picture, and her marathon.

Danielle uses video clips and movie connections to relate to the students and draw them in. "I definitely like using videos throughout, little clips whether it's inspiration or it's tying into something I'm teaching where I'll use as an analogy of something and I'll think of a part in a movie that I know like an allusion that they can connect to, so I try to use that power in my teaching" (DD1, 33:15).

In one lesson, she used clips from a documentary on the O.J. Simpson case. For a unit on building evidence, she showed clips of lawyers building their cases with evidence. Another time, she used a clip from the movie *The Karate Kid*. Danielle was showing the narrative technique of 'words of the wise'. She showed the iconic "wax on, wax off" clip, hoping the students recognize that often the piece of advice is not simply stated for a reader. These are two quick examples of media analogies that Danielle makes on a daily basis. "I try to find stuff that I like, or that would hook me...most of them can get that feeling from like, a movie. So that seems like a quick one to get to that I can get that connection point" (DD2, 5:17).

Danielle tries to see the big picture of the content that she is teaching. She believes she is most effective in hooking the students if she can demonstrate the relevance of the material. She will tell the students, "here's the payoff, or here's the big picture, how it will help you down the line.' It's not just me giving you this, right? That's another thing in my teaching with engagement, I always try to tie it to like a big picture so they can kind of see how it's plugged in" (DD1, 47:38). Danielle begins all of her planning with this thought in mind for engagement, how does she "get them to buy in; it all starts with the purpose and the relevance" (DD2, 28:26). She does not have students constantly asking about why they are doing something or learning something. Rather, she plans with the end goal in mind; the students are able to put these pieces together.

An example of this is her inclusion of the OJ Simpson case; she wanted to build a solid sense of evidence and support in their argumentative writing. Therefore, she had the students choose a side, (guilty or not guilty) and showed them pieces of evidence from the case. Danielle's instruction was for them to build their case for what they believed to be true. Since these students had very little background on the case, most were starting from nothing. While observing in the room, students had vocal outbursts to new information presented in a video clip ("I knew it! I am right!") (DD4, 4-18), demonstrating the level of engagement for their project. Danielle found the students extremely successful with the building evidence from the case and took the project the next step in their argumentative writing. Danielle had an end goal in mind- solid evidence and support in argumentative writing- and took multiple steps to ensure the students were able to see why they were doing the work they were doing.

Finally, an analogy and connection that Danielle used all year came in her form of tracking the students reading. Danielle has a reading track system that she calls their 'marathon.' She wanted to find a way for the students to see their physical growth in reading, their grown in stamina, and how they think about their books. To make this point more clearly, she likened reading to training for and running marathons. Ultimately, Danielle set up a conversion system of 25 pages equalling one mile. For students to complete the marathon (26 miles), they needed to read 650 pages. But the marathon was not simply for volume. Danielle notes, "(first) I'd be like how, 'How far did you read or run?' And then the other category was like your muscles, (your) thinking" (DD6, 29:37). She also told the students that she was going to be just like their trainer or their coach, helping them reach their goals. Danielle recognized that goal setting is just as important of a skill to practice and work on, and her analogy of being their coach or trainer, helped them understand the need for support when setting goals as something we do in every aspect of our lives. If they did not meet their goal for each grading period, their mileage rolled over onto the next grading period. The coaching also continued, looking at what would be manageable amounts for them to complete to meet their goals. Danielle thought it was

important to note that the reading could be done any time, anywhere, and simply needed to be recorded to count. She wanted to show the students that reading, just like getting exercise, is a lifelong habit that needs to continue to be developed (DD6, 25:49). Therefore, the reading was not only what was done for the class or assigned reading. It could take place at home, or during their study hall, or anywhere they brought their book with them.

Danielle found the marathon so valuable to her class because it allowed her students to track reading and patterns. Students were recognizing if they were only reading one genre (color-coded by genre). Danielle shared that for many of her students, it meant being a well-rounded reader. “They were thinking about genres so they can visually see. So that was cute to see them try to fit a goal, well rounded” (DD6, 35:55).

Additionally, they tracked their progression per grading period on their reading stamina. “They would compare from grading period to grading period. So it's really neat. There were many competitive students that no matter what, beat their next score. So they intrinsically, it was cool to see them and get 100 pages more” (DD6, 31:54). The student self-regulation, and justifying causes in their own learning, pushed them to continue to be better. Now, there was also the extrinsic reward of a gold (chocolate) medal each time they completed a marathon, but again Danielle likened this to an actual marathon; runners are not pushing their bodies just for the medal in the end; there is something much more (DD5, 5:54). And this is the same thing that happened to her readers. She found that many of her students said, “It was fun to watch my growth” (DD5, 4:24) showcasing the intrinsic motivation of the marathon.

Danielle believes students need to read like a scorekeeper, not a spectator. If you are sitting on the bench, or the bleachers, you do not need to focus as much as when you are a player, on the field or court, monitoring every move and honing your skills to be better. Danielle recalls coming up with this analogy when she was courtside at one of her own children's games. She says “sitting in a gym watching my own kids, I was like as a fan, I'm able to just sit and talk

and maybe know the score or come back, (which is different than) being there accountable. And so I wanted the kids to know because like when I'm reading like I'm accountable for them I'm just how much more I'm getting out of my reading" (DD3, 9:55). Danielle uses analogies for her students to have a mental image and connection to what she is teaching them.

Students owning their learning. Danielle believes students need ownership within their classroom to take their learning upon themselves. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as creating new rules, reporting out on student success, and tutoring younger students. To begin with, one aspect of the student's ownership comes in the student's ability to manage the classroom; this included coming up with new rules to support everyone in their learning environment. Danielle shared that some members of her community were struggling with shouting and being disruptive. So a group of classmates proposed a tally system for the whole class. According to Danielle, "if they blurt out, they put little tallies and then they do push it. They came up with two girls then took the lead on giving her the sheet every Monday. So it has the itinerary of push-ups, crunchers, burpees, lunges, or planks" (DD1, 24:24). The students who get tallies need to do the number of exercises that they earned. Danielle loved watching the community come together to make sure that all agreed and understood the new parameters. They also made sure that the tallier would be a "non-biased" individual, guaranteeing that the student is doing their time for their violations.

Other classes heard of the new system and wanted to implement something for their classes as well. Danielle allowed each of her classes to bring it to a vote, and the new practices were implemented. Danielle found that her students "feel so good about having a voice" (DD1, 25:54) and being able to establish practices for the whole group. One of the best aspects of this practice was the students wanting their learning environment to be even better than it was. She recognized students took the stance that, "This is the community that I love, that you guys have, they can value each other. And then it works" (DD1, 26:57).

Students also share their successes and those of others around them. While observing, Danielle picked sticks for two students to be “spies” in the room while the class was discussing power. These two students went around the room with a piece of loose-leaf paper, interacting with the groups and observing their conversations. At the end of the discussion period, Danielle asked them to report back to the group the key points they heard in discussions, or provide a compliment to a group who was working well together. One of the girls complimented the spirited conversation that one of the groups was having. The other recapped a point that she heard multiple times (DD4). Both had thoughtful responses and were proud of the position that they had. Danielle recognized that this practice helped the class hear from a variety of perspectives, instead of the few who often volunteer thoughts and responses (DD2, 22:15).

Through a tutoring project, Danielle allows her students to increase ownership in their content. Danielle reported that this was her second year doing the project, and it has evolved both years, but the benefit is students teaching students. Danielle first came up with the idea because “This idea started where, I just thought about how I learned or just through my education programs like when you had to analyze or do like a practicum and have evidence, how it really makes you get to those deeper levels of thinking” (DD6, 10:46). With her student teaching in mind, she wanted to create the same feel for her students, providing them the opportunity to learn and analyze so that they could turn around and teach it as well.

At the time, Danielle's younger sister was teaching sixth-grade language arts at the same school and the two paired up to test their theory with the tutors. In preparation for their tutoring sessions, she alerts the students that this skill will be the next taught to their buddies, then model the reading strategy. Before the students teach it to their buddies, they do a shared activity and practice it on their own. Completing the full gradual release of responsibility, the students turn around and teach it, using the same tools and graphic organizers as they were taught with, to their buddies.

Danielle reported that her students loved the experience and provided nothing but positive feedback. Students felt “that they really (needed to) pay attention, I think that’s the key is ‘wow, when I’m doing this, my teacher’s modeling this, this isn’t just for me, I can’t fluff it off and say it doesn’t matter because now I am accountable (to someone else)” (DD6,12:21) This accountability forced the students to ask questions when they were confused or follow along a bit closer. Danielle even encouraged her own students to create visual representation as a reminder to themselves as they were learning it to provide them with the confidence to teach it (DD4).

Danielle loves that tutoring takes out the students perspective of “I can’t do it” or “I am not good enough” because they are working with younger students, students at a lower level than themselves. Danielle reports choosing the partners carefully, leaning on the sixth-grade teacher's knowledge of her students, and her notes on the types of buddies that they might need.

A student who typically wasn’t known for completing his feedback forms, and who struggled to get work turned in throughout the year, reported that he “enjoyed helping someone like that” (DD6, 15:29). She loved watching the self-reflection that her students went through, and the bond that they created with their buddies. Multiple students said they underestimated how hard teaching a younger student would be, that “when you’re in the action of it, you realize you’re the teacher” (DD6, 20:57), and that when it didn’t go the way that they expected it to go, they worked to make it better for next time. Danielle also loved watching the bonds of the students, sharing appreciations at the end of their sessions, thanking the younger students for working with them that day (DD6, 54:25).

Creating student ownership in the classroom is fun for Danielle to watch and important to the buy-in for her curriculum. “That’s my favorite part, is to watch them go from kind of having

me at the beginning of the year, to see me kind of back off as a facilitator and help them a little but (let them go.)” (DD1, 23:45)

What motivates Danielle

Danielle is motivated by making a difference and the feelings she gets from the creation of new lessons and plans. She says, “I guess that feeling. That feeling of making a difference. Accomplishing someone to be better. There is so the motivation of always evolving. I feel like my material is there but I'm constantly changing it according to the receptiveness of my students. So I'm always that person whether it's teaching, or whether it's like with coaching; ‘How can I better say this’ or ‘how can I make a better picture,’ For them to understand, get them from A to B. And so and in my writing like how can I change this to be better for my reader to see what I'm saying. And so I think evolving. And then I do have some type of drive with the creation part of it. I think somehow it stimulates my brain to be like inventor type. Yea, just being at the highest level, taking something and designing and creating I get very gratified. Versus using someone else's. I'd want to create... For me, it's more just changing a life because of a tool” (DD5, 42:13).

Data Compared to the Themes

Eighteen themes emerged across the research participants. Each of the four teachers demonstrates these 18 themes to some extent in their classroom. The following figures identify how those themes played out in different classrooms. These figures are an extension of Figure 6 but serve to view the similarities and differences between the classrooms and themes.

Personalized Education

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Personalized education	Curriculum decisions were made to ensure each student's	Personalized education, student choice, promotion of student	<p>“It empowers them to know what they need and what will be a spot that is personalized.” PP1</p> <p>Teach students to soar with their own</p>	Data-driven, strategy groups personalized to students, choices for activities on the menu.	“I can't say enough about the power of choices and how I think that impacts student engagement” (II4).	Believes that she personalizes her students' education due to knowing them so well. Decisions are made because of knowing them.

	success. Flexible curriculum.	reflection	wings. Priority on fairness.			
--	-------------------------------------	------------	---------------------------------	--	--	--

Figure 11. Chart for Personalized Education, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Personalized education is defined as curriculum decisions that are made to ensure each student's success. Since the curriculum is supportive of all students, it means that the curriculum is flexible, with the teachers able to make adjustments and differentiated options based on the students needs. Examples of personalized education that are coded in the data include options for student choice in the work—allowing the students to have a say about the structure or topics of their work.

For Perceptive Paige, she found herself regularly discussing a student's need to find what is best for that student. She uses the phrase “Soar with their own wings” in an effort to show all of the students in her class that they are each unique and different—and have different needs. She encourages those needs through personalized learning. According to Paige, “It empowers them to know what they need and what will be a spot that is personalized” (PP1). Personalized learning has a huge role in Paige's classroom and is something that she mentioned on multiple occasions during our time together.

Ownership Owen treats personalized learning differently, yet it is also a huge part of his classroom routines and practices. For Owen, his personalized learning comes from student choices during their “open hour” of classroom time. During this time, the students work on activities on their weekly menu. The students get to choose which activities to work on when, cognizant of the need to finish all of the activities that week. Owen also personalizes learning based on a computer program intervention system that his school uses. The students are required to log time each week, and each week Owen looks at the data that he gets from that program and supports the students through it. Owen focuses his strategy groupings based on that data and, at times, his student collaboration groups (triads). Through the use of data, and the student menu, just about each aspect of Owen's class is personalized to his students.

Inclusive Isabelle personalizes learning by offering her students choice in just about everything that they do. According to Isabelle, “I can’t say enough about the power of choices and how I think that impacts student engagement” (II4). Therefore, whether it is the book options she has for her students or the directions that her writing is going, she is working to make sure that the students are able to make decisions in their learning, decisions that fit their own needs. Compared to Paige and Owen, the personalized learning in Isabelle’s class is a bit more subtle, but it is present nonetheless.

Similar to Inclusive Isabelle, Deliberate Danielle expresses her personalized learning in a more subtle manner. For Danielle, her personalization comes from knowing her students so well, analyzing their personal needs, and incorporating that into how she plans her lessons. Danielle discussed how she plans for different examples for the different classes because of how well she knows her students. In conjunction with this knowledge of her students, she also works to meet the needs of each of her students through how she structures assignments and projects.

Purposeful Literacy Experiences

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Purposeful literacy experiences	The teacher creates literacy experiences that are purposeful and relevant to the student's life.	Project-based learning, literacy experiences outside of the classroom, setting the purpose	Project-based learning. Authentic audience with reading and writing buddies.	Real-life examples (crime cases, wheel of fortune spending, NFL team), building a student's background for later work.	Strong priority on relevance, literacy experiences outside of the classroom, Global Read Aloud, writing to NFL commissioner, TED Talks to hook students, providing genuine audience for reading and writing.	Helping the students to see how the pieces of the literacy experience fit into a larger picture. Real-world examples.

Figure 12. Chart for Purposeful Literacy Experiences, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Purposeful literacy experiences is defined by the teacher creating literacy experiences that are purposeful and relevant to the student's life. This can be done through the inherent

nature of the project or by setting up a purpose and goal for the student so they are able to view its application.

Perceptive Paige creates purposeful literacy experiences through the audiences she provides her students. Paige is guided by a set curriculum, but she works to expand the curriculum so the students see value and purpose in it. The largest way she does this is through providing her students with an audience for their reading and their writing. One such audience is her elementary reading and writing buddies. For both, her students act as mentors and leaders, which requires them to be specific with their own craft and understand it well. This provides relevance and an end goal that her students need to be motivated to engage in the literacy experiences.

Ownership Owen chooses projects and examples for his students that he knows will be relevant to their lives. For example, instead of Owen's students writing a persuasive essay on a current topic, Owen found he had many athletic students in his class. Therefore, they turned their persuasive essay into a letter to the NFL commissioner regarding a new NFL team. He also builds their background and context for work through media and video clips that he knows his students will connect to. An example of this would be watching a YouTube clip on inventions that failed when starting their research and work on inventions. He wanted to hook them with something different, so showing the imperfect inventions was the way to do that.

Inclusive Isabelle creates purpose for her students at a broader level. She says she does this through extending the literacy experience outside of her classroom from the onset of the school year. She credits the Global Read Aloud as a way her students can connect to students across the nation about books with controversial issues. Isabelle finds her students connect to their text differently knowing that they will be responding to students outside of her classroom. Similar to Owen, Isabelle also had students writing letters to the NFL commissioner. However, she also had students writing to other CEOs of companies and organizations that they were interested in. Isabelle too wanted to provide a genuine audience for her students, creating

that drive to write well. Finally, Isabelle uses media platforms such as TED Talks to generate her students' interest. Through the TED Talks, the students connect to the content and see the relevance of the issues and ideas. Isabelle then uses that interest to motivate her students to participate in the literacy experience.

Deliberate Danielle creates purposeful learning experiences by setting the “relevance and rigor” (DD4, 20:08) for her students. She wants her students to see how the work that they do for her class is bigger than assignments for their teacher. Instead she wants them to understand the content in relation to a bigger picture—how they will use these skills in their lives. Danielle finds that she scaffolds the work that the students do in order for them to see how one thing will build on another. She then takes those skills and ties them to real-life applications. Similar to Paige, Danielle also works to provide an authentic audience through the concept of reading buddies. Danielle’s students meet with students at a younger grade in her school and mentors them through the reading process. As Danielle works through her reading lessons, she is constantly coming back to how her students could teach this idea to their buddies and why it is important to know how to do it.

Educating the Whole Student

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Educating the whole student	Activities, routines, and structures work to educate the whole person, not simply pushing content.	Educating the whole student, reading as a lifelong habit	Remind the students that they “will change the world someday.” Helping them reach above and beyond themselves.	“They need to learn this and that but it's really more about learning how to be good students and good people. They're very impressionable on their learning. In sixth grade who they're gonna be, they're starting to do that” (OO5, 24:01).	“I feel like so good because there are things that kids don't really know about... so I just feel like it's a really, it's an empathy builder for them more than anything else.” Empathy built through diverse texts, no rules other than respect.	It's not all about learning. It's learning the whole self. Believes that it is her job to “build the students, their character and everything, and how it all works together as a system.”

Figure 13. Chart for Educating the Whole Student, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

I defined the idea of educating the whole student as activities, routines, and structures in place that work to educate the whole person. These activities, routines, and structures are not necessarily focused on literacy but can include community, gratitude, and mental health.

Perceptive Paige views educating the whole person as helping the students understand where they are and what they need. For Paige, she recognizes that students cannot learn well if they are not mentally well, so she works hard to help her students understand that they need to communicate with her. She also wants each of her students to know that she cares about who they are as a person and as a learner, and that she wants the best for them. If that means that they need a pass from learning or a pass from a hard deadline once in a while, she grants it to them. She also works to support them in reaching beyond what they ever dreamed was possible for themselves.

According to Ownership Owen, “They need to learn this and that but it’s really more about learning how to be good students and good people. They’re very impressionable on their learning. In sixth grade who they’re gonna be, they’re starting to do that” (OO5, 24:01). Owen views his job as a teacher as being to help them discover who they are going to be and to push them to be the best versions of themselves—as Owen says, “really good people.” He does this by being a very strong role model for them and exposing them to texts and information with strong characters making life choices.

Inclusive Isabelle considers educating the whole student in terms of building empathy for her students: “I feel like so good because there are things that kids don’t really know about...so I just feel like it’s a really, it’s an empathy builder for them more than anything else” (II4, 19:10). She does this through exposure to different texts and topics that the students might not know much about. She described a book she read to the whole class last year about students who were refugees. This year it is about students from varied socio-economic backgrounds. She wants her students to think differently about people who are different from them and understand where they are coming from. According to Isabelle, there are no rules in her classroom except

for respect for all—and that does not only apply to the classmates and teachers but also to the topics and ideas that they cover in class.

Deliberate Danielle works to educate her whole students by treating her students like adults and having “real” conversations with them. Danielle finds that her students are used to being treated like kids but are craving being treated like an adult, so she does. She helps them understand their personal needs and the psychological place of learning (more on this concept later). She feels it important to “build the students, their character and everything, and how it all works together as a system” (DD1, 29:47). In order for her to educate her students, she needs to educate their whole selves in order for them to feel successful.

Setting the Student Up for Success

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Setting the student up for success	Teacher has included practices that allow the students guidance and support so they feel successful.	Building confidence, repeated tools, modeling. Gradual release of responsibility	Anchor charts, pushing the curriculum to meet the needs of her students, students sharing their work, flexible due dates, book groups.	Repeating tools to build confidence, modeling everything, building students' background.	Constantly modeling using previous student work, personal examples, other student examples, examples found online. Opportunities for students to share their work.	During planning, experiencing the lesson while she creates it in order to understand where students will get stuck. Using Google slides as a guide. Lots of modeling and examples. Constant use of analogies.

Figure 14. Chart for Setting the Student Up for Success, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The definition of this theme involves the teacher including practices that give the students guidance and support so they feel successful from the onset of the task at hand.

Perceptive Paige takes many steps to help her students feel successful with their learning activity prior to beginning that activity. One example of these steps is the anchor charts that she has the room. Paige sets up all of the student work by putting together an anchor chart with her students. One student even deemed Paige the “anchor chart queen.” She creates these charts as part of the gradual release of responsibility that she uses to help her students feel ready. The idea is that by creating the chart together in a group, they should feel more successful when they have to start the work on their own. She then hangs these anchor charts around the room as visual reminders of the content that they are working on. Additionally, Paige

has her students working and collaborating in groups all of the time, whether this is writing groups or reading and book groups. She wants the students to learn from and with one another. Finally, Paige uses flexible due dates to help her students feel most successful. She would rather students do the work well and want to do better than be rushed to complete something by the due date that is not well done.

Ownership Owen builds confidence and success in his students through his modeling and use of repeated tools. Prior to starting any writing task, Owen has an example of that text written on the board ready to share. The work that Owen shares is an example that he wrote, and then he proceeds to talk to his students through the thought process that he went through to get to the end product. Also, Owen uses repeated tools with his students to build their confidence in the content that they will create. Owen discussed using a graphic organizer that the students had used multiple times before. He does this so that the students do not have to use extra brain power to work with the tool (or graphic organizer." Instead, he wants the students' focus to be on the content that they put on the graphic organizer. Finally, Owen works to build the students' background prior to releasing them to do the task on their own. Prior to starting a unit on Norse mythology, Owen did multiple activities so the students became familiar with Norse mythology. Owen knew that his students understood Greek mythology, but not Norse, so he needed to help them understand the overall differences before releasing the students into their books.

Inclusive Isabelle has her own notebooks right alongside her students. She uses these notebooks to complete all of the work that she is asking the students to do, modeling the examples, notes, and writing assignments. She then keeps these notebooks readily accessible to her students in case they need to look back to how she did something. Along with showing her own examples, she also shows the work of previous students or allows her current students to share an exemplary example for the work.

Deliberate Danielle stated that during her planning process, she works to “experience the lesson” in the same way that the students would. Her hope in doing her planning that way is to see where the students might get stuck or need other support. She wants each of her students to feel as successful as they can from the beginning, so she approaches the planning process as experiential and analytical—she is constantly thinking about her students’ understanding during the process. Another way that Danielle constantly works to help her students understand the work is by attaching analogies to the work. Danielle is constantly citing analogies for the content, comparing them to concepts that the students will understand and relate to.

Best Learning Environment

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Best learning environment	Classroom atmosphere allows each student to find their best learning environment. It is set up for students to feel successful due to the classroom setup.	Best learning environment, relaxed atmosphere	<p>“Profitable and healthy spot for themselves—always aiming at finding their best selves in their choice.”</p> <p>Flexible seating options—changing seats every week. Creating joy in their classroom.</p>	Partnered tables in U-shape, personalized wall space to connect to students, lights off while teaching to calm students, plays video game music in the background while students are working.	Students contributing to forming class expectations and rules, phone jail, comfy chairs.	Grouped tables. Classroom lights off, with lamps and Christmas lights on. Comfy chairs for reading. Easy access for the students to “come together” during their community circle.

Figure 15. Chart for Best Learning Environment, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The best learning environment is defined as a classroom atmosphere that allows each student to find their own best learning environment. It is set up for students to feel successful due to the physical space.

Perceptive Paige had the most obvious version of best learning environment options out of each of the teachers. Paige asks her students to find their own seats every week based on the learning environment that they need. Paige never has assigned seats but rather allows her students to choose the “Profitable and healthy spot for themselves—always aiming at finding their best selves in their choice” (PP3, 1.19:14). Her classroom environment is filled with a

variety of flexible seating options that include tall top tables and rocking chairs to go along with the tables and desks. Her space is also filled with positive messages for the students and plants to bring added oxygen into the space. This creates a relaxed atmosphere where students feel successful. She also has a strict schedule of routines that the students come to understand and anticipate. Paige feels that this specific schedule helps eliminate the stress and anxiety of the “what is happening in class today” feeling for the students.

Ownership Owen’s classroom atmosphere is similar to Paige’s in the sense that he too keeps a tight schedule of routines in his classroom. However, that is mostly where the similarities in their classroom spaces end. Owen feels that the best learning environment for his students is to be in tables that make a u-shape in the middle of the room. He likes this space because it allows for easy movement. He has the students grouped in pairs to be able to work with one another. Owen also feels that quiet music while working is an important part of his classroom environment. He will always turn this music on when the students have independent work time. Additionally, Owen teaches with his classroom lights mostly off. Again, Owen feels that having the lights off creates a calming atmosphere that helps his students be successful.

Inclusive Isabelle also has her students grouped in tables, but her tables are set for groups of six students collaborating together. She also requested that the chairs that she has for her tables be ones that have arm rests and cushions. She wanted her students to feel comfortable in their literacy spaces. Isabelle tried to mimic the “comfy chair” of their favorite reading space for her classroom environment. And although Isabelle has other seating options throughout her room where students can move to during independent reading time, she finds that not many of her students choose to move out of their spot due to those chairs.

Deliberate Danielle has a unique mix of each of the classrooms previously mentioned. Danielle teaches her day with a mixture of lights on and lights off. When the classroom lights are on, she is guiding the students in a mini lesson. When the lights are off, the students are immersed in their independent work time. Danielle has multiple strands of string lights around

the room, all varied in look and style. Those lights are the lights of the classroom when it is the student work time. She also has grouped tables, but only three students to a table. To go along with the tables, Danielle has a few additional seating options for students such as a tall table with a foot swing and two additional teacher desks for students to sit at. Similar to each of the other classrooms presented, the overall feel of Danielle's room is comfortable and relaxed.

Emphasis on Progress

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Emphasis on progress	Classroom assessment focuses on student growth and development over assigning a grade.	Emphasis on progress, feedback	Importance of rubrics over grades. Rubrics act as the students' bookmarks to remind them of their goals. Remind students/parents that grades do not reflect what their student is able to do.	Doesn't grade everything, tracks student progress—students earn badges for it.	Hates grades. Emphasizes student reflection. Returns students' previous work to compare growth.	No mention of grades at all. Uses the marathon analogy for tracking reading, constantly goal setting to beat their marathons. A comprehensive rubric helps students understand areas of improvement.

Figure 16. Chart for Educating the Whole Student, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The emphasis on progress utilizes classroom assessment practices that focus on student growth and development as opposed to assigning a grade. The teachers were able to do this through providing feedback to their students and asking their students to look critically at their work and growth.

Perceptive Paige remarked that she has to remind parents that the grades they see for their child is not the sole indication for how their child is doing in class. Paige mentions that many of the ways her students grow and progress in class have no concrete way to measure them other than viewing their growth. Paige does have student rubrics that she works off of and encourages her students to actively resort back to, but she reminds her students that their end scores do not always represent the new ways that they are thinking and experiencing their literacy tasks.

Ownership Owen does not find himself grading much of his students' work. He finds it important for the students to go through his exercise to help them practice their skills. Instead,

as previously mentioned, he tracks their progress and work through their data systems and meets with his students based on that work. Owen makes it special as his students progress through the online program by awarding badges to his students as they improve on their work. When it comes to the practices he has in his class, he does not focus on the grades but rather the responsibility of completing the tasks to the best of their abilities.

Inclusive Isabelle flat-out stated during her interviews that she “hates grades.” She feels that although the extrinsic reward is important at times, when students and parents focus on grades, they forget about holding themselves to high expectations for quality of work. Instead, Isabelle feels that it is incredibly important for her students to view the ways that they have progressed in the work that they are doing. One way that she does this is by showing her students work that they did at the start of the year, or start of a unit, and comparing it to their final products.

Deliberate Danielle did not have any mention of grades or points at all during the time I spent with her. Danielle feels that it is incredibly important for her students to be able to track where they are in regards to their literacy tasks and to be able to set goals for constantly improving it. Danielle spoke of a comprehensive rubric that she uses with her students regarding parts of their writing, which she created for an easy reference and tool that the students can use to understand their abilities and what they need to do to get better. One of the ways Danielle said that teaching is hard is because she loves analyzing and interpreting the student work that comes in. This becomes hard because she finds that she spends a lot of time doing it, which takes away from her family time at home. Throughout the analyzing process, Danielle is constantly leaving feedback for students to push them to be better at their own skills.

Constant Reflection

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Constant reflection	The teacher engages in	Constantly working to	I spend a lot of time thinking, okay, how	Reflecting throughout the day—gets better	Adjusts teaching in the moment.	“That lifelong learner in me just [knows] that

	practices that constantly question their effectiveness, appropriateness, and student response in order to lead to the best delivery.	make practices better, reflection, guinea pigs	am I going to make this even better than what it is on paper? What am I going to do to reach twenty-eight. I'm constantly doing that." Improve as the day goes on.	as his day progresses, lots of alone activities to reflect on school.	Maintains a running document with change suggestions for the future.	there's always something I can do better. There's always a way that I can do it better. So by reflecting, saying what went well, strengths and weaknesses [emerge]."
--	--	---	---	---	--	--

Figure 17. Chart for Constant Reflection, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Constant reflection is defined by the teacher engaging in practices that constantly question their effectiveness, appropriateness, and student response in order to lead to best delivery. They do this because of their desire to constantly make their practices better for their students.

Perceptive Paige says, "I spend a lot of time thinking, okay, how am I going to make this even better than what it is on paper? What am I going to do to reach twenty-eight [students]? I'm constantly doing that" (PP3, 24:48). Due to this reflection, Paige spends an extensive amount of time on the creation of her lesson plans. She also finds that if something is not going well while she is teaching, she will adjust her plan to make it work better for her students.

Ownership Owen recognized that his life outside of school is conducive to being a better teacher. He states that while doing a lot of solo exercising such as running and swimming, he finds himself thinking about his practices and plans. Owen is constantly reflecting on the content he puts in front of his students to ensure that what he puts forward is going to be the best for his students.

Inclusive Isabelle too is critical of the plans that she has for her students, and she also constantly reflects on their effectiveness throughout the lesson. Not only does she work to make her lessons better even in the moment, but she is also leaving notes for herself after her units finish to remember her changes for replicating them in future years.

Deliberate Danielle takes the stance that "That lifelong learner in me just [knows] that there's always something I can do better. There's always a way that I can do it better. So by reflecting, saying what went well, strengths and weaknesses [emerge]" (DD5, 14:55). This

competitive drive to always improve is what keeps Danielle analyzing and reflecting on her work. Danielle will change her plans and examples for the different groups that she has in front of her because of her reflection both on the effectiveness the plan had in the previous class and on how she can anticipate the new set of students responding to the content.

Being Vulnerable

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Being vulnerable	The teacher is willing to share their personal self with their students.	Making mistakes in front of them, personal sharing of stories	Shares that she is a lifelong learner as well. Showcases the fact that "I have flaws too." Name jar.	"Share your life with them. Be real with them. Do not do it in an awkward way, instead just be real with them. Be vulnerable. I use a model for everything, a real model from my life" (obse. notes).	Writing notes and models in front of the students. Regularly editing the models.	Constantly sharing personal stories as examples. Showcase lifelong learners.

Figure 18. Chart for Being Vulnerable, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Being vulnerable included the teacher being willing to share their personal selves with their students. Their personal selves include their personal reading and writing, as well as personal stories that spurred the aforementioned.

Perceptive Paige's students love to catch her in a mistake. In fact, she makes a game out of catching her mistakes of mixing up students' names. The class all laughs and adds fake money into a name jar, punishing her—or making her bake them goodies—when Paige's totals get too high. While teaching, if Paige mixes up something, or forgets something, she readily calls attention to the fact that she made a mistake. Paige does this because she wants her students to see that it is okay for people to make mistakes and that it is nothing to be nervous about or ashamed of. Instead, it is important to work to be better. Paige embracing her mistakes showcases her vulnerabilities to her students.

Ownership Owen believes that vulnerability is one of the most important ways that he can motivate his students to engage in literacy experiences. He said, "Share your life with them. Be real with them. Do not do it in an awkward way, instead just be real with them. Be vulnerable. I use a model for everything, a real model from my life" (obse. notes). Owen

provides a model for everything he does with his students, and his models are always something that he created as the reader or writer. Each of the examples gives Owen's students a small glimpse into his personal life. It also helps his students relate to him and come up with their own ideas based on what Owen did. Owen also finds that sometimes his students will correct the work that Owen did or suggest ways to make it even better. Owen embraces these comments and encourages the students to continue to be critical of every written piece.

Inclusive Isabelle uses her modeling to be vulnerable with her students. Unlike Owen, Isabelle does not delve as deeply in sharing her personal life with her students. She will share information about herself in terms of her family, but she does not share her stories and personal examples as a means to spur student writing. Instead, she models the writing and then edits and revises her ideas right in front of her students. She wants her students to see writing as a process that everyone can continue to improve and make better, and that as the teacher, even her writing is not perfect. Isabelle embraces making mistakes in front of her students and embraces opportunities where she and her students can learn together.

Deliberate Danielle readily shares her life with her students. She considers sharing her vulnerabilities a way of demonstrating the lifelong learner in her. She uses personal stories for her examples and analogies with her students and writes models off of personal experiences. Danielle uses these personal experiences to help her students see the trusting environment that she has built and that she is a willing participant in that community right alongside her students.

Making Connections

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Making connections	The teacher works to get to know the student so that they can create a bridge or a connection between material, or	Making connections, meeting the students at their level, listening to students	"One of the top things that I really stress and focus on. And that's through connections with students, and then you can find out how they're motivated because each student is probably going to be	Connecting content to build background, uses technology to connect to students—hook students.	"Lets them (the students) know that I care what they think." Getting to know students' reading background well—textual lineage.	Listens to her students intently in order to use their interests and their lingo to help them make connections to her content. Constant use of analogies to foster connections to content.

	between each other.		different.” Trailhead question.			
--	---------------------	--	------------------------------------	--	--	--

Figure 19. Chart for Making Connections, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The teachers in this study felt that if they can connect to their students, they will be able to motivate the students to engage in literacy experiences. Making connections is defined as the practice of the teacher working to get to know their students so that they can create a bridge or a connection for the students to themselves, and to the material.

Perceptive Paige says that “(Making connections- that 's)One of the top things that I really stress and focus on. And that’s through connections with students, and then you can find out how they’re motivated because each student is probably going to be different” (PP4, 21:27). Paige does this through a variety of ways, but she starts each day with finding out the interests and opinions of her student through her trailhead questions. Every day she posts something that she wants her students to respond to. From the cute kitten or the cute baby deer, preference between milk or juice, or one word that describes their morning, Paige is taking in this information and using it to know her students. This is a process that she will do all year so that she constantly is gaining new information about her students to be able to use when supporting them.

Ownership Owen works to build student connection through subtle moves, such as hooking students with technology and connecting to students with common interests. Owen enjoys listening to his students and using those interests during his classes. One way he accomplished this last year was through the quiet music choice he played during independent student work time. He knew that he had a group of students who loved video games, so the music that he played was video game background music. He said that this small connection to his students helps them feel motivated within their classroom.

One of the driving factors in making connections for Inclusive Isabelle is for her to show the students that she really cares about them and what they think. Therefore, she spends time throughout the year working to know her students’ background, and then she uses that

background to connect students to texts. This begins with one of the first projects that Isabelle does, her textual lineage project. This involves the students sharing the books and texts that have made them into the readers that they are. Isabelle says she studies this information and uses it to support her students throughout the year.

Deliberate Danielle uses the student lingo that she hears throughout the room to show her students that she is listening to them—in a supportive and caring way. She will drop a phrase that the students have been using and the students will be entertained by her knowledge. She then uses the fact that they are impressed she knew the concept to connect to the content that she is instructing. She says that she listens intently to her students for their interests and mannerisms so she can use those things to hook the students on the content through the examples that she uses. She feels that these bits of information are treasured because they are an immediate connection to the students.

Learning as a Partnership

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Learning as a partnership	A sociocultural take on learning. Part of a give and take experience with another. New ideas are formed by working with other perspectives.	Job of the teacher is less needed, student ownership, learning with their peers, learning with the teacher	It is helping the student understand that they can express these needs and that she will “deeply listen.” Students’ choice of seats teach them their needs in an educational environment.	Student menus, strategy group instruction, triads with their peers. “Hey bud, you didn’t get this concept or what we were learning with pronouns, so let’s strategy group, let’s figure [it] out and tackle [it] together and rebuild those skills” (OO2, 27:49).	Constantly seeking suggestions for writing topics, models. Many opportunities for students to evaluate work/class and provide feedback for changes.	Student authority in classroom routines and practices. Students leading the implementation of practices.

Figure 20. Chart for Learning as a Partnership, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Learning as a partnership is defined as having a give-and-take experience with another person. New ideas are formed by working with other perspectives. The partnership creates a learning experience that is two-way, with both student and teacher invested in the success of the learning experience. Each of the teachers feels that their job is to become less needed over time due to the students taking their own learning upon themselves.

Perceptive Paige wants her students to know the importance of communicating their needs to her and that she will always be open to listening. She is constantly working to build her students' confidence so they know that they can advocate for themselves and speak up for what they need. The way she accomplishes this is by showing her students that she cares about their needs and will work with them to create learning tasks that they will feel successful in. Her flexibility and care for her students show them that together they will share in the learning experiences.

Ownership Owen uses his strategy group time to show the students the importance of learning being a partnership process. Owen finds that he can pull smaller groups during that time and work with them at a more personal level, supporting the student with exactly what they need. Owen shared that he will say to a student, "Hey bud, you didn't get this concept or what we were learning with pronouns, so let's strategy group, let's figure [it] out and tackle [it] together and rebuild those skills" (OO2, 27:49). This shows the student that the two of them will work together in the learning process.

Inclusive Isabelle encourages her students to share in the learning process by providing ample opportunities for her students to reflect on and evaluate their projects. Isabelle asks her students to fill out evaluations on the various projects and at various times in her class in order to gauge how the students are receiving their coursework. She wants her students to know that their opinion matters and that their classroom activities are meant to be things that they would be interested in. She will tweak the activities and plans if she sees that they are not achieving the motivational factors that she planned for them to.

Deliberate Danielle gives her students the authority to propose new classroom routines and practices in an effort for them to feel autonomy in their learning. She wants the classroom environment to be one which each student contributes to and participates in, and she is willing to adjust practices based on the needs of her students. Due to her welcoming her students into the learning experience, they take leadership roles in the classroom and help others around

them succeed. Danielle finds her students are incredibly active in the running of her classroom, which allows her to sit back and watch how practices will unfold, an experience she enjoys.

Building a Trusting Community

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Building a trusting community	The teacher actively works to create an environment where students feel comfortable sharing. The students feel membership to the group.	Build community, build trust, willing to take risks	Showcasing fairness, the need to support one another.	Students trust that he isn't going to waste their time. Won't sell "junk stories," creates trust to share—students willing to risk participation.	90 Seconds of Sunshine. One rule: respect one another.	"They always have a right to pass. They don't have to share. It's neat to see some kids at the beginning here who pass. You know for a while until they feel comfortable and until you can tell that they trust the community and then they open up and start sharing."

Figure 21. Chart for Building a Trusting Community, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

This theme is defined by the teacher actively working to create an environment where students feel comfortable sharing. The students feel membership to the group, which allows them to engage in the literacy experiences. The teachers do this by building trust in the community and in one another.

Perceptive Paige works to build her classroom's trusting environment through building faith in her students that she is working to do what is best for everyone. As previously noted, Paige works incredibly hard to personalize learning for her students. This emerges in adjustments and differentiation that some students receive while others do not. Paige says that building her environment includes discussion on fairness and support of one another. Paige helps her students understand everyone's learning needs, and not only is it Paige's job to support those students, but it is their classmates' jobs as well. Therefore, she is creating a classroom environment that works to support all students and trusts that each person is going to work to make the best learning environment they can.

Ownership Owen describes the fact that he has to earn his students' trust when it comes to the coursework that they are doing. Owen builds a trusting environment by showing his students that he is not going to waste their time with content and activities that are meaningless

to them. Instead, he is working to bring high-interest and valuable topics to his students, so they trust in his content and are more willing to engage.

Inclusive Isabelle wants every member of her classroom to feel welcomed and valued. One way that she accomplishes this is the practice of welcoming her students. She greets her students at the door, ready for each student to start the day with a clean slate. She wants her students to know that no matter what previous days have been like, each day they have a new chance of being a valued member in the classroom community. Another way she builds a trusting community is through having her students show gratitude and give compliments to one another. Each day students are asked to share a compliment or gratitude with classmates, highlighting the value of each classmate. This practice builds their classroom community and allows each student to feel welcomed and appreciated.

Deliberate Danielle uses a community circle each day to start her learning community off on a positive note. During their community circle the students are encouraged to share about their lives and share in community conversations. It is the practice of constantly sharing that helps build the community in Danielle’s classroom. Danielle will notice her class opening up to one another more once they recognize that Danielle’s classroom is a safe space. Danielle states, “They always have a right to pass. They don’t have to share. It’s neat to see some kids at the beginning here who pass. You know for a while until they feel comfortable and you can tell that they trust the community and then they open up and start sharing” (DD6, 1:28). Once they have built that trusting environment, her class learns from one another and supports one another.

Content Creation

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Content creation	The teacher works on the material, creating	Google Slides presentations, media/video	Project-based learning expands beyond the set curriculum. Agreement with the administration that	Feels it's easier to create his own models—he knows what he wants from them, and knows how the students will	Harvest ideas from mentors/role models, social media, and published journals. Make adjustments to work for current	Thrives with the creation of content. Google Slides in three-months worth of content. Innovative classroom posters designed on her own.

	lessons and examples.	clips, personal sharing	she can adjust.	relate.	students.	
--	-----------------------	-------------------------	-----------------	---------	-----------	--

Figure 22. Chart for Content Creation, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The teachers in this study value the lesson planning process, ensuring that the material they present to their students reflects the backgrounds and interests of their students. The definition of content creation is that the teacher works on their instructional material, creating lessons and examples.

Perceptive Paige does all of her lesson planning and organization using Google Slides. She places content on the slides that guides each of the instructional practices in her classroom. Even though Paige has a set curriculum, she works to make it her own, adding varied purpose to the work and examples that are personal and impactful to the students. Paige also adds many student examples to the creation of her lessons on Google Slides.

Ownership Owen does most of his content creation through the activities he plans for the student menus. He works to make sure that the menu tasks are important and self-directed. Owen makes sure to have a blend of independent tasks as well as collaborative tasks. He wants to keep the students engaged in their literacy experiences and doing work that builds their skills. For his mini lessons, Owen creates much of his content from personal examples, showing the students what the work will look like and reinforcing the task because he took time to do it as well. Owen does not use examples that he finds online, as he feels he spends more time looking for what he would want than the time it would take for him to create it himself—so he does.

Inclusive Isabelle also works off of a set curriculum, like Paige, but she also works to make that curriculum into what is best for her students. Isabelle is an active participant in reading research and the professional development world of reading practices, and she often uses these options to adjust the content that she has. Isabelle also credits individuals around her and mentors of hers from whom she harvests ideas for her content and practices. She will

take ideas from others and then tweak them to match the needs of her students and the needs of her objectives.

Similar to Paige, Deliberate Danielle also does all of her lesson planning on Google Slides. Danielle plans for three months at a time, creating long slideshows that have all of the content for those three months on the presentation. Also similar to Paige, Danielle includes many examples for her students in her presentations. Danielle's examples come from past students and from Danielle's personal examples as well. Danielle says that one of her favorite parts of being a teacher is that she gets to be an inventor. She invents the content, in a way, making it work for her specific students and thinking all of their needs and the activities that will be most successful.

High-interest Topics

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
High-interest topics	The curriculum presented has relevance and interest for the student.	Novels, content, short stories	Trailhead questions, vote for read-aloud books, push the set curriculum.	Importance of novel choices, real-world application for writing topics, out-of-the-box informational text.	Relevant topics (current events, police brutality), not censoring reading (mature topics as well as low-level). Student choice.	Real-world application. OJ Simpson court case for argumentative unit. Student choice in reading material.

Figure 23. Chart for High-interest Topics, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

I define high-interest topics as the curriculum presented has relevance and interest for the students. This would be material that the students could find relevant to their lives or topics that were new and interesting to them.

Perceptive Paige uses her passion and excitement for literacy to spur passion and excitement within her students. She credits her ability to be so enthusiastic in helping motivate the students with the topic options. Paige does not deviate from the topics provided by her set curriculum much, but instead uses those topics and creates relevance for her students that will be the motivating factor. Finally, Paige allows her students to help choose read-aloud novels based on stories that they would like to hear. She presents a few novels and then allows the

students to vote on the ones most interesting to them. This hooks the students on the topic because of their autonomy in the decision.

Ownership Owen feels that it is his job as an educator to give his students assignments and topics that are both intriguing and new. Therefore, he finds articles on real-life topics that he knows his students might not know much about. One such topic was the “hottest pepper in the world”; another topic was “snake venom” (OO1, 16:41). Owen likes showing his students the value of reading topics not typically brought into schools but which are ideas that can have real-life applications. Finally, Owen works to make choices that he feels will engage the boys more immediately than the girls. He feels that boys need more intrinsic motivation at this age, so he works to find stories and books that will be engaging to them, and then engages the girls.

Inclusive Isabelle works to extend the topics of her set curriculum to topics that she feels her students would be more engaged and interested in. When it came to the work that Isabelle did regarding persuasive writing, she too wanted to make sure her students had a strong opinion on the topic to allow them to write about it. Therefore, she chose the topic of school violence, as it was something that the students had to struggle to understand. She found that many of her students felt extremely passionate about the topic which made it easier to write about. Once Isabelle capitalized on this passion, she was able to fuse other curriculum ideas with it to keep the students' motivation high.

Deliberate Danielle uses real-world examples to excite her students for the literacy tasks. For example, when Danielle was discussing using supporting evidence, she had her students watch clips from the O. J. Simpson trial. She also allows the students the option of choosing their reading material, allowing for student choice in their work. Finally, she chooses read-aloud stories specifically to engage her students with characters they might not have seen before. She was reading a story about a cyborg during class, and although the mechanical side to it engaged her male students more, the character was a girl, which engaged her female students.

Teacher's Promotion of Students Seeing Themselves as Readers/Writers

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Teacher's promotion of Students seeing themselves as readers/writers	The teachers encourage the students and themselves to view themselves as capable in the literacy processes.	Confidence in the content, participate in reading community	Empowers her students through her enthusiasm, knowing that she is listening. Published treasure book.	<p>"I want the kids to never feel like that's the perfect example. I'll say this could have been better or I didn't spend enough time on this but I'm going to go back. So I correct my work in front of them."</p> <p>"In middle school, it's more or less you want to build skills and love reading."</p>	<p>"There is a culture and expectations. That this is the class of readers and writers."</p> <p>"I try to really get kids to realize, like, you will write like this in some form. I don't care if you're working at your dad's car shop, you're gonna have to do some kind of reading and writing. And so having these skills, like, gives you power."</p>	wants her students to be able to understand what it feels like to focus on their reading and not be distracted by everything around them. Once Danielle found that her students were successful with their "in the zone" reading, she found it was hard to break them out of their zone. Wants her students to know reading and writing are lifelong habits that need to be practiced, just like exercise.

Figure 24. Chart for Teacher's Promotion of Students Seeing Themselves as Readers and Writers, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The definition of the teacher's promotion of students seeing themselves as readers and writers is that the teachers encourage and support the students so that they see themselves as capable in the literacy processes. Viewing themselves as capable gives them confidence in the content that they are working with, which in turn leads to participating in their learning communities.

Perceptive Page refers to her students as a group as "readers" and "writers" during the instruction time of those units. While the students are working on their reading, anytime she needs to get the group's attention she will stop them by addressing them as "readers." She does the same during the writing units. She uses these terms instead of saying a general term like "students" or "kiddos" because she wants her students to know that she views them as readers and writers. To instill that same view in her students, she uses publishing tools online to publish her students' work in hardcover books. This one little project turns her students into authors, which allows them to realize their potential as writers.

According to Ownership Owen, "I want the kids to never feel like that's the perfect example. I'll say this could have been better or I didn't spend enough time on this but I'm going

to go back. So I correct my work in front of them,” (OO5, 6:58) because he wants them to see the process of reading and writing. He also wants the students to work with him as a reader and a writer so they can view themselves as a reader and a writer as well. Hopefully when his students view him as a reader and writer still in progress, it provides them with the role model that they need to be able to view themselves as readers and writers.

In Inclusive Isabelle’s classroom, “There is a culture and expectations that this is the class of readers and writers” (II4, 25:56). Isabelle works to make sure that her students know that the cool thing to do in her room is be a reader and a writer, and that she is going to work to help them be the best readers and writers that they can be. She also helps them see the importance of being a reader and a writer because they will need to be a reader and a writer their entire lives. “I try to really get kids to realize, like, you will write like this in some form. I don't care if you're working at your dad's car shop, you're gonna have to do some kind of reading and writing. And so having these skills, like, gives you power” (II4, 57:58).

Deliberate Danielle uses the analogy that being a reader and a writer is similar to getting exercise for your body. Both are healthy lifelong habits, and both are something that every individual will need to continue to work on their whole lives. This analogy turns reading and writing into something every individual should do in order to live a healthy and happy life. She continues with her analogy by saying she will be their trainer this year to give them the confidence to form these healthy habits and to give them exercises they can do to be better at strengthening these habits. Her students can clearly understand this analogy, and it gives them confidence to work on being healthy by getting better at these habits.

Professional Learning Opportunities/Educational Talk

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Professional learning	Opportunities for the teacher	Teacher is part of	Presence in online learning communities that	Turns to past college professor for assistance and to talk	Mentorships through her master's program, reads daily	Constantly reading the research and taking advantage of every

opportunities /educational talk	to experience professional growth and development. Opportunities are guided and based in research and effective practices.	learning communities, opportunities/ professional development	relate to the content that she has.	through content, reaches out to high school colleagues, team approach format of school.	educational emails/blogs. Constantly reading current research and professional development texts.	professional development opportunity that she can.
---------------------------------	--	---	-------------------------------------	---	---	--

Figure 25. Chart for Professional Learning Opportunities, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

Perceptive Paige is highly engaged in learning communities surrounding the set curriculum her district has in place. Not only did she discuss the activity during data collection, but she also talked to the students about it as well—making comments on how others in those learning communities would be impressed by the work her students were doing. She spends an extensive amount of time during the lesson planning process going through posts on media platforms, but she also returns to those platforms during the units to showcase their success. Her contributing to the successful discussions helps many others in the reading communities and gives her confidence to continue to try new things.

This was not Ownership Owen's strongest theme. While he does participate in educational talk every day with his peers, it was not an idea he came back to multiple times. With that said, there were ways that Owen discussed educational talk and its importance in his teaching. One of these ways was his relationship with a past professor of his. Not only was that professor one of the reasons why he went into education in the first place, but they have also been a supportive figure during his career.

Inclusive Isabelle spent three years during her career as a literacy specialist for Brown County, which involved her studying reading research on a daily basis. Since returning to the classroom, she continues this practice. Each morning she has multiple daily emails from different literacy organizations discussing books and practices. She also follows many researchers on various media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, tracking the articles that they post and the discussions they are igniting. She uses this knowledge not only to enhance

her practices, but also to give back to the community by continuing to present at various literacy events in her district and in her city. She also sits on the executive board for a literacy council associated with the state literacy organization.

Deliberate Danielle loves attending professional development opportunities. She says that these opportunities not only re-invigorate her, but also that she gets so much out of these experiences to hold in her “back pocket” for when she needs new ideas (DD5, 4:05). Danielle attempts to go to whatever literacy professional development opportunities are available to her and has even submitted to present at them. Danielle is active in educational talk opportunities within her school, taking advantage of the professional book study opportunities that she has and contributing to their conversations.

Meeting the Students’ Psychological Needs

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Meeting the students’ psychological needs	The teacher is concerned with the student’s needs beyond their academic abilities.	Mental and emotional well-being	Greeting every student every day, the mindful rest part of her routine to reset and prepare for the day. Knowing that the students cannot learn if they are not emotionally well.	Relevance in student material, the structured schedule eases anxiety, hopes to help the students mature. Likes to teach with lights off, provides calming atmosphere for students	Regular one-on-one conferring with students, meeting students’ social/emotional needs through 90 Seconds of Sunshine. Every day is a new day.	“I just love anything psychology-wise, and that’s why I really like mindfulness because they start at this age to mature enough to understand.”

Figure 26. Chart for Meeting Students’ Psychological Needs, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

This theme is defined as the teacher is concerned with the students’ needs beyond their academic abilities, and it is demonstrated through the teachers’ active planning for mental and emotional well-being. Whether through the environment they create, student collaboration, or support through student connection, the teachers are constantly attempting to help their students be emotionally and psychologically well.

Perceptive Paige knows and understands the importance of being emotionally ready to learn. That is why she implemented a “mindful rest” period in her day, every day. She feels that

if her students are not emotionally ready to get going, then no matter what type of content she is trying to cover, it will be useless to those students. During her mindful rest period, the students have the chance to just sit and draw; Paige has the lights off and quiet music on. Paige also uses that time to check in with students, making sure that they are doing well and are set up and ready to have a great afternoon.

Ownership Owen works to meet his students' psychological needs by the environment that he creates. This includes having a classroom that is relaxed yet structured. Owen teaches most days without his classroom lights on. He does this because of the calming feel it brings to his classroom, but also to eliminate the harsh lights. He feels that students appreciate the relaxed feel of the space, especially when many other areas of their lives are anything but relaxed. It is also a structured space in the sense that his students can anticipate what each day will be like. He keeps a structured schedule to lessen anxiety in his students.

Inclusive Isabelle regularly meets with each student on a one-on-one basis. Her goal with this conferring time is to gauge where each student is at, discuss what the student's goals are, and see how she can help that student. Her students love having the ability to meet with her one-on-one and share where they are at without the pressure of other students listening in or judging them. She also works hard to bring positivity to her classroom environment. She finds that adolescents are not always great about supporting one another and having positive interactions. Therefore, Isabelle makes those positive interactions a daily practice in her classroom, which helps her students have a more positive mindset towards her class in general, supporting their emotional and mental well-being.

Deliberate Danielle takes very active steps towards helping her students understand the importance of their well-being and how their psyche works. She states, "I just love anything psychology-wise, and that's why I really like mindfulness because they start at this age to mature enough to understand." Therefore, she does projects in her class that help her students become aware of their needs and what is contributing to their positive or negative mental states.

She does these projects for the students to have a visual reminder of what they need, but also so that she can get to know the students' psychological needs as well. Danielle continues to come back to these projects throughout the year. She discusses addressing student behaviour by asking where they are psychologically and what is contributing to their overall unrest. She then supports the students as they discuss better choices based on what they need emotionally. Her work with student psychology lets the students know that she is serious about their mental and emotional well being—but also that she views them as adults, mature enough to handle themselves.

Exposure to Books/Text

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Exposure to books/text	Students have the opportunity to access books and texts.	Access to texts, access to a variety of texts, teacher matches text to student	Hot Reads list on the board (added to by the students), constant collection of books along the chalk ledge of her whiteboards, personalized book matching.	Works hard for a wide variety of informational texts. Specifically chooses texts to appeal to all students.	Book talk every day all year long. 50 book challenge.	Book talk every day. Prides herself on book matching.

Figure 27. Chart for Exposure to Books/Text, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The definition of this theme is providing the students access to books and texts. Again, this access varies in content, structure, and style. It also is present in a variety of ways across the different classrooms.

Perceptive Paige has a robust classroom library that is stocked with novels and picture books. Paige does not have a concrete organizational structure to her library because she wants the students to feel that they can easily take a book off the shelf to read. She does not ask the students to sign it out, and she lets the students take the books home. Ultimately, Paige would rather the students have the books in their hands than have a fully stocked shelf. In addition to a large classroom library, it is also important to Paige to be able to support her readers in finding good books. She does this through a variety of ways. The first is that she loves to recommend books to her students. She loves matching them with books that they too

might love. The other is she looks to her students to recommend books to each other. Paige has a “hot reads” list on her whiteboard where any student is able to add a title to the list. This recommendation board needs to get erased periodically because so many titles end up on the list that they run out of space. Between having the books available to the students and matching students with the perfect book, exposure to text becomes an important theme for Paige’s class.

Ownership Owen does not have the most robust library in the study, but he stated that he takes his students to their school library to check out books. He works hard to make sure that the options he does have are interesting and engaging for most of his students. Owen also tries to help expose his students to text and reading options that are not only novels. He uses many short stories and nonfiction articles in class and encourages his students to find a variety of text types when it comes to their reading.

Inclusive Isabelle has had the conversation more than once about censoring books. She doesn’t. She finds that if students feel that they are mature enough to handle the content and have the avenues to talk through the books, then she would rather the students be reading them than unable to find books they are interested in. This view on censoring books goes along with her lack of limitations on what students can read. Isabelle does not care that the students might be reading books that are well beyond their reading level or well below their reading level. Again, what is important to Isabelle is that the students are reading. Isabelle does her part to help introduce her students to a variety of texts. Just about every single day, Isabelle does a book talk. This is her opportunity to introduce the students to different texts available, specifically choosing stories that she feels her students might gravitate towards. She does this to make sure that every student is able to see the options that they have and the variety of texts that might interest them.

Deliberate Danielle has a very similar philosophy on book exposure to Isabelle. Danielle also does a book talk every day for her students. She presents texts within the units they are reading, as well as outside of those units. She does give heads-ups to students when the topics

are a bit deeper or are cause for caution, but she also does not restrict the students from reading them. Danielle has bookshelves that line a full wall of her classroom, and she still has more shelves in the middle of her room. Danielle wants to make sure that each student has the ability to find a book, and she also prides herself on making the perfect match for students.

Students' Sharing/Discussing

Theme	Definition	Example	PP	OO	II	DD
Sharing/ discussing	Students vocally contribute to the conversation around content in the class.	Participating in the learning community, offering input, sharing their books	Sharing session after each workshop—reading and writing.	Everyone contributes during the mini-lessons. Encourages students by sharing that they each have their own role in their reading groups.	“Times when we’re sharing, it’s the time that we’re the most like a community”—when they’re sharing out.	Community circle to share personally. Opportunities to discuss during each mini-lesson. Share in book clubs.

Figure 28. Chart for Students' Sharing and Discussing, definitions, and evidence from each research participant.

The teachers in this study encouraged their students to share and actively participate in the learning that happened in the classroom, and a great way they did that was through the discussions that took place. Sharing and discussing is defined as students vocally contributing to the conversation around content in the class; the teachers fostered these conversations every day.

Perceptive Paige encourages her students to share their work on a daily basis. Whether they are reading or writing, she is constantly asking her students to discuss their literacy experiences, and due to the opportunities available, her students are constantly actively sharing. Paige even finds that she has to cut the students off sometimes because there are so many students who are interested in sharing and she needs to keep rolling with their day. She also utilizes technology to allow her students to share their thinking and their work. Her school has a one-to-one technology policy where every student has an iPad. Due to having an Apple TV system in her classroom, she encourages her students to pair with their interactive board and share with the class when they have something that they are proud of. She allows those

students to talk through their thinking and through the work that they did as an example to other students, and also to show the great work that is happening in her classroom.

Ownership Owen has his students be active participants in every aspect of his classroom and instruction—this includes during his mini lessons. Anytime when Owen has directions on a board or on a graphic organizer, he asks for student volunteers to share the directions with the class. When they have a short story to read out loud, Owen asks for student volunteers to read the story. Even the examples that Owen puts on the board that he has written, Owen asks that the students help read them. This is because Owen wants the students to hear their own voices in every part of the lesson. He wants them to be comfortable sharing and be willing participants in their classroom environment. Whenever Owen asked for volunteers, many hands went up, not always coming from the same students.

Inclusive Isabelle says that “Times when we’re sharing, it’s the time that we’re the most like a community” (II1, 17:25) — when they’re sharing out. She makes this statement because she feels that sharing is the time when she sees her students learning from and supporting one another. The times that her students are sharing are the times where everyone is on a similar page and is able to compliment and agree with each other in an organic fashion. Isabelle said that due to the volume of sharing, she finds almost everyone participating on a regular basis and can see the lightbulb go on for students based on something that was said by their peers. Isabelle has her students collaborating during class on a daily basis and as they finish products. She also has them sharing their final products (reading or writing) with their peers for positive feedback from their classmates.

As previously mentioned, Deliberate Danielle starts out every day with her students sharing in their community circle. Community circle is not where the sharing ends in her room. After each mini lesson, Danielle has her students work with their classmates next to them to discuss and try the work that they covered in the mini lesson. She also has them discussing examples and sharing their work that they feel demonstrates the task covered in the mini

lesson. Danielle purposefully has her classroom arranged to be able to foster that constant conversation from her students. Additionally, Danielle runs many of her reading units in a book club format. During book clubs, the students have the chance to choose the books that they are going to read as a group, and then they meet regularly to discuss their books. Danielle does not monitor these conversations, as she has set up expectations for discussing and sharing that the students are used to and adhere to for the most part. Through constant opportunities, her students understand what is expected of them in conversations, which allows those conversations to be productive and learning experiences for all.

General Comparison on Differences across Participants

The teachers approach half of the themes in different ways. The nine that were not similar to one another were the teachers' approaches to personalized education, educating the whole student, emphasis on progress, making connections with/for students, learning as a partnership, content creation, meeting the students' psychological needs, and helping the students see themselves as readers.

For example, all the teachers in this study personalize education differently for their students. Owen uses a menu for the students to take ownership of their work, and he bases his small group teaching points on data. Paige makes sure that her students are learning in a way that is best for them, even if it means the practices in the classroom are not the same for everyone. Isabelle provides the students with choice in just about everything that they did. Meanwhile, Danielle personalizes the student's education based on how well she knows the students and can meet their needs.

Another example of this divergence would be in viewing learning as a partnership. Danielle allows the students to be in charge of practices and routines, including behavior management. She considers the classroom a community, and everyone has to positively contribute to the workings of the classroom. Owen views the learning partnership as most influential in his triad reading groups. These groups are assigned based on ability and are

flexible groups, which allows students to move in and out of them. The triad groups are responsible for working together each week to complete their set of tasks, breaking them down together and understanding the process as a group. Isabelle approaches her partnership in learning through student feedback. Isabelle is continually asking her students to complete surveys and feedback forms to find ways that she can make the learning experience better for them. She feels that surveying her students demonstrates to them that she cares about them and their opinion and that they have ownership in what the class does and how they do it. Finally, Paige understands the learning partnership to be empowering her students to understand their individual needs. Paige inspires them to know what they need personally in their learning and to know that they can make decisions that are best for their education. Paige starts by helping her students understand their physical place and what would be best for them. She allowed them to continue to explore their classroom environment to find their best seat. Paige hoped this encouraged them to understand that they have a part in their learning success. She also empowered them to be able to talk to her about their learning needs, and her students knew she would listen. Then she provides the support on an individualized basis to help each student to be most successful.

Finally, a third example of differences between the teachers would be meeting the students' emotional and psychological needs. Owen creates a calming, predictable atmosphere for the students to work in. He feels that many of his students lack structure in their homes, so he creates it at school. He also recognizes the increase in the amount of anxiety students have these days, so he teaches with his lights off the majority of days. Additionally, he plays music in the background, typically video game music. He hopes it can trigger relatable memories for some of his students, and he hopes it encourages them to continue to be their best selves. Isabelle meets her students' psychological needs through positive social interaction. She knows that it is important for adolescent students to be social; therefore, she provides ample opportunities for the students to have positive social interaction with their peers. One way that

Isabelle does this is through her “90 Seconds of Sunshine,” where she asks her classes to give compliments to their classmates. Isabelle finds that the students who receive compliments are as positively impacted as students who start their day out by giving compliments. Paige works to meet her students’ psychological needs by paying attention to her students’ emotional well-being. She feels students can not learn academically if their emotional needs are not being met; therefore, Paige works to do this first and foremost. She accomplishes this through a hug, a “love ya!”, or just asking how their day is going. Paige gives her students extra ‘grace’ and leniency when she finds them unfit to learn that day due to them being emotionally not well. In that case, she works with them later, at a personalized level, to make sure that they are still getting the content. And finally, Danielle focuses on students’ psychological needs and the psychological aspects of learning. Danielle asks every student to start their year by sharing their requirements to “fill their tank,” meaning to identify the qualities that allow them to function at full capacity. She also asks them to explore the habits that take away from it. Danielle helps the students understand their control over their psychological well-being and the practices they can put in place to make sure that they are their best selves.

These teachers all have differences in their approaches, but they are still aiming for the same goals. None of the approaches were more correct than others. A rich understanding comes from examining how different personalities and different teachers can accomplish the same overall objective.

General Comparison on Similarities across Participants

Seven of the themes manifested themselves in similar ways in each of the classrooms observed. These seven are providing purposeful literacy experiences, helping set the students up for success, having a process of constant reflection, working to build a trusting community, providing curriculum through high-interest topics, taking advantage of professional development opportunities, and allowing ample opportunity for sharing and discussing in their classes.

One example of these similarities is providing purposeful literacy experiences for their students. Each of the teachers observed utilizes real-world examples and provides genuine audiences. Danielle uses examples such as movies and actual historical court cases to show her students models and examples of the work that they are studying. Owen does this same thing when they watched the movie *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), which depicts a jury deliberating on a court case, to guide them in forming evidence. Additionally, he used a clip on YouTube to engage his students in their work on inventors. Isabelle uses TED Talk clips to convey information and show purpose to her students. By chance, Isabelle and Owen both also had groups of their students write letters to the NFL commissioner this year. Finally, Paige, Danielle, and Isabelle all set up reading and writing buddies or tutors. These buddies create a bigger purpose for their reading and writing.

Another similarity is the way the teachers set the students up for success. All four of the teachers stated the importance of modeling for their students. For Owen and Isabelle, the models come from personal examples and personal writing that they show the students. Danielle, Paige, and Isabelle also model using past student work. The knowledge that the work was done by another student helps the students connect to and frame their focus in their work. It also incites a bit of competition, thinking their work can be even better. The teachers also work to build their students' confidence to succeed. For Owen and Isabelle, this means using the same tools multiple times so the tools are familiar to the students, which allows that step in the learning process to be seamless. Danielle and Paige develop the students' confidence by using graphics and directions through Google Slides.

Finally, all of the teachers are similar in their drive to be better educators, as evidenced by their reflection on their practices. Each consider their first class "guinea pigs" and feel they become a better teacher as the day goes on. Owen cited his class after lunch as most effective for his teaching. Paige stated that sometimes she had to go back the next day with her morning class to reteach the content differently because of the improvements she made during the day.

Danielle even contacted the researcher after a day of observations to point out a part of her lesson that she improved to make the lesson even better. Isabelle and Paige discussed the fact that they were active on social media and media platforms that provided them with regular articles and reading about current practices. They both cited using these new ideas to help them in the planning process. Danielle shared that she attended multiple professional development opportunities each year to be able to learn from "the best." Owen and Isabelle also shared that they talk and plan with their teams to refine their practices and make sure that they are the best that they can be.

It is important to note the fact that some were more similar does not make them stronger themes. The themes that are different from one another showcase the variety of ways that the themes could emerge in a classroom; it does not make them less important than the similar themes. The similar themes did not allow for the same variety. This could be because it is the only way to demonstrate that theme or because this is a way that the teachers thought and responded in similar ways.

Data Compared to Exemplary Teaching Research

Figure 12 returns to the original definition of exemplary teaching. These qualifications were presented in the methods section and were the grounding for the teachers that I sought after. The components below were used during the recruitment stage both as a way to identify teachers and as part of the initial considerations for the teachers to continue in the study. Based on the final data, I will identify why each qualification was met by each teacher. I will also demonstrate how the teachers extend the qualifications of exemplary teachers.

Initial Qualification of Exemplary Teachers	Present in Themes
Creating a community of learners	Build trusting community, see themselves as a reader/writer
Utilizing classroom amenities	Best learning environment,

	exposure to books/text
Expanding the institutionalization	Personalized education, emphasis on progress
Incorporating routines that allow for student interaction	Sharing/discussing
Class objectives meet student needs	Setting the student up for success, making connections
Diversity and differentiation	Purposeful literacy experiences, high-interest topics
Student autonomy	Learning as a partnership
Maximizes interconnectedness	Making connections, purposeful literacy experiences

Figure 29. Comparison of initial definition of exemplary teaching to present themes.

Creating a Community of Learners

According to the earlier description, “exemplary teachers exhibit excitement towards students’ motivators, the excitement encourages classmates to do the same, building a space that promotes and encourages one another” (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 11). This was demonstrated by each of the teachers in the study in a variety of different ways; specifically, however, it was evident in the ways they created a trusting community, as well as in how they promoted habits of lifelong learners who see themselves as readers and writers. To have a community of learners, the students need to view themselves as such. Danielle talks to her students about prioritizing reading and writing just as they do other healthy living habits. Isabelle does the same as she talks about the importance of literacy, whatever the students’ future professions. This is also why each of the teachers promotes the fact that they, too, are constantly working to be a better reader and writer, being vulnerable and making mistakes in front of students, and allowing students to help them in the writing and editing of their projects. For example, Paige shares with her students when she is in her evaluation year with her principal and when he is coming in to observe them to see how much Paige is learning about her students and their curriculum. Owen also discusses the fact that he will have an example

that he has drafted on the board and then take a student's example that is well done and share that theirs is even better than his. This promotion of his students also allows them to see themselves as readers and writers.

Each of the teachers works hard to promote a trusting community within their classroom. They all go about it similarly, ultimately promoting respect within their classroom community. Danielle describes her community as a "judge-free zone." Owen says his promotion of student sharing and a lack of critique in front of everyone encourages his students to take more risks by sharing their work. Isabelle says trust and respect are her key rules for the students. And Paige promotes trust through her conversations with her students about wanting the best for them and by telling them that they should want the best for those around them as well. No matter how the trusting environment is built, each teacher promotes a learning community through helping their students see themselves as learners and knowing that the environment in their classrooms is going to be supportive and respectful.

Utilizing Classroom Amenities

When it comes to classroom amenities, an "exemplary teacher engages students by creating an atmosphere conducive for learning and interacting" (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 11). The exemplary teachers studied in this research all have classroom environments that are relaxed and conducive to student learning. Additionally, they all have an abundance of texts in the room that were highlighted for the students. The classroom environments are relaxed and support the students' best learning environments. Each of the teachers want their classroom to be a place that the students enjoy being in; therefore, they set up the room to be one where the students will be comfortable and learn best. For Paige, this means flexible seating options. For Danielle, Isabelle, and Owen it includes assigned seating with best partnerships in mind. All classrooms have tables instead of desks, and none of the tables are in rows facing forward. Each of the teachers wants the students to be able to interact with and learn from one another.

For three of the four classrooms (all but Owen's), the students have one-to-one technology that the teachers use regularly. They each also use online platforms (such as Google Classroom and Edmentum) to provide resources to their students online. Finally, they all have interactive whiteboards in their classrooms, which each teacher used while being observed. Other than technology, each of the classrooms had books available to the students. Paige had her "hot reads" list on the board with titles her students should check out, along with books lining her whiteboard ledges. Isabelle has her books all stacked with their spines horizontally instead of vertically, inviting the students to take them. Danielle has a library directly in the middle of the classroom, with certain books highlighted, while Owen has a bookshelf along the wall but also copies of books on his counter space. The ease of access to the texts invites the students to pick them up and read them, thereby motivating the students through the use of amenities in the classroom.

Expanding the Institutionalization of Schools

Exemplary teachers think beyond the standardized curriculum to engage adolescents in literacy experiences (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 12). Three of the four teachers I studied work at schools that have adopted a set curriculum program. The fourth has an online curriculum program as well as a textbook. And yet, during each of my observation times, those curriculums were used very loosely, if at all. Each of the teachers mentioned the programs they have, but all work hard to personalize the students' education as well as emphasize student growth and progress over the institutionalized grades. The teachers all do this slightly differently, as mentioned above, yet each knows the students in their room will be most motivated through an education that makes sense to them. This is why Owen creates the menu for his students while meeting their academic needs through his strategy groups. It is also why Paige and Danielle get to know their students so closely so they can choose books and stories that will work specifically for those students. These teachers all push the boundaries set by the boxed curriculum and know that the education they are providing their students instead is

personal and motivating to those students.

Part of personalized education is promoting their students' growth over prioritizing grades. Danielle has created a rubric so comprehensive that it could be overwhelming to most people. However, she teaches her students to understand and use it so they can track their growth and understand the aspects of their work that need continued developments. During the observations, I did not see mention of grades or points, nor did I hear a student ask if a project was "graded" or how much it contributed to their final grade. Instead, I observed Paige meeting with a student and discussing the growth the student had made throughout the year. The student left with a smile. Although grades and set curriculum are both an aspect of the classrooms that were studied, the teachers have worked to motivate their students by providing an education that goes beyond both.

Incorporating Routines That Allow for Student Interaction

Earlier definitions of this qualification found "Literacy practices of exemplary teachers should allow students to re-engage in literacy and carry on meaningful conversations about their literacy experiences" (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 12). This definition is evident in Isabelle's room as she recognizes that when students are sharing, they are building their classroom community as they participate and support each other. Owen, too, finds his students motivated and engaged in the discussion of their work. For instance, during a group activity where his students were trying to identify the culprit of a fictional crime, Owen found students standing up and acting out the story.

This is similar to a situation that Danielle had when she asked her students to discuss the power between characters. She found not only were her student groups getting heated over the discussion, they began to meld into larger groups, as more and more students wanted to participate in the conversations. This sociocultural take on learning has her students building their knowledge through interactions with each other. Each student is bringing their perspective to the conversation, and the teachers here fostered opportunities to build those perspectives

through the interactions with their peers.

Class Objectives Meet the Students' Needs

Based on the definition provided earlier, "An educator that is exemplary at motivating students is not driven solely by the curriculum but rather is able to use their passion and knowledge for the students to be successful in their teaching" (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 12-13). Exemplary teachers are those who work to connect to their students to create a motivating educational experience. This data shows that connecting to their students and working to set their students up for success proved to be motivational for the students in the classes observed. Paige and Danielle both believe that there is nothing more important than making connections with their students. Once they have made connections with them, they are able to motivate them through a variety of other avenues, the largest being meeting their needs. Owen and Isabelle also recognize the need to connect to their students as they work to find out as much as possible about the students, their reading backgrounds, and their strengths and weaknesses in order to best support them.

Another way the teachers in this study meet their students' needs is through personalized education. The teachers are able to support their students by recognizing the difference in their learning styles and needs and then personalizing their education for them. This allows all students to feel successful.

All the teachers are working to meet their students' needs by helping them feel as successful as possible from the onset of an assignment. One way they do this is through modeling and examples. Another avenue for setting students up for success is through building their background on the topics they are covering or will be covering. Finally, these teachers set their students up for success by building their students' confidence and showing that they care. Through setting their students up for success, as well as making connections to their students, these teachers were able to put together class structures that were able to meet their students' needs.

Diversity and Differentiation Is Considered

Admittedly, the teachers' educational environments were not racially diverse. Yet to be an exemplary teacher does not mean that you need to teach in a racially diverse classroom, but instead, "Exemplary teachers teach with texts that reflect the background of all of the students in class and help to expand their knowledge of a variety of backgrounds" (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 13). The teachers in this study work hard to expose their students to a variety of texts and literacy experiences. They work to bring in a diversity of issues and perspectives and build empathy within their students through providing purposeful literacy experiences and selecting high-interest topics for the students. Each of the teachers in this study invites the students into literacy experiences relevant to their lives. They achieve this by opening up options for the students to explore, as well as by introducing concepts that the students might not be accustomed to.

Owen recalls a full class period conversation on child homelessness in the nearby local city; he found that his students were pretty oblivious to poverty—a concept that impacts his students as well. Isabelle loves participating in the Global Read Aloud program because she feels that the books always reflect cultures and values that her students have not been exposed to before. It also allows her students to connect to classrooms outside of their geographic area. This too, spurs conversations about why the comprehension of the book could be different between two classes and two people. These opportunities and conversations help students understand that the world is much bigger than just them and the environment that they are living in. Additionally, all of the teachers work to build their students' interest in and curiosity about the wider world by presenting topics that are new, interesting, and sometimes controversial. Danielle does not censor books for her students, and on one of the days that I was observing, she gave a book talk about a girl with a major mental illness. During her book talk, Danielle mentioned that this book is not easy to read but the topic is important to discuss. She has had her students read about gun violence, as she found the new active shooting drills were

disturbing for some of her students and wanted to make the drills less scary by reading different perspectives on it. Finally, Paige had her fifth-grade students dealing with some pretty heavy issues. Paige mentioned that she read *The Honest Truth* by Dan Gemeinhart, in which the main character sets off to climb a mountain, risking his life, as he has been re-diagnosed with cancer. Paige shared that the book was beautifully written and one that she will continue to use.

Even though the classrooms are not racially diverse, each of the teachers worked hard to expose their students to diversity through purposeful literacy activities, as well as by presenting tough topics. Due to this, they met the qualification for exemplary teaching in regards to diversity and differentiation within their classrooms.

Allowance for Student Autonomy

As research showed in Chapter 3, exemplary teachers can foster an environment that returns autonomy to the students (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 13). The teachers in this study each had practices that did exactly that. Owen and Isabelle use choice as a motivating factor in their classrooms. Owen fosters choice by running his routines through the student menu; his students get to choose what they work on and when. Isabelle allows choice in both her students' reading and their writing. Along with making any book acceptable in her room, Isabelle also asks for student choice in her models and examples. For example, Isabelle does quick-write activities with her students. She demonstrates the quick writes by writing it with her students. Before beginning the writing, she takes requests from her students regarding the topic. A day that I was in the room observing, the students had her writing about doors. They giggled as she made her way through the mundane topic yet were impressed by how she could bring it together.

That example turned into other students writing about the mundane, attempting to make them interesting. Isabelle found her students motivated to write about doors and desks and pencils all because of her model that came from a student suggestion. Along with tasks and

books, these teachers allow students to have a choice in the running of the classroom. Whether it is Paige's weekly flexible seating or Danielle's classroom expectation setting, each teacher works hard to foster choice and ownership in their classroom. This is due in large part to the teachers viewing education as a team process, one where the students and the teachers work together.

Teachers Maximize Interconnectedness

Exemplary teachers maximize the interconnectedness of their classes and content. Exemplary teachers can create an environment where “students can connect to the material and their peers in the process of understanding new material and utilize this connection to deepen the learning experience” (Qualifications of Exemplary Teachers, p. 14). Paige, Owen, Isabelle, and Danielle did this by making connections with their students and then using those connections to create relevance in the literacy experiences. Each inspires their students to see the bigger picture and purpose of the content they are covering. Isabelle, Danielle, and Paige all separately noted, unprompted, that they cannot recall ever being asked “Why” they are doing something. Instead, they have set their content up in a way that students know the work they are doing will be leading to something greater. The teachers find that sometimes the purpose is to create an understanding of their classmates and their backgrounds. Paige began their unit on informational text by having her students do a demonstration speech on something they knew well, something they were passionate about. For some, this was a video game; for others, this was art or music. Either way, the students were sharing aspects of themselves with their classmates, and everyone was learning new pieces of information about their classmates. For Owen, this often takes shape in the form of background work to their larger concepts and pictures. He is constantly working to fill gaps and build bridges to the work that they are aiming to achieve.

The reason each of the teachers is successful is because of the extent to which they know their students and how much their students trust them. The teachers view their

connections as a vital component to their classroom. Danielle explained that the information she gains is “valued treasure” and “little secrets” that she can use to connect to her students and motivate them in the content and examples that she uses. Paige finds that by connecting to her students, she is able to understand where they are coming from and what they need from her to be a better teacher. All of the teachers in this study work to make connections between the students and the content, between the students and their peers, as well as between themselves and the students in order to motivate their students to engage in literacy experiences.

Expanding the Definition

A few aspects of the data go beyond what the initial qualifications for an exemplary teacher identified. These include ways that teachers can plan for and understand the motivation in order to have the greatest impact. These components will be covered in the main findings but are as follows emphasis on progress, constant reflections, content creation, professional development opportunities, meeting the students’ emotional/psychological needs, and educating the whole student.

Data Compared to Motivation Research

Major grounds for this research came from the work of Wigfield and Guthrie’s (1997) dimensions of student motivation. The collection completed, the themes were compared to the dimensions of student motivation in an attempt to reinforce, counteract, or extend the data that did not fit within the dimensions. Figure 30 demonstrates the comparison.

Status	Dimension		Theme
Reinforces	Importance, Social, Self-Efficacy, Involvement, Curiosity	by	Purposeful literacy experiences, Educating the whole student, Being vulnerable, Making connections, Learning as a partnership, Building a trusting community, Students seeing themselves as readers/writers, Book talks/exposure to text, Constant sharing/discussion
Counteracts	Challenge, Compliance, Work Avoidance,	by	Personalizing education, Setting the student up for success, Emphasis on progress,

	Grades		High-interest topics
Not included in dimensions	---		Constant reflection, Content creation, Professional learning involvement/mentorship, Meeting students' psychological needs

Figure 30 Comparison between Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997) dimensions and present themes.

Reinforce their data

Many aspects of my data reinforce the concept from Wigfield and Guthrie's (1997; 2000) research on what motivates students to read and write. The following themes reinforce their work: setting up purposeful literacy experiences, educating the whole student, creating the best learning environments, being vulnerable, making connections, building a trusting community, helping students see themselves as readers and writers, increasing exposure to text, and encouraging constant sharing/discussion. As demonstrated in the chart, these enforce their motivation for different purposes.

My data confirmed that multiple aspects of the classroom motivate students due to their involvement in class. Teachers sharing their vulnerability created additional involvement for the students. This would look like Paige's name jar in her classroom. Paige finds it important to point out a person's own flaws, so every time that she calls a student a wrong name, "money" (running total in a drawn jar on the whiteboard) is added to her name jar. The students are involved not because they are purposefully waiting for Paige to make a mistake but, rather, because they see that it is okay to make mistakes and that no one is perfect. Isabelle and Owen do the same thing but with their writing. They purposefully edit their work in front of students so students can see that no work is perfect from the beginning. Another example of a theme from my data that reinforces involvement is making connections with the students. Based on Danielle using analogies that her students understand or Owen connecting to students through video games, the students are more willing to become involved in the task or the discussion.

The final two major themes that enforce involvement are learning being a partnership and the amount of discussion and sharing that takes place in the class. Both of these invite students to participate in the learning process. Owen does this by showing his students their individuality but also their role as participants in a larger whole. Paige invites everyone to figure out what they need in their learning environment to be their best self. Isabelle recognizes that the students are most involved in their learning when they are sharing and discussing their work. Therefore, these four themes of showing vulnerability, forming connections, treating the learning process as a partnership, and offering opportunities to share and discuss motivated students to be involved.

Another dimension that my data supported was that students are motivated by being able to be social. Every teacher in this study provided opportunities for their students to learn from one another. A major theme that supported this dimension was building a community of trust. This was important for each of the teachers, and they all took similar approaches to building this community—namely, the importance of respecting one another and each other's perspectives and abilities. Since the students built a community of trust, they freely shared and worked collaboratively to learn in their classrooms. This ability to be social, knowing that there was no judgment toward their work, helped the students to feel included and learn from one another. A second theme that reinforced students' motivation through being social was educating the whole student. Teaching students to be good people, or to always work to the best of their ability, helped the students relate to one another and gain additional empathy for thoughts and people different than themselves. This fostered working environments where the students worked well and supported each other in the learning process.

Finally, a third dimension supported here was self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was supported by multiple different themes all working towards providing students ownership and autonomy. One example was the configuration of the classrooms that supported the students' best learning environment. As Paige noted, students had to understand what they needed in a learning

environment in order for them to pick their next flexible seating option. Danielle promotes a relaxed atmosphere when she helps her students visualize their ability to get “in the zone” for reading. Her students need to understand the distractions around them and be able to focus solely on themselves and their reading to achieve “in-the-zone reading.” Danielle and Isabelle also allow students to help determine classroom expectations and rules. Not only are they a part of it, but the students also help to reinforce the classroom expectations and make amendments to them when they see that they are not working. All of this is done so each student can be in a classroom environment that is best for them and their personal needs.

Teachers being vulnerable also promotes self-efficacy. Both Isabelle and Owen point out their mistakes in their writing in hopes that the students can be motivated to take risks and share their writing. Without the teachers being vulnerable and sharing their flaws, students could feel the pressure of having a perfect piece to share and, rather than embracing their learning journey, be too afraid to contribute. Finally, the last theme to reinforce self-efficacy was the students’ ability to view themselves as readers and writers. For Danielle, this is shown by the students tracking their reading in the marathon and continually working to beat their previous “mileage.” Owen watches his students work to come up with a better example than what he shared in hopes that Owen will acknowledge their creativity over his own. Paige encourages her students to be vocal about what they need in their learning, especially if something is not working. To understand if something is not working well, they need to be in tune with their own learning process and what they are taking from it.

Counteract Their Data

Multiple themes in this research seemed to contradict Wigfield and Guthrie’s (1997) work. This is not to say that this research has disproven the work of Wigfield and Guthrie but, rather, that for the dimensions of compliance, grades, challenge, and work avoidance, there were themes to show stronger motivational impact.

According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), compliance is “reading to meet the expectations of others.” In contrast, Danielle, Isabelle, Owen, and Paige all demonstrated that by taking steps to set students up to be successful, they were motivated by confidence over compliance. Owen and Danielle have shown the importance of modeling. The primary reason for modeling is to give students a starting point, to provide them with the confidence and knowledge that they can complete the work. Owen and Danielle both use personal examples for their models in an attempt to hook their students’ interest or jog their memory. For example, Owen had his students writing a personal narrative—a snapshot moment. Owen recalled a time fishing with his grandfather. Many students had questions regarding the fishing experiences but very few questions regarding his word choice or how he started his model. After answering all of their questions and asking his students to connect to the feeling that Owen had reeling in his big fish, Owen allowed the students to start their writing. The students did not begin their personal narratives out of compliance to finish the task. Nor did they start their writing because Owen said go. They started their writing because Owen had given them the tools to do so with his model and ideas with his vulnerability, making the students intrinsically motivated to complete the writing. Owen’s example is very similar to what I saw in each of the classrooms I observed. The teachers set the students up to be successful by boosting their confidence, using repeated tools or modeled tools, and spurred ideas that encouraged the students to complete the literacy activity.

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that students are motivated to read because of grades, which they defined as “the desire to be favorably evaluated by the teacher.” Again, I am not trying to prove that students are not motivated by grades, but this research found that none of the teachers spent time talking about grades very much. Instead, the teachers found the students working hard to show their progress. Paige noted that parents are not awarded or evaluated on everything they do in the workplace, and often some of the greatest things they do go unrewarded. Paige said that grades are similar in that they do not reward the great things

that the students are doing. For this, Paige looks to rubrics with her students. She has gone as far as to turn those rubrics into bookmarks that the students use with their independent reading books. Paige then finds the students using the language from the rubrics to show their improvement. They are not discussing moving up in numbers but, rather, why their learning has improved since the last time that they met.

Both Danielle and Isabelle have practices very similar to Paige's. Isabelle dislikes grades. Instead, she works with her students to see how they are improving and how they are getting better at evaluating their own work. Isabelle finds that she gives very few grades, and yet the students in her room are still reading and writing. One of the student feedback letters at the end of the year told Isabelle that her student had found the bulk of her learning that year to be in writing because she could not believe what a better writer she was at the end of the year compared to the beginning. This was not due to the student getting higher grades in writing at the end of the year but, rather, the progress the student could see by comparing a piece written at the start of the year to a piece written at the end.

Finally, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found students are motivated by work avoidance or "the desire to avoid reading activities." This research found two different themes that motivate students to complete their work rather than avoiding it. The first is high-interest topics and the second is setting the students up for success based on the purpose of the task. Paige tells students they should abandon books they started but are not interested in. She promotes loving books and reading rather than suffering through a story that does not connect with them. This is why, Paige (as well as each of the other teachers) explains, she works hard to find the perfect books for her students to read. Owen also finds it is helpful to set the students up by building their background knowledge as a connection to hook them into the book. He has done this with Norse mythology as well as snake venom. Owen has his students reading about these topics because he knows that his students will be intrigued and motivated by them and, in turn, be motivated to read the larger novel. When students feel disconnected from their text, they avoid

reading it. Each of the teachers shared that this often happens if the text or story comes from a set curriculum and is not responsive to the students in the class. So rather than reading a story about sports, Isabelle had her students reading about police brutality and gun violence. Rather than having her eighth-grade students listen to a read-aloud on ponies, Danielle had them reading about cyborgs and dystopias. These are just two examples, but as Owen puts it, if the stories are “junk,” he is not going to have his students read them, even if they are coming from a textbook or curriculum. Therefore, by choosing topics that engage the students, these teachers motivate their students and decrease work avoidance. Finally, the teachers in this study decreased work avoidance by giving purpose to the students’ literacy tasks. One purpose for the work Paige and Danielle’s students did was to teach subject matter to their buddies. The students were unable to avoid the work because they would need to turn it around and teach it to younger students. For Isabelle and Owen, who had their students writing to an outside source as compared to writing an essay, their students completed the work because they wanted to impress the authentic audience. In either case, instead of avoiding the literacy task, the students had purpose and relevance to engage in it, so they did.

Not included in the dimensions

Five remaining themes did not fit well within the dimensions of student motivation based on the work of Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). It is interesting to recognize that none of the dimensions of Wigfield and Guthrie’s work include motivation through the teaching. This data found that the presence of exemplary teachers had many influential motivating aspects for the classroom.

The themes outside of Wigfield and Guthrie’s data are content creation, constant reflection, involvement in professional learning, meeting students’ emotional/psychological needs, and creating an optimal learning environment for students. The first three themes relate to strategic processes and are teacher-centered. When Wigfield and Guthrie were studying what motivates adolescents to read, their main focus was on the students, not the teachers.

This could explain the lack of correlation in the findings. The themes that extend motivational research will be covered in-depth in Chapter 5.

Data Compared to Previous Research

Research on motivation and exemplary teaching is not new. As presented in the review of literature, much has been done to study what motivates students. Additional work has been done to study what makes exemplary teachers. The work presented below focuses on exemplary literacy instruction. It also is work that helped to ground this study. Figure 31 identifies four different pieces of research and their main findings. I will then look at how my research matched their findings. I will also discuss how my data differed from their research. Finally, I will briefly mention how my research extends their findings.

Allington/Johnson (2002)	Rudell (1997)	Knapp (1995)	Snow et al. (1991)
Classroom talk (positive and supportive)	using clearly formulated instructional strategies that provide opportunities for monitoring and providing feedback to students	Maximize opportunity to read	Explicit instruction
Curriculum materials (expansive, inclusive, choice)	having in-depth knowledge of reading and writing processes and how to teach them	Integrate reading and writing	Classroom routines
Organization of instruction (flexible, planned yet open to redirections)	frequently using internal motivation	Focus on meaning-making	Challenges students
Nature of evaluation (focused on progress, improvement based)	sparingly using external motivation	Opportunities to discuss	Supportive, encouraging, and friendly environment
			Engaging, constructive teacher-student exchanges

			Wide variety of reading materials
			Schedules library visits
			Crafting curriculum activities
			Asks inferential questions
			Displays student work

Figure 31. Main findings of previously grounded research.

How the Data Supports Current Research

Curriculum and classroom routines (Allington & Johnson, 2002; Rudell, 1997; Knapp, 1995; Snow, C., Barnes, W., Chandler, J., Goodman, I. F., & Hemphill, L. 1991).

Each of the studies above recognized the importance of flexible curriculum and classroom routines for effective literacy instruction. Structured routines were a large part of each of the classrooms in the study. Since three of the four classrooms observed have the same set curriculum program in their schools, each has a similar overall structure. The fourth has aspects that are similar to the other three but varies as well. Each of the teachers has a mini-lesson then independent work time. The teachers also have similar ways of having students share and discuss their work.

Owen recognizes that the structured classroom is important for students. He, along with Isabelle, stated that the structured routines decrease students' anxiety over class. If their practices are routine and set, students will know what is expected of them. This idea of a structured routine could appear to go against the personalized learning (Allington and Johnson's inclusive curriculum) and the relaxed, friendly atmosphere of the room (Snow et al.), but instead it complements it perfectly. The structured routine that incorporates independent work time in each of the rooms allows the teachers to work with their students through conferences (Isabelle and Danielle) or strategy groups (Owen and Paige.) It also allows the teachers to work with students who may need extra support. Additionally, these teachers maintain conducive work

environments, one where the students not only feel comfortable but want to be present. This is done through various lighting techniques (Danielle), flexible seating options (Paige and Isabelle), and quiet music playing (Owen and Danielle.) Each adds a calming feel to the room, allowing students to focus on the literacy experience. Therefore, the classroom routines, personalized flexible curriculum, and engaging atmosphere are all present in this research as well as previous works.

Wide range of reading material (Allington & Johnson, Knapp, Snow et al.). Snow et al. (1991) discuss the importance of exemplary literacy instruction involving regular visits to the library. Although this research does not support the same goal, it does support the same concept.

Ultimately, regular visits to the library ensure students have adequate access to books and texts. This is something this research does confirm and support. Access to text was one of the 18 themes that was evident in each of the teacher's classroom practices and routines. This theme is also consistent across the board with exemplary teaching and the study of motivation. The teachers in this study each have inviting classroom libraries and access to text. Paige cited that she expects 25% (PP5, 50) of her classroom library books to be out at any given time. She does not have a practice for tracking the books; it is more important to her that they are being accessed by the students. She has a flexible organization within her library, as students are allowed to reshelve books. Isabelle, on the other hand, has her library organized by genre and author. She too has students regularly using her books and pulling them from the shelves on their own, but she has a bin for the students to return the books to for her to reshelve them, ensuring they return to the appropriate location. By having this order, she feels that the students can locate the books with ease.

These robust libraries go along with the relevant, high-interest, or tough topics as previously discussed, as well as specific book choices for the students. All of these are points of agreement to the work of Allington and Johnson (2002), Knapp (1995), and Snow et al. (1991).

Classroom conversations (Allington & Johnson, Knapp). One of the major aspects of grounding research for this study was the practice of allowing students to carry on conversations about their reading in class. It was a major component of the review of the literature and was present in the dimensions of motivation as well as being a qualification of exemplary teaching. Each of the teachers in this study described running book clubs in their classes.

Owen has the whole class read the same books but has the students studying and discussing them in small groups (triads) before he has discussions with everyone else. Owen talks about walking around the room during book discussions. He loves surreptitiously listening in on their conversations. Not only does he learn a lot about the students' thinking during that time, but he also loves listening to how insightful they are. Paige's students meet in book clubs. Many groups were finishing ahead of schedule, and the groups were discussing their connections to the books and how they would have handled the situations their characters were in.

In Isabelle's room, I found her class doing novels-in-verse book clubs. She shared that her students often get to choose their book club partners and books. She reported that her students love their novels-in-verse because the books read much faster. That, and the titles she has can be controversial in topics. While observing in Isabelle's room, I watched one of her groups discussing an adjustment to the calendar they have for reading expectations. Their group gets to choose reading assignments and when they would like to meet; the group I observed needed to adjust the reading so they could read more in a day. Isabelle loves how the students keep each other accountable, and she finds the students read so they do not let their friends down.

Danielle's students had just finished a social justice book, and so Danielle talked about the fascinating conversations her students had based on the subjects of the books. Book clubs are another way to foster conversation and sharing in classrooms. These go along with the

previously stated examples of sharing and discussing in class. Ultimately, there is an abundance of time where literacy talk happens in the classrooms, which supports the research here.

In-depth knowledge (Rudell). One aspect that this research confirms but has not been previously discussed in depth through the other avenues of comparison is the professional development and knowledge of the teachers. Rudell's (1997) research calls for exemplary literacy instruction to be done by teachers who have a deep knowledge of the literacy process. The idea of being highly qualified and knowledgeable is important to the teachers in this study. For this reason, they are constantly working towards reflecting on their work and instructional strategies and seeking out educational opportunities for themselves. Danielle and Isabelle both cited using practices of numerous researchers in their classrooms. On several occasions, during interviews or in preparation for observations in Owen's room, we were interrupted by a colleague coming to Owen to seek out his thoughts or advice on something. It is obvious that each of the teachers in this study are highly appreciated by their schools due to their knowledge and practices.

Aspects of the research not addressed.

In the research presented above, a few aspects did not end up as a priority in the study. These aspects include but are not limited to displaying student work (Snow et al., 1991), focusing on reading skills such as meaning-making and inferential questions (Knapp, 1995; Snow et al., 1991), and sparingly using external motivations (Rudell, 1997).

Displayed student work (Snow et al., 1991). Snow et al. (1991) found that exemplary literacy instruction included having student work displayed throughout the classroom. This finding is a bit dated and was not extremely prevalent in the classrooms in this study. Each of the classrooms studied has easy access to technology for students; therefore, much of the classwork and many of the assignments are done on computers. With that said, student thinking is still prevalent in the classrooms, as is students sharing their work. Paige was introduced to

me by her student as the “anchor chart queen.” These anchor charts were not simply directions and lessons that Paige did for the students; instead, multiple charts were used to showcase (and remind) the students of their thinking. I could see charts (both in her room and Isabelle’s as well) with various samples of student handwriting on them, hung up on the walls as a means of reminding the students of their initial brainstorming work. Along with their thinking on anchor charts, the students can share their work with their classmates. While I was observing in Paige’s room, she was having the students share their arguments for the persuasive papers they were writing. Isabelle’s students were preparing a feedback folder for their classmates to use when they were sharing their published writing with a partner language arts class the next day. Finally, Owen shared that students were going to be reading their crime narratives and trying to solve each others’ crimes. Even though the students’ work is not displayed throughout the room, there is clear evidence that student learning is constantly taking place in the classroom.

Focus on meaning-making/Inferential questions (Knapp, Snow et al.). Another aspect of exemplary literacy instruction as identified by both Knapp (1995) and Snow et al. (1991) is the focus on literacy skills such as meaning-making and inferential questions. Throughout the study, individual reading skills did not come up with any of the participants. No one focused on comprehension, making predictions, or other skills associated with reading. Instead, the teachers focused on the topics and the hooks that would connect to their students and promote reading.

The only teacher who implied lessons and conversation about reading skills was Danielle, and she did so as part of her conversation on the levels of thinking that she teaches the students. Danielle shared a graphic that she created for her students to understand how they think about text; this graphic has three levels of thinking, going from broad to in-depth thinking. She teaches her students that to get to the next levels of thinking, they need to understand the first levels. Ultimately, Danielle is moving through the meaning-making process to inferential thinking, but her teaching focuses on how they think about it and how they

understand the organizational process of thinking. This shift away from skills in reading shows that for these teachers, the students and community are much more important to the reading process than the individualized reading skills.

Sparingly using external motivations (Rudell). Motivation can be broken down into internal and external motivations. Rudell's (1997) research finds exemplary instruction in literacy happens if teachers can encourage students to be internally motivated. This research agrees with Rudell's work in the sense that these teachers found it important to make reading a lifelong healthy habit. The data also found that utilizing external motivators when appropriate helped their classroom routines and practices. Paige noted that everyone acts and behaves with goals in mind. There are always motivators that can help push people to go that bit beyond what they thought was possible. Paige finds, "Some students do need the interim, the extrinsic to help them pump up the intrinsic, and I totally play into that because we all do. We all have those things like 'Oh my gosh I just need a new pair of shoes and then I can run for another year' or whatever it is" (PP5, 7:21). For example, Danielle, Paige, and Isabelle all used running a marathon as an analogy to reading. The teachers remind the students that the reading process is similar to a marathon in the sense that they need to build up their endurance and stamina, using their coaches and setting mileage goals.

Each of the teachers has aspects in their classes that play to the external motivators. For example, in Isabelle's room, she had a candy jar, and when students find their Word of the Week in their novels or use it in their writing, they can show her and go and get a piece of candy. It is a simple routine that works to keep students vigilant towards their Word of the Week. Isabelle also noted that she has had to take the candy jar away, but it did not change their practice of watching for the Word of the Week words. Without the external motivator to begin with, the continued habit might not have been instilled. Another example is Danielle's marathon reading tracking. Students track their reading with amounts that convert to mileage for their marathon. Once the students complete their marathons, they get a gold medal piece of

chocolate. The students do not read and continue to push their reading amounts simply to get the chocolate; however, the idea of finishing the marathon is incredibly motivating to students. In the end, this research supports the teachers working to motivate their students through internal motivation; however, students may occasionally need external motivators.

Additional thought to research.

This data supports many of the findings from the previous research in which it is grounded; however, several aspects in the data extend the research. The research found that meeting emotional and psychological needs are imperative to motivating adolescents to engage in literacy experiences. Yet, the affective needs of the students were not considered in the research presented here. Other major themes that were not present in the grounded research were relevance and purpose for literacy experiences, the collaborative learning process, and, finally, motivation as a strategic process. These themes will be elaborated on in the findings of the study in Chapter 5.

The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree

When asked 'Why did you become a teacher?' many respond with an inspirational story about an educator they had growing up who changed their life. There are few who responses that parallel that of Professor Debbie Faase. Debbie's vocational choice involved a darker side to education: being immensely unhappy in school as a child. She recalls feeling physically ill at the thought of walking through the school doors--not literal illness, but rather, disdain for school, to the extent that Debbie found herself falsifying this illness to her parents in hopes of convincing them to let her avoid the pain of school that day. Debbie's parents soon noticed these recurrences and lessened their own likelihood to allow this to continue. However, though Debbie despised attending school, she found joy in the make-believe land of what school could be. Debbie found herself "playing school" on a regular basis, creating an educational environment for her "students" where learning was fun, where learning was attainable, and where learning allowed her students to thrive. Her make-believe school included many games, books, activities, and always included fun. It was not until college when she formed what would be her teaching philosophy: a philosophy about the questions her students asked over the answers that she would give. She knew that her teaching style would involve constantly asking questions, allowing the students to find and explore to get answers, rather than being given them. However, Debbie learned this wasn't as simple in the classroom as it was being formulated in her own mind. She learned the key to success was far beyond merely asking the questions, but rather, was giving students the confidence to know that together they can find the answers. Through a unique student teaching experience, Debbie saw how students in low socioeconomic status were held to much lower standards and therefore performed at a lower level. She fine-tuned her teaching philosophy to ensure every student would not only be encouraged to seek out answers, but also be held to high expectations for sharing those answers with others. It was due to this encouragement in her classroom that Debbie soon was a student and parent favorite.--so much so that her current principal asked her to take over the school; she was only 25 at the

time and was then the youngest principal in the cities Catholic School diocese.

Even though this might be intimidating to most, Debbie sought out the support of those around her and encouraged her staff to be autonomous- free to try new things. This was further supported when she had an informal gathering with researchers Dorothy Watson and Ken and Yetta Goodman who asked Debbie if her school would pilot a whole language teaching program. Since this involved throwing out the basal readers and spellers that were currently being used, Debbie was immediately on board; her staff however, was not! Many fought her on this radical change, telling her that she was wrong to abandon the more traditional way of teaching.

Debbie held strong, and the students flourished under the new program. The students were in control of their reading and writing, demonstrated time and time again through Debbie's "Student Success Wall" where she showcased the work of her students. This encouraged many students to visit her and share success stories. Although her tenure as principal was cut short due to a relocation and having a family, many students and teachers were inspired by her drive to maintain high standards for her students and show them the power of success- this researcher included.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The exemplary teachers in this study showcased how they motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences. This emerged in a series of 18 themes that were consistent across the four teachers studied. Chapter four compared these themes to one another, to previously cited qualifications, and to other research. I wish to conclude by examining these themes in regard to how they demonstrate teachers' understanding of motivation, how they show teachers' planning for motivation, and how they reflect the classroom practice specific to motivation; Figure 32 shows a quick organization of the themes, and a narrative follows.

Understand motivation	Plan for motivation	Motivation emerges in practices
Personalized education	Constant reflection	Clear and relevant purpose
Educating the whole self	Making connections	The best learning environment
Emphasis on progress	Setting students up for success	Learning as a partnership
Need to see themselves as readers/writers	Professional growth	High-interest topics
Emotional/psychological needs*	Content creation	Exposure to text
	Being vulnerable	Sharing and discussing often
		Trusting community

Figure 32. Chart representation of the theme's response to the research questions.

How Teachers Understand Motivation

The teachers in this study had a comprehensive understanding of motivation that focused on the students' affective nature. Instead of meeting rigid teachers who have curriculum and assessments as their primary focus in the classroom, and their students as secondary, I

worked with teachers who understand motivation to be about the student. Five different themes emerged that encapsulate how the studied teachers understand motivation.

The teachers studied found that to truly motivate their students, education must be personalized; students must be able to connect to it and see why it works with their learning styles and needs. The different teachers in the study all exhibited a variety of ways to personalize education for their students; however, each allowed for flexibility on student tasks, student deadlines, and choice of the text that the students have. Additionally, through personalized education, each of the teachers encouraged students to reflect on their needs and best options. The teachers knew that motivation would be strongest if education was personalized.

Another view of understanding motivation for the teachers was through educating the whole student, not just meeting their academic needs. The teachers found a great response to motivating their students when it was tied to strong personal growth. Personal growth could have been through maturity or empathy for others. When students felt a personal connection to the content, they were quick to engage with it, and it fostered their development as a person. This also included helping the students understand that reading and writing are lifelong habits; the teachers worked to spur a love and understanding of these literacy tasks. To develop the whole student, the teachers believed that their students needed the drive to continue to develop their reading and writing habits, no matter what their future would hold. The students were motivated by literacy experiences that helped them grow and develop as people and would set them up to be successful in the future.

To truly motivate the students through educating the whole student, the teachers needed to support the emotional and psychological needs of the student. The teachers believed that to truly motivate their students, the students needed to be in a good place emotionally and psychologically. When the students were bogged down with outside factors, no matter the motivational tactics attempted, they were not ready to engage in the literacy experience. This

support also included educating their students on expressing those emotional and psychological needs. The teachers motivated their students by empowering them to speak up for their needs and to recognize when their needs were being met and when they were not. When the students' emotional and psychological needs were met, they could be motivated to engage in literacy experiences.

Setting them up for future success also involved the getting the students to see themselves as readers and writers and realize that literacy experiences are fun and cool. The teachers were able to motivate their students only when the students found they were successful in a given literacy task. This involved opportunities that proved that the students were experts in the skills or allowed them to showcase their literacy successes. It was also important that the classroom environments showed that reading and writing were important and fun. When students found personal success, they had positive outlooks on the literacy experiences.

Finally, the teachers understand that motivating their students to engage in literacy experiences was possible when they focused their attention on student progress over grades. The teachers each expressed dislike for structured grades, as they get in the way of intrinsically motivating students to want to engage in the experience. The teachers also found that when students worked through activities that were not graded, they were more cohesive as a community and engaged better in the literacy conversations. The students were motivated by their own progress and growth, and the more developed they got, the more they considered themselves readers and writers, which is another aspect of motivation according to these teachers. Therefore, the emphasis on progress over grades proved to be a motivational tactic for the teachers involved in this study.

How Teachers Plan for Motivation

The teachers in this study found that they spent a lot of time and thought on improving themselves to better plan for motivating their students. To begin with, the teachers in the study

were all reflective professionals. They spent time during their day, as well as before and after lessons, reflecting on their process and whether it is the best way to work with their students. Each teacher found that planning for the highest motivation came from looking at themselves and how they were going to best execute the connection to the material for the students. By reflecting on their effectiveness they were able to better support the students that they were working with and what would be best for them, leader to more personalize learning.

Additionally, the teachers in this study took their reflection and used it to enhance their specific content creation. When planning for motivation, the teachers in the study found it important to create and adjust and try out the content they worked with. Unlike the adage of “Why reinvent the wheel?” these teachers found “reinventing the wheel” to meet the needs of their students an important step in their planning process. This does not mean that every idea is spurred from the teacher on their own. Some are most comfortable starting from scratch and creating what they know will work for their students, but others found that they could adapt other lessons that they have done or have seen to be successful. Either way, keeping the students in mind was an important step when it came to motivating their students to engage in literacy experiences.

When creating their lesson content, part of the creation process involved using examples from their personal lives or drafting imperfect examples in front of the students. The teachers found that when planning for motivation, it was important for them to be vulnerable with their students. Again, the level of vulnerability varied across participants, but each knew that being real with the students was an important motivating factor.

Just as using examples from their personal lives allowed them to connect with and motivate their students, modeling and using examples was one of the ways that the teachers felt they were best setting their students up for success, which in turn, motivated them to engage in the literacy experience. It was obvious that providing the students with guidance in a structure, or a “starting point” for their students, was essential. When the students were not feeling

successful, they were less likely to engage in literacy experiences. Therefore, providing that starting point, that model, allowed the students to understand what was being asked of them and motivated them to give the literacy experience their own attempt.

When planning for motivation, each of the teachers felt it imperative to plan for connections between the content and the students as well as between the content and themselves. Making connections to the kids inspired each teacher in their examples and direction for presenting their content. To make connections to the students, the teachers found it is vital to listen to their students, to the ways that they responded to one another, and to how they were responding to the lessons. They felt that making connections needed to be a purposeful step in planning to motivate adolescents to engage in literacy experiences.

Finally, to truly set themselves up with the tools they needed to motivate the adolescents they worked with, the teachers found it important to stay up-to-date on current practices and best curriculum options through professional development. The teachers engaged in educational conversations with peers, colleagues, and mentors in order to incorporate practices that kept up with research and best practices. These educational conversations also allowed the teachers to seek guidance and hone their craft based on advice and perspectives of other educators. For these reasons, the teachers' professional development opportunities and educational conversations became instrumental in motivating their students.

How Motivation Emerges in the Classroom

Many practices within the observed classrooms highlight motivation; however, a select few practices had a large impact in each room. The classroom environments that the teachers have created reflect their desire to have a motivating space where adolescents feel comfortable and successful. These environments did not look similar, yet each created a relaxed atmosphere where student learning was evident. The "schoolroom" structure of forward-facing desks in rows was nowhere to be seen; instead, the rooms encouraged interaction and collaboration. Additionally, students felt comfortable in their classrooms and were often getting

up to take care of a routine task without creating a distraction. Having an environment where they wanted to be was a motivating factor for the students.

Along with the physical environment, fostering a trusting community was imperative to motivating students. The teachers worked hard from the start of the year until the end of the year to build a community with the students they worked with. This community was one of trust in the kids, trust that they would respect one another and respect themselves. It also was a community of trust in the teacher, where the students would not be criticized in front of their peers, and an environment where the teacher used a curriculum that was important to the students. This trusting community not only created a bond among their peers but also allowed for the students' confidence to rise. This could be from a success in class or simply because they knew their voices were important and valued in their classrooms. Either way, building a trusting environment showcased how the teachers' understanding of motivation emerged in their classrooms.

Creating literacy experience with a clear purpose and audience became vital to enhancing motivation within the classrooms. The teachers not only provided purposeful activities, but they also sought a relevant audience for the students' work. These two components added value to the students' buy-in of the activity, as well as increased the quality of students' final products. Often the purpose emerged through project-based learning curriculum that extended the set curriculums. Other times, the purpose came from literacy experience that extended the classroom. No matter the platform for the purpose, the clear and relevant literacy experience motivated the students to not only participate but also participate at their highest level.

One way of fostering the engagement through purposeful literacy experiences was with the use of high-interest topics. The teachers in the study found it important for literacy experiences to not only be relevant but also of interest to the students. These topics varied from teacher to teacher, as well as across maturity levels, yet the practice of choosing topics of high

interest invited students into a literacy experience where they wanted to know more about their topic.

One way that the teachers shared the high-interest topics was through constant exposure to texts. Students were motivated to read new books or articles and work to gain information on content because it was readily accessible and discussed regularly. The teachers were constantly making the students aware of different types of text, topics for text, and new ideas for books for them to pick up and read. Knowing the importance of texts for student success, these teachers provided not only the resources but also the motivation for their students to engage with those resources.

Similarly, the teachers provided ample opportunities to share and discuss texts and for the students to share their work. Each teacher ensured that there were routines that fostered academic conversation among their students, not only allowing them to learn from one another, but also allowing them to expand their ways of thinking. This sharing and discussing also provided teachable moments for students to hone their craft, whether by thinking about the text or completing a written piece. The sharing provided an audience of their peers, one that is motivating for adolescent students. Many other classes of students might shy away from sharing in front of their peers; however, due to the trusting and respectful environment the teachers created, most students freely shared their work and their thinking.

Finally, the teachers helped their students understand that learning is a partnership process, one they were willing to support and guide the students along. Knowing the students were motivated by others around them, they used this understanding to have practices in place that allowed for students to learn from one another. They also fostered the opportunity for students to make decisions in what they were reading and writing about, allowing students power and control over their learning. Each of the teachers felt that their job was to give the students the tools they need, but then that they the teachers should become less and less needed as a result. This feeling of passing power to their students through their leadership and

guidance was an important practice that motivated their students to engage more deeply in the literacy experience. Motivation emerged in these classrooms where the student and teacher were learning together in a partnership.

Research Questions

How can a teacher motivate early adolescents to engage in literacy experiences?

Sub-questions.

- How does a teacher **understand** motivation in an early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher **plan** for motivation within their early adolescent language arts class?
- How does a teacher's understanding of motivation **emerge** in their early adolescent language arts class experiences?

Interpretation of Findings

While each of the themes represents the participants and the findings, four themes did not intersect with the original qualifications of exemplary teaching, the dimensions of motivation, or the grounded research. These themes expand the thought of the previous work while working to answer the research questions of this study.

Exemplary educators understand motivation to be meeting the emotional and psychological needs of the students. One of the major themes that emerged through this study is that teachers understand that students' emotional and psychological needs must be met in order to motivate students in their class. This was seen in the teachers' discussion on mental health as well as in active practices that support psychological needs. At various times during the interviews, each of the teachers offered comments on practices that support their students' mental and emotional well-being.

Owen and Isabelle both use structured routines in their classrooms to aid the students' mental health. Owen stated that his students can live in a world of chaos and he wants his room to be a calming space. While Isabelle recognizes that the need for routine and structure to help

her students stay calm. Paige finds that anxiety is becoming widespread among her students, which gets in the way of them being successful in her classroom. She needs to be able to support and take care of their mental needs first before she can get into any of the content she has. Getting a feel for where her students are emotionally and psychologically is something that Paige works particularly hard to do, and then she uses that information to be the teacher that her students need. Paige spends countless hours helping her students know what they need to be the best versions of themselves. This does not mean how they can improve academically, but instead, how they can take care of their own needs to help them feel confident and successful overall. One way that she does this is by allowing her students to choose their own seats each week. She empowers her students to know that they can find a spot that will let them shine. She also adjusts her curriculum to ensure that each student in her room will be successful. Finally, she said she tries to make sure every student knows that she cares about them and their success and that she will do what it takes to help them feel successful while in her room.

Danielle spends a lot of time working with her students and their emotional and psychological needs. Not only is one of her major projects at the start of the year entirely related to the students' emotions and psychological needs, but she also teaches the students why this is important to focus on and how to maintain a good balance in order to be a successful student. This project is something she also finds herself coming back to throughout the year when she notices students are struggling or need additional emotional and psychological support. Danielle presents the students with the research behind the idea of emotional and psychological wellness. She and the other teachers also recognized that regulating their emotions was not particularly easy for adolescents to do. This is why educating the whole student became a priority in order to best meet their needs.

Finally, Isabelle supports her students' emotional and psychological health through her "90 Seconds of Sunshine." The practice of complimenting a student every single morning starts

their day on a positive note, encouraging her students to find the good in those around them right from the beginning of class. The compliments can change a student's outlook on class and their feelings towards themselves. It is also a good practice for the students giving the compliment. It helps them do something positive and feel a stronger sense of community. One aspect of Isabelle's "90 Seconds of Sunshine" is called "sticks;" each person picks a stick with the name of a student to give a compliment to at the end of class. Isabelle recognized that her students were watching their classmates all of class, watching for the ways that they were doing good, or being helpful, or adding to the community in order to deliver their compliment. Even though this practice does not even take two minutes of her class time, the practice of saying something nice to their classmates is invaluable when it comes to building community and supporting her students' emotional and psychological health.

Along with helping the students understand what their emotional and psychological needs are, the teachers in this study bring joy into their classrooms to foster positive well-being. Paige and Danielle both do this through year-long community time; for Paige, it's called GLOW time, and for Danielle, it's through her classroom energizers. Both teachers bring in activities that are a way to give students the chance to work together and have a bit of fun. Meanwhile, Owen offers his students quarterly incentives and also takes little steps to bring joy into his room. His hand-drawn movie, book, and video game characters on the walls inspire the students. He also plays familiar video game music to evoke positive thoughts and connotations. Isabelle says she has fun with the students by joking with them and laughing with them. She recognizes that her light-hearted personality and smiles help the students feel comfortable in the room. These joy-filled times, whether planned for or part of the day, bring positivity into their students' lives, encouraging positive emotional and psychological well being.

One of the reasons why this theme is absent from previous bodies of work could be due to changing environments and the need for new societal understandings. When Allington and Johnston (2002), who wrote the newest piece of research grounding this work, were completing

their work on exemplary teachers, technology was not yet easily accessible in classrooms, much less at home. Additionally, familial support was more of an expectation then than it is now. Parents are less present in their children's adolescent lives (Hill, Witherspoon, & Bartz, 2018). This results in less family talk at home (Heath, 2013) and could lead to greater pressure to do better; students need to be responsible on their own because their parents cannot be there for support. Since greater sociological issues have emerged, the teachers have found that supporting students' emotional and psychological needs has a greater place in their educational environment.

Exemplary educators plan for motivation through constant reflection and professional development. Rudell's (1997) study was the only grounded work that mentioned the importance of the work of the teacher in motivating adolescents to engage in literacy activities. Similar to that work, this research found the need for teachers to reflect on their practices, complete professional development opportunities, and create genuine content to increase motivation in the classroom. To begin with, this research found that teachers are able to motivate their students because they are constantly trying to make their own work better. Students are motivated by the new ways that the teachers are making connections to the work and thus are motivated by different examples and tactics the teachers use. Content that is stagnant, or simply planned and repeated without change, is not motivating. Instead, however, it is the teacher's constant reflection of the students that help make the lessons motivating to the students. The teacher works to gauge the student response, the student understanding, as well as the student intrinsic motivation to complete the task after the lesson has been delivered. Based on this input, the teacher makes adjustments and changes to the delivery of the content.

Isabelle discussed this process when she shared comparisons between two of her blocks. She shared that one group was super slow while the other rushed through everything. She also shared that one group was hugely athletic and therefore motivated by connections with sports while the other did not have as much of an interest in sports. If Isabelle had delivered her

content in the same way for both classes, one of the two groups may not have been as motivated. Instead, it takes reflection during the day as well as during the planning process to use examples and models that will equally motivate the students. She and the other teachers recognized that they can always do something better to meet the needs of their students, and they are constantly reflecting and adjusting to make that happen.

To go along with the reflection process, the process of content creation also impacts the strategic process of motivating adolescents. With the ease of access to online lesson plans and ideas, as well as those provided by boxed curriculums, the average teacher acts more like a detective than an inventor. However, to be strategic in motivating adolescents, lessons cannot simply be found online; they need to be adjusted and crafted for the current students. This is what the exemplary teachers in this study did. Owen recognized that there are many invaluable tools available to him; however, it was easier to craft the work himself to meet his students' needs and his objectives for the lesson. The same goes for Paige and Danielle. Danielle typically would go through the lesson herself in the crafting of the plan. Through this, she knew what it would take to inspire and motivate the students and what she would need to do to be clear for them. She then created her content with examples and models specific to what she found as a struggle for her during the process. While Paige and Isabelle used excellent available resources, they still found themselves adjusting the work to be the most effective for their groups of students. This plays into the final strategic process for motivation; it is the presence of exemplary teachers and their drive to stay exemplary that most motivates students.

The teachers in this study used mentorships and professional development opportunities in order to continue to be exemplary. Paige and Owen both discussed the confidence that their administrations have in them, continuing to offer opportunities for them to enhance their skills. Paige's administration has told her that amid a stringent curriculum, she needs to continue to do "her," which includes being innovative, reflective, and student-centered. Her principal has this

confidence in her because he knows that Paige is constantly working to take the curriculum and make it even better, and that she seeks out the resources to do just that.

When critically examining the qualifications that teachers have and the avenues they took to motivate their students, they are all student-centered. Aspects like having an abundance of text, expanding the curriculum to meet student need, and building a trusting environment are all examples of themes reinforced by the grounded data. They also are student-forward since it is the students that they are working to motivate. However, to be exemplary, the teachers in this study found that there were active steps that they needed to do for themselves to create that environment for their students. Other than Rudell's (1997) work, the research left out the steps that the teachers need to do, which involve reflection, content creation, and professional development opportunities.

One qualification worthy to note is that Rudell (1997) calls for teachers with in-depth knowledge. Comparatively, this work is not putting emphasis on the teacher being perfect nor on their having the greatest literacy knowledge. In fact, these teachers have all recognized how important it is to be vulnerable and make mistakes in front of their students to show that it's okay to take risks and fail sometimes. These teachers continue to take steps to be better. Whether it is through constantly reading professional texts or articles online or by reflecting on their own processes, these teachers are willing to continue to grow and expand their knowledge and practices. They practice being lifelong learners and working to improve right along with their students. These steps allow teachers to better plan for motivation in their classrooms.

Teachers' understanding of motivation emerges in the classroom through the purposeful strategic process of practicing literacy. The teachers in this study found they were able to motivate their students best through creating purposeful literacy experiences that showcased collaborative learning. To do this, they took strategic steps to demonstrate that learning is a partnership as well as to set up clear relevance and purpose to the students' lives. Each teacher was diligent about making sure the students understand the learning process as a

partnership, one between themselves and the teachers, as well as between themselves and the students around them. The teachers provided many opportunities for the students to learn from, and with one another, allowing them to share their thinking with their classmates and feel successful as a group. To be able to learn from their classmates, there needed to be respect and trust within the room. Once that trust was built, the students felt safe to share and expand their thinking. For the collaborative learning process to work, the teachers had to be specific in offering the students choices and ownership in their learning. If the students felt that there was a right and a wrong way to do something, they were less likely to take risks or create new learning opportunities with their partners.

Paige noted that students in her room often requested additional conversation time with their partners if they found they had not covered everything during their strategy groups. They knew to do this because Paige has empowered her students to advocate for their learning needs.

Isabelle demonstrated the student-teacher partnership through the maintenance of her own reading and writing notebook. Isabelle cited keeping a notebook and redrafting the notes and examples in each block that she taught. The notes and models changed a bit based on the students in the class, but ultimately, she wanted the students to see that she was recording this information because it's important; she was not just insisting that the students take notes. She also found that her students' backgrounds and examples made the lessons better as the classes continued throughout the day, and she wanted each example recorded in her notebook as well. Likewise, Owen did all of the writing projects with his students. He did this in the form of models, but also to show the students what the process was like. For both teachers, participating in the learning opportunity alongside the students showed them that the purpose of the learning opportunity was not just work but something they were interested in as well. They found the students were motivated to do the work because their teacher, too, was doing the

work. Owen and Isabelle demonstrated their passion for reading and writing through the participation in the literacy experiences, which also rubbed off on the students.

Making literacy experiences a strategic collaborative process between the students and the teachers was a theme that was not previously identified in the grounding research. Previous work identified the need for teachers to plan projects and activities that have the students working together, yet the practices here are routines, part of the schedule. They were parts of the everyday class that showed the students the importance of working together, learning from one another, and taking an active role in the way they learned in the classrooms.

Implications for Practice

Teachers who are looking to have an impact on their student's motivation will hopefully relate to one of the teachers in this study to further examine the methods, practices, and structure they could implement in their own classrooms. To extend their classroom practices, I encourage those teachers to try something new, something that these teachers are doing, to be able to strengthen their own practices.

Teachers can begin by being reflective. The teachers in this study were successful because they were constantly reflecting on their own practices and how they could teach better. Additionally, as demonstrated by the teachers in this study, other teachers' practices will improve if the teachers engage in teacher talk with colleagues and mentors. The purpose of this teacher talk is to hone their own practices and further critique how their rooms operate. Teachers hoping to increase their students' motivation should be willing to share their goals and be able to identify possible weaknesses in their teaching practices. Teachers can start with being vulnerable with confidants; that will help the teacher become used to the practice and expand their vulnerability with their students.

The narratives demonstrate the need to critically examine the content and the delivery of the content that is being taught. The teachers in this study had set curriculum, yet they were able to expand their curriculum to meet the needs of their students. This study shows that it is

important to always keep the student's needs at the center of the learning process. The needs of the student are expanding beyond just their academic needs, and all of these needs must be met in order for them to engage in literacy experiences. Looking at the curriculum and how and what teachers are teaching will give those teachers the power to make the best decisions for their students. This study does not advocate going against set curriculum practices. Instead, it encourages teachers to find ways to continue to make the curriculum work for the needs of their students.

Finally, the needs of adolescents are constantly changing. Likewise, so is research and researched-based practices. Teachers who continue to be lifelong learners, reading articles on practices and learning new ways to meet student's needs, will continue to motivate their adolescents.

Through being reflective, finding support within educational communities, and constantly working to be lifelong learners, teachers will be able to strengthen their own practices for motivating adolescents to engage in literacy practices.

Extended Findings; Implications for Teacher Educators

A primary finding of this study that deserves added consideration is how each teacher attended to the social and emotional needs of the students in their classes. While generalizations showed that each teacher made this a priority, due to the varied nature of the teacher's personalities, it emerged in very different forms. Therefore, this theme will be explored further through examining how the teachers invite the students towards a literacy experience through attending to their social and emotional needs, and how the emergence of this invitation relates to the teacher's personality.

To begin, Paige approaches the social, emotional needs of her students as an intuitive process. Paige credits her confidence in her feelings for a situation, her intuition, or her "teacher gut" to what makes her most successful, supporting her student's emotional and psychological needs. Her intuition for her students drives her to understand how to support them, to challenge

them, and to provide a bit of leniency to the assignments and work. This emerges through individualized education for her students. Paige is often adjusting due dates and expectations for her students as she can see the need on a student-by-student basis. Paige does this to alleviate stress for the student to rush through their work to meet the deadlines. Instead, Paige would rather build her student's confidence by providing extra time for the students to produce work that they are proud to have done. Paige's teacher "gut" also allows her to gauge when her students are ready for her to pull back with her supports, or when she needs to increase them. Paige feels that she provides supports to her students before them becoming frustrated with the work and disengaging from it. These practices in support of her student's emotional and psychological needs match her personality, one that is affective and warm. Paige readily says 'love ya' to her students and is willing to offer a student a hug when she can tell they crave the care, or to demonstrate her pride in her students. This warm personality is similar to a parent/child relationship, where the students well being extends beyond their academic performance.

Owen's approach to meeting his student's emotional and psychological needs is through emotional-association response. Primarily he does this through the association of memory and association to music. During work time, Owen plays music from popular and familiar video games. He does this to create a nostalgic/comfortable feeling for his students. He believes that students can associate the familiar music with positive associations of times they were successful, to support them feeling greater success in class. The use of familiar music is a subtle support, but one that he feels helps some of his students who struggle to feel successful. In addition to the music, Owen also uses the association of familiar memories and moments to improve his student's emotional and psychological needs. Owen uses many personal examples, calling on parts of his life that he knows his students will connect to, and then encourages his students to use his ideas to help their own grow. Being vulnerable is an incredibly important part of Owen's teaching practices and matches his personality. Owen feels he needs to be real with

his students, connecting to them, and being a role model for his students. To be the role model for his students, he invites them into memories and moments of his life where he demonstrated growth and personal improvement, to encourage his students to grow and mature into good people. These associations not only promote his students to engage in the material but also help support their emotional and psychological needs, building their confidence and comfort level in his classroom.

Isabel approaches the emotional and psychological needs of her students on a relational level. Isabel treats emotional and psychological learning as relational beings, engaging with one another. She does this through the community she builds, and the expectations that the students engage and support one another. One way that Isabel does this is through the daily compliments that she requires of her students. These compliments are ways that the students need to think differently about their classmates, finding the good in them and the classroom community. She also supports their peer engagement through the use of reading and writing partners. A sociocultural take on supporting her students, Isabel has her students working with and learning from one another to hone their craft. An expectation of these partnerships is for the students to provide constructive feedback and support to one another. This approach mirrors Isabel's personality as she continuously works to provide feedback to her students. Whether this is on a face-to-face level during her reading conferences, or through examining their work and giving feedback. Isabel's belief that students grow through constructive feedback directly impacts how she supports her student's psychological and emotional needs in her classrooms.

Finally, Danielle uses a cognitive-behavioral approach to supporting her student's emotional and psychological needs. Danielle works hard to encourage her students to understand their psychological processes that attend to learning and comprehending literacy experiences. She encourages her students to think about their education and how it occurs, specifically where they get stuck in the learning process. Danielle is continuously talking to her students in scientific ideas on how the brain works, and how she can better support her

students. She wants to provide her students with the knowledge and terms they need to understand psychological processes to advocate for their personal needs in their learning. A cognitive-behavioral approach to the psychological and emotional needs of her students supports Danielle's personality as she is a technical person. Danielle enjoys thinking through every aspect of her lesson ahead of time, working to anticipate her student's struggles and needs. She is a planner, who works to make sure steps have been taken to ensure ultimate success for her students. Danielle is also a learner. She is constantly reading current literacy professional development text to stay up to date on her practices for her students. She wants her practices to reflect the changing needs of the students, meeting the intense emotional and psychological needs that they have.

Recommendations for Further Considerations

This research uncovered topics for further research, such as the importance of administrative support, the impact of motivation in more racially diverse educational systems, and how assessment and data practices can be changed through exemplary teaching.

First of all, two of the four teachers in this study had very supportive administrations. One teacher acknowledged the importance of this to her success as a teacher. When she has a strict curriculum to follow, knowing that her administration supports her flexibility is both comforting and powerful. However, not all administrations may be comfortable with their teachers veering away from the established curriculum. Therefore, additional research could examine the dynamics that exist between teachers and their curriculum and teachers and administration when they are being told to follow structured educational programs.

Exemplary teachers should also be studied in more racially diverse, lower-income schools. A limitation of this study was the overall homogeneity of the participants. Although the findings are broad and do not require financial assistance to be successful, they also have not been observed in a racially diverse or lower-income area. Research could address meeting the emotional and psychological needs of the students. In lower-income areas, the emotional and

psychological needs of the student might be greater than in the sample area studied. Therefore, additional teacher resources or support might be necessary.

Finally, another area for further research would be determining where data and assessment fit in the exemplary teacher's classroom. Each teacher here had very little to no mention of grades or assessment practices. While these teachers do assess their students, they are able to structure their practices around the priority of the student, not the grades. Therefore, additional research could target intrinsic and extrinsic practices and how those practices fit in with a data-driven educational system.

While there are additional avenues that can be explored from this research, following up with administrative buy-in, environments that cause greater emotional and psychological needs, and changes to assessment practices will be a good start.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research sought to demonstrate how exemplary teachers motivate their adolescent students to engage in literacy experiences. The objectives and the themes of this research looked at what teachers understand about how adolescents are motivated, how they plan for that motivation, and how their planning emerges in their classrooms.

Four exemplary teachers studied demonstrate multiple similar beliefs, including the belief that students are motivated by the character and community-building aspects of their classrooms. This is evidence through their priority personalized education, education that focused on the whole student including their emotional and psychological needs, and education that focused on the strategic partnerships in the learning process. These practices require teacher preparation and analysis. The teachers needed to constantly reflect on their practices and work to make them better for their students. The teachers listened to their students and built bridges between themselves and their students, as well as to the curriculum, in order to enhance their student motivation. They also needed to be vulnerable with their students, showcasing their constant learning and pointing to the fact that they are always working to be

better in their teaching of literacy. Finally, they found themselves adapting and creating content that was specific and connected to their students. This content drew the students to the literacy experience and engaged them in the work.

This plan for motivation revealed itself through the teachers encouraging students to learn from and with one another. The classrooms were set up to allow for student collaboration and a level of comfort that helped students open up to their classmates. The opportunities and experiences provided found the students learning and working to grow in their literacy skills, then demonstrating their progress to authentic audiences, which created a specific purpose for their work. Using an abundance of high-interest topics and providing accessibility to texts allowed the students to engage in literacy tasks and see themselves as readers and writers. This increased their motivation to engage in the literacy tasks.

While additional work can be done to find how exemplary teachers and motivation impact more diverse classrooms, the tension between curriculum and teachers, as well as a new understanding towards assessment practices, it reinforces current studies and adds to the breadth of knowledge when it comes to exemplary teachers motivating adolescents. The expansion of current research has led to an understanding of the need for exemplary teachers to constantly be working to develop their craft and reflect on their current practices. It also highlights the need for teachers to motivate their students by caring for their emotional and psychological well-being. Finally, it demonstrates the need for motivation to be a strategic process, ideally as a partnership between teachers and students.

Exemplary teachers are constantly reflecting on their practices in order to educate the whole student and meet their needs while creating an environment where students are motivated to engage in literacy practices due to the opportunities that these teachers provide.

Closing My Story

Completing my doctorate through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has truly changed who I am as an educator.

It was three years ago, when I was only a year into the program, that I was inspired to make major changes in my educational life. I was excited for the direction that my study was going. This led me to study the Finnish educational system. I learned that in Finland, education is about the student, student exploration, and innovation: “A typical feature of teaching and learning in Finland is encouraging teachers and students to try new ideas and methods, learn about and through innovations, and cultivate creativity in schools, while respecting pedagogic legacies” (Sahlberg, 2007, p. 152). This allows the priority of learning and teaching to be on the students rather than the policy. Finland aims to teach the student that learning is a lifelong process that goes beyond the classroom. It also puts priority on the learning community and the students within that community rather than on standards as the United States has. “Many primary schools therefore have become learning and caring communities rather than merely instructional institutions that prepare pupils for the next level of schooling” (p. 154).

As I learned more about the country, everything about its core values inspired me to want to relocate and immerse myself in such a positive environment. This decision was all happening as the political landscape in the U.S. was changing, which was not shining a positive light on education. I desired nothing more than to be able to be in an environment that made more of the great things that teachers were doing, as well as be in an environment that was educating a society to be creative, forward-thinking problem-solvers.

Needless to say, I did not end up moving to Finland, nor did I have the opportunity to continue my studies on their educational environment; however, I was able to find the positivity that I was seeking. The consideration of Finland’s system and a persistent, inspirational professor led me to pursue my research in exemplary teachers. By studying exemplary teachers, I was able to sit down with

individuals and have academic conversations about the good things they were doing in their classrooms. I was inspired in each classroom, as the routines and structures those teachers had in place made more of their students, pushing them to be the best they could be and challenging them to think differently about topics and ideas.

When reflecting on my study in a conversation with my mother, Debbie, a previous educator and administrator herself, I told her that being in these classrooms challenged the practices and structures of my own classroom, in hopes that I, too, could be better. I can confidently say that I am a better teacher today, and I will be a better teacher moving forward, due to each of the teachers mentioned in this dissertation. This includes the study participants, the educators identified in the vignettes, and the professors who signed off as part of my committee. Each has been a part of my story, and that story will continue to spread as I continue to make a difference in education, sharing what it means to be a truly exemplary educator. Although my dissertation is closing, my story is far from over.

References

- Agosto, D. E., Hughes-Hassell, S., & Gilmore-Clough, C. (2003). The all-white world of middle-school genre fiction: Surveying the field for multicultural protagonists. *Children's Literature in Education*, 34(4), 257-275.
- Allington, R. L., & Johnston, P. H. (2002). *Reading to learn: Lessons from exemplary fourth-grade classrooms*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Almasi, J. F., & Gambrell, L. B. (1994). Sociocognitive conflict in peer-led and teacher-led discussions of literature. *Reading Research Report* (12).
- Alvermann, D. E. (2002). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34(2), 189-208.
- Alvermann, D. E., Hinchman, K., Moore, D. W., Phelps, S., & Waff, D. (2006). *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Routledge.
- Alvermann, D. E., Hutcherson, P. L., & Jackson, A. J. (2016). Epilogue: Looking back to look ahead. *Journal of Education*, 196(3), 45-47.
- Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N., & Ruddell, R. B. (2013). *Theoretical models and processes of reading*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Alvermann, D. E., Young, J. P., Green, C., & Wisenbaker, J. M. (1999). Adolescents' perceptions and negotiations of literacy practices in after-school read and talk clubs. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), 221-264.
- Anderson, L. H. (2002). *Fever 1793*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Armstrong, K., & Marr, M. (2016). *Loki's wolves*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Autio, O., Hietanoro, J., & Ruismäki, H. (2011). Taking part in technology education: Elements in students' motivation. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 21(3), 349-361.
- Baker, L. & Wigfield, A. (1999). Dimensions of children's motivation for reading and their relations to reading activity and reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34, 452-477

- Barton, G., & McKay, L. (2016). Adolescent learners and reading: Exploring a collaborative, community approach. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 39(2), 162-175.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Bomer, R. (1999). Conferring with struggling readers: The test of our craft, courage, and hope. *New Advocate*, 12(1), 21-38.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2007) *American time use survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Burks, B. A., Beziat, T. R., Danley, S., Davis, K., Lowery, H., & Lucas, J. (2015). Adapting to change: Teacher perceptions of implementing the common core state standards. *Education*, 136(2), 253-258.
- Cameron, James (Producer & Director). (2009). *Avatar* [Motion picture]. United States: Twentieth Century Fox.
- Carroll, J. (2011). From encyclopedias to search engines: Technological change and its impact on literacy learning. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 19(2), 27-34.
- Casey, H. K. (2008). Engaging the disengaged: Using learning clubs to motivate struggling adolescent readers and writers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(4), 284-294.
- Connor, C. M., Goldman, S. R., & Fishman, B. (2014). Technologies that support students' literacy development. In J. M. Spector, M. D Merrill, J. Elen, & M. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (4th ed., pp. 591-604). New York, NY: Springer.
- Conway, P. F., & Amberson, J. (2011). Laptops meet schools, one-one draw: M-learning for secondary students with literacy difficulties. *Support for Learning*, 26(4), 173-181.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Daniels, E., Hamby, J., & Chen, R. (2015). Reading writing reciprocity: Inquiry in the classroom. *Middle School Journal*, 46(4), 9-16
- Dawkins, R., & Wong, Y. (2016). *The ancestor's tale: a pilgrimage to the dawn of evolution*. Boston, MA: Mariner.
- DiGisi, L. L. (2010). Response to "Reviewing adolescent literacy reports: Key components and critical questions." *Journal of Literacy Research*, 42(2), 115-123.
- Duffy, G. G., & Hoffman, J. V. (1999). In pursuit of an illusion: The flawed search for a perfect method. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(1), 10.
- Duncan, L. G., McGeown, S. P., Griffiths, Y. M., Stothard, S. E., & Dobai, A. (2016). Adolescent reading skill and engagement with digital and traditional literacies as predictors of reading comprehension. *British Journal of Psychology*, 107(2), 209-238.
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 109.
- Elo, S. & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 62(1), 107–115.
- Eskay, M., Onu, V. C., Obiyo, N., & Obidoa, M. (2012). Use of peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning: Implications for reducing anti-social behavior of schooling adolescents. *US-China Education Review*, 11, 932-945.
- Faggella-Luby, M. N., Graner, P., Deshler, D. D., & Drew, S. (2012). Building a house on sand: Why disciplinary literacy is not sufficient to replace general strategies for adolescent learners who struggle. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 32(1), 69-84.
- Fonda, H., & Rose, R. (Producers), & Lumet, S. (Director). (1957). *12 Angry men* [Motion picture]. United States: Orion-Nova Productions.
- Frankel, K. K., Becker, B. C., Rowe, M. W., & Pearson, P. D. (2016). From "what is reading?" to what is literacy?. *District School Journal of Education of the State of New York*, 196(3), 7-17.

- Franzak, J. (2006). Zoom: A review of the literature on marginalized adolescent readers, literacy theory, and policy implications. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(2), 209-248.
- Gabriel, R., Pereira, J. D., & Allington, R. (2011). Exemplary teacher voices on their own development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(8), 37-41.
- Gaiman, N. (2008). *Coraline*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Gambrell, L. (2011). Seven rules of engagement: What's most important to know about motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(3), 172-178.
- Gee, J. P., (2000). Teenagers in new times: A new literacy studies perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 412-420.
- Gee, J. P., (2007) *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Gee, J. P. (2009). A situated sociocultural approach to literacy and technology. In E. A. Baker (Ed.), *The new literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice* (pp.). Chicago, IL: Guilford.
- Gemeinhart, D. (2016). *The honest truth*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Klauda, S. L. (2014). Effects of classroom practices on reading comprehension, engagement, and motivations for adolescents. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49(4), 387-416.
- Guthrie, J. T., Klauda, S. L., & Ho, A. N. (2013). Modeling the relationships among reading instruction, motivation, engagement, and achievement for adolescents. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(1), 9-26.
- Guthrie, J. T., Van Meter, P., McCann, A. D., Wigfield, A., Bennett, L., Poundstone, C. C., Rice, M. E., Faibisch, F. M., Hunt, B. and Mitchell, A. M. (1996). Growth of literacy engagement: Changes in motivations and strategies during concept-oriented reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(3), 306-332.

- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403–422). Mahwah, NJ: Routledge.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & You, W. (2012). Instructional contexts for engagement and achievement in reading. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 601–634). New York, NY: Springer.
- Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2007). Learning opportunities in preschool and early elementary classrooms. In R. C. Pianta, M. J. Cox, & K. L. Snow (Eds.), *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability* (pp. 49-83). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- Hansen, C. C. (2008). Observing technology enhanced literacy learning. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 8(2), 108-121.
- Hayn, J. and Sherrill, D. (1996). Female protagonists in multicultural young adult literature: Sources and strategies. *The ALAN Review*, 24(1), 43–46.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). Research currents: A lot of talk about nothing. *Language Arts*, 60(8), 999-1007.
- Heath, S. B. (2013). It's a book! It's a bookstore! Theories of reading in the worlds of childhood and adolescence. In A. Alvermann, N. J. Unrau, and R. B. Ruddell, *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (6th ed., pp. 204-227). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Heath, S. B. (2013). So what's it about? Your book, I mean? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(4), 266-270.
- Hemphill, L., Kim, J., Yudron, M., LaRusso, M., Donovan, S., Sabatini, J. & O'Reilly, T. (2015). Experimental effects of the strategic reading intervention on reading performance in high poverty middle schools. *Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 1–8.
- Hill, N. E., Witherspoon, D. P., & Bartz, D. (2018). Parental involvement in education during middle school: Perspectives of ethnically diverse parents, teachers, and students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 111(1), 12–27.

- Hippisley, S. (2009). Girl talk: Adolescent girls constructing meaning in book groups and the classroom. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, 16(2), 221-230.
- Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). "Just plain reading": A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350-377.
- Ivey, G., & Johnston, P. H. (2013). Engagement with young adult literature: Outcomes and processes. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(3), 255-275.
- Khan, S., & VanWynsberghe, R. (2008). Cultivating the under-mined: Cross-case analysis as knowledge mobilization. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 9(1).
- Kim, G. M. (2016). Transcultural digital literacies: Cross-border connections and self-representations in an online forum. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 51(2), 199-219.
- Kim, H., and Kamil, M. (2016). Adolescents, computer technology, and literacy. In T. Jetton and J. Dole (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Kinzer, C., & Leu, D. J. (1997). Focus on research: The challenge of change: Exploring literacy and learning in electronic environments. *Language Arts*, 74(2), 126-136.
- Kirkland, D. E. (2017). "Beyond the dream": Critical perspectives on black textual expressivities between the world and me. *English Journal*, 106(4), 14-18.
- Kirkland, D. E., Ortlieb, E., & Majors, Y. (2017). A dance of bars: Rethinking the role of literacy education in the age of mass incarceration. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(4), 467-470.
- Klauda, S. L., & Guthrie, J. T. (2015). Comparing relations of motivation, engagement, and achievement among struggling and advanced adolescent readers. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 28(2), 239-269.
- Konold, T., Cornell, D., Shukla, K., & Huang, F. (2017). Racial/ethnic differences in perceptions of school climate and its association with student engagement and peer aggression. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46, 1289-1303.

- Koss, M. D., & Teale, W. H. (2009). What's happening in YA literature? Trends in books for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 563-572.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97, 47-68.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2006). *New literacies: Everyday practices and classroom learning* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead, NY: Open University Press.
- Lee, C. D. (2001). Is October Brown Chinese? A cultural modeling activity system for underachieving students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38, 97-141.
- Lenhart, A., Arafeh, S., Smith, A., & McGill, A. R. (2008). *Writing, technology, and teens*. Washington, DC: Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Leu, J. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J. L., & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the internet and other information and communication technologies. In A. Alvermann, N. J. Unrau, and R. B. Ruddell, *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (5th ed., pp. 1570-1613). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Lloyd, S. L. (2004). Using comprehension strategies as a springboard for student talk. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(2), 114-124.
- Lowman, J. (1996). Characteristics of exemplary teachers. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 65, 33-40.
- Martin, J. L., Martin, T., & Capel, M. (2014). Apple pie and ebonics: Language diversity and preparation for a multicultural world. *Leadership and Research in Education*, 1, 135-50.
- Martínez, M. E. (2013). A study of the availability of multicultural children's literature in Treasure Valley schools: Quality, access and inclusion. *McNair Scholars Research Journal*, 9(1), 53-60.
- Meyer, M. (2012). *Cinder*. New York, NY: Feiwel and Friends.
- Moje, E. B., Overby, M., Tysaver, N., & Morris, K. (2008) The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(1), 107-154.

- Moje, E. B., & Young, J. P. (2000). Reinventing adolescent literacy for new times: Perennial and millennial issues. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 400-410.
- Moore, D. W., Bean, T. W., Birdyshaw, D., & Rycik, J. A. (1999). Adolescent literacy: A position statement. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(1), 97-112.
- Morgenstern, E. (2016). *The night circus*. London: Vintage.
- Moss, P. A. & Haertel, E. H. (2016). Engaging methodological pluralism. In D. Gitomer and C. Bell (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (5th ed., pp. 127-247). Washington, DC: AERA.
- Müller, C. M., Hofmann, V., Begert, T., & Cillessen, A. H. (2018). Peer influence on disruptive classroom behavior depends on teachers' instructional practice. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 56, 99-108.
- O'Brien, D. & Scharber, C. (2008). Digital literacies go to school: Potholes and possibilities. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 66-68.
- O'Donnell-Allen, C., & Hunt, B. (2001). Reading adolescents: Book clubs for YA readers. *English Journal*, 90(3), 82.
- Pulido, I. (2009). "Music fit for us minorities": Latinas/os' use of hip hop as pedagogy and interpretive framework to negotiate and challenge racism. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(1), 67-85.
- Rampey, B. D., Dion, G. S., & Donahue, P. L. (2009). *NAEP 2008 trends in academic progress*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R & D program in reading comprehension*. Washington, DC: Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.
- Rawson, C. H. (2011). Are all lists created equal?: Diversity in award-winning and bestselling young adult fiction. *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults*, 1(3).
- Reynolds, J. (2018). *Long way down*. London: Faber & Faber.

- Ripp, P. (2017). The 7th grade book challenge revisited. Retrieved from <https://pernillesripp.com/2016/06/05/the-25-book-challenge/>
- Ripp, P. (n.d.). The global read aloud. Retrieved from <https://theglobalreadaloud.com/>
- Rose, D. (2011). Beyond literacy: Building an integrated pedagogic genre. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 34(1), 81-97.
- Rosen, L. D. (2010). Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the way they learn. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 2(3), 255-256.
- Ruddell, R. (1997). Researching the influential literacy teacher: Characteristics, beliefs, strategies, and new research directions. In C. Kinzer, K. Hinchman, & D. Leu (Eds.), *Inquiries in literacy theory and practice*. (46th Yearbook of the National Reading Conference, pp. 37-53). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68.
- Ryan, R. M., Kuhl, J., & Deci, E. L. (1997). Nature and autonomy: Organizational view of social and neurobiological aspects of self-regulation in behavior and development. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 701-728.
- Sahlberg, P. (2007). Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach. *Journal of Education Policy*, 22(2), 147-171.
- Sahlberg, P. (2010). The secret to Finland's success: Educating teachers (Research brief). *Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education*, 1-8.
- Schunk, D. H., Pintrich, P. R., & Meece, J. L. (2008). *Motivation in education* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2007). Influencing children's self-efficacy and self-regulation of reading and writing through modeling. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 23(1), 7-25.

- Scrimin, S., Moscardino, U., Altoè, G., & Mason, L. (2018). Attentional bias for academic stressors and classroom climate predict adolescents' grades and socioemotional functioning. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 28(1), 245-258.
- Shabani, K. (2016). Applications of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1-10.
- Shin, H., & Ryan, A. M. (2017). Friend influence on early adolescent disruptive behavior: Teacher emotional support matters. *Developmental Psychology*, 53, 114–124.
- Shirley, E. M., & Cornell, D. G. (2012). The contribution of student perceptions of school climate to understanding the disproportionate punishment of African American students in a middle school. *School Psychology International*, 33(2), 115-134.
- Shochet, I. M., & Smith, C. L. (2014). A prospective study investigating the links among classroom environment, school connectedness, and depressive symptoms in adolescents. *Psychology in the Schools*, 51(5), 480-492.
- Skinner, E. A., Kindermann, T. A., Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (2009). Engagement and disaffection as organizational constructs in the dynamics of motivational development. In K. R. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 223–245). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Snow, C., Barnes, W., Chandler, J., Goodman, I. F., & Hemphill, L. (1991). Unfulfilled expectations: Home and school influences on literacy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Stake, R. E. (2015) *Multiple case study analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" *Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 13(10), 1.
- Tatum, B. D. (2000). Examining racial and cultural thinking. *Educational Leadership*, 57(8), 54.
- Tatum, B. D., Calhoun, W. R., Brown, S. C., & Ayvazian, A. (2000). Implementation strategies for creating an environment of achievement. *Liberal Education*, 86(2), 18-25.

- Teale, W., Lyons, K., Gambrell, L., Zolt, N., Olien, R., & Leu, D. (2013). An online learning community as support for at-risk students' literacy growth: Findings, implications, and challenges. In A. Shamir & O. Korat (Eds.), *Technology as a support for literacy achievements for children at risk* (pp. 144-156). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Thomas, E. E. (2013). Dilemmatic conversations: Some challenges of culturally responsive discourse in a high school English classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 24(3), 328-347.
- Thomas, E. E. (2016). Stories still matter: Rethinking the role of diverse children's literature today. *Language Arts*, 94(2), 112-119.
- Unrau, N. J., & Quirk, M. (2014). Reading motivation and reading engagement: Clarifying commingled conceptions. *Reading Psychology*, 35(3), 260-284.
- Varuzza, M., Sinatra, R., Eschenauer, R., & Blake, B. E. (2014). The relationship between English language arts teachers' use of instructional strategies and young adolescents' reading motivation, engagement, and preference. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 3(2), 108-119.
- Vasudevan, L., & Campano, G., (2009). The social production of adolescent risk and the promise of adolescent literacies. *Review of Research in Education*, 33, 310-353.
- Villanueva de Debat, E. (2006). Applying current approaches to the teaching of reading. *English Teaching Forum*, 44, 8-15.
- Watson, J. (2014). *Loot: How to steal a fortune*. New York: Scholastic.
- Weintraub, J. (Producer), & Avildsen, J. G., (Director). (1984). *The karate kid* [Motion picture]. United States: Columbia Pictures.
- Wendt, J. L. (2013). Combating the crisis in adolescent literacy: Exploring literacy in the secondary classroom. *American Secondary Education*, 41(2), 38-48.
- Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(3), 420-432.
- Zach, L. (2006). Using a multiple-case-studies design to investigate the information-seeking behavior of arts administrators. *Library Trends*, 55(1), 4-21.

Appendix A Pre-research Sampling Survey

Name:

Educational background: (this includes college names and degrees)

School of current teaching position:

Grade currently teaching:

Years in this current position:

Previous teaching experiences (please list all schools, grades, and estimate of years in that position)

Teaching philosophy

Appendix B Formal letter of Invitation to Study

Date

Dear Mr/Mrs.. (Participants Name):

Thank you for allowing me to visit your classroom this past (date.) I was incredibly impressed with the strategies and tactics that your classroom uses to invite your students to the literacy experiences. I was able to observe an environment where students not only wanted to read, but were excited to engage in the variety of literary tasks they were working on. Based on what I observed, I would love to learn more about the classroom community that you have created, and the purposeful steps you take to put student motivation at a forefront of the student learning. I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study within your classroom, at (insert school name). This research will be part of the requirements of my dissertation for the Urban Education Doctoral Program at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee. The study is entitled; How do teachers plan for and implement strategies that invite adolescent students to socio-centric literacy experiences.

No students will be researched specifically, and no student names will be used in the study report. Rather, I will be looking at the set-up of your classroom environment and daily schedule and routines that foster motivation for students.

If approval is granted, interviews will occur at a time that is convenient and non-obtrusive to you. I will also schedule two to three visits to your classroom where I can see these strategies in action. No costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: cjfaase@uwm.edu.

If you agree, kindly sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Additionally, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this survey/study at your institution.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Faase

UW-Milwaukee

Curriculum and Instruction

Urban Education Ph.D Program

Approved by:

Print your name and title here

Signature Date

Appendix C Interview Questions

Personal Motivations

Q1. Please tell me about getting into education in the first place. Why did you want to become a teacher?

Educational Environment

Q2. Describe you and your students favorite part of your classroom and why?

Q3 What is your students favorite part of your schedule and routines. What is yours?

Teaching and motivating students

Q4. Without sharing names, Tell me about your most influential student.

Q5. Tell me about your favorite part of teaching reading to adolescents.

Q6. Tell me about the biggest struggle of teaching adolescents.

Q7. Without sharing names, will you tell me about a student who sticks out to you for having the biggest gains in reading during your time with them.

On Teacher Understanding and Planning:

Q8. Describe for me your favorite/feel they are most successful lessons.

Q9 What do you spend the most time thinking about as you start a new year of teaching reading to adolescent students?

On student motivation

Q10. Can you put into words what students look like in your classroom that you know you have hooked on reading.

Q11. What are your most successful ways of motivating students to read? Engaging students in reading?

Is there anything else that we haven't covered. Anything else about your classroom and teaching that you think I should know so that I know what you are like as a classroom teacher of adolescent readers.

Appendix C.2 Interview Questions with Sub questions

What were they like? What type of connection did you have with them?

Personal Motivations

Q1. Please Tell me about getting into education in the first place. Why did you want to become a teacher?

- **Your expectations vs. what keeps you in?**
- **Reasons change- how do yours keep you in the profession**

Educational Environment

Q2. Describe your and past students favorite part of your classroom?

- desks/tables
- Seating arrangement
- Classroom library
- Technology
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Movement?
- Spatial organization of the classroom supports learning objective

Q3 What has been your students favorite part of your schedule and routines. What is yours?

- How long have you had these routines?
- Where did these routines come from?
- Who are they most successful/least successful for?

Teaching and motivating students

Q4. Without sharing names, Tell me about your most influential student.

Q5. Tell me about your favorite part of teaching reading to adolescents.

Q6. Tell me about the biggest struggle of teaching adolescent Language Arts.

- How do you account for this?
- Better/worse over the years?
- What works?Doesn't work.

Q7. Without sharing names, will you tell me about a student who sticks out to you for having the biggest gains in reading during your time with them.

- Were the gains all data supported?
- Greatest contributing factors?
- Relationships with the students around them
- Relationships with the teachers?
- Previous relationships with books?

On Teacher Understanding and Planning:

Q8. Describe for me your most successful lessons, and what makes them so successful.

- Definition of successful
- Lesson content
- In the hook
- Directed towards reading
- Differentiation for students

Q9 What do you spend the most time thinking about as you start a new year of teaching reading to adolescent students?

- Motivational factors?
- Student demographics
- Routines
- Practices
-

On student motivation

Q10. Can you put into words what students look like in your classroom that you know you have hooked on reading.

- How do you know students are motivated/engaged?
- What about quiet students?
- Does it look the same for all/most students?
- Are you making any changes to these practices?

Appendix D Observation Focus

- ☐ **Classroom Environment**
 - ☐ **Favorite part of their classroom.**
 - ☐ **Where students are most**
- ☐ **Language Arts period routines**
 - ☐ **Practices**
 - ☐ **Transitions**
- ☐ **Motivational phrases**
- ☐ **Motivational tactics**
 - ☐ Self Efficacy
 - ☐ Challenge
 - ☐ Work Avoidance
 - ☐ Curiosity
 - ☐ Involvement
 - ☐ Importance
 - ☐ Recognition
 - ☐ Grades
 - ☐ Competition
 - ☐ Social
 - ☐ Compliance
 - ☐ Other _____
- ☐ **Lessons similar to the teachers “favorite lesson” as identified in first interview**
- ☐ **Uniquely You**
- ☐ **Students hooked on reading based on the teacher’s description from interview.**

Directly after each observation

- **Simple check in with teachers**
- **“Could you walk me through what I saw today” or “This is what I saw today. Did I miss anything.” Was this a typical day for your class? What else would you like me to know about this class period/lesson?**

Appendix E Interview Questions

Q1. Tell me about how the year is going

- a. Is this/are these groups of students typical to students you have worked with in the past?**

Q2. Tell me about the group of students you get to work with?

- b. Has this group of students required you to change aspects of your classroom routines and practices from what you intended at the start of the year?**

Q3. Out of your classes- do you think more or fewer students love to read? Tell me about those students.

Q4. The students who do not love to read- tell me about those students.

Q5. For the students who do not love to read, tell me about the parts of your class that they find most success in.

Q6. BASED ON this group of students you are working with, how has your idea of motivation changed. Can you tell me about a student/lesson that shows that.

Appendix F: Letter to Support Recruitment

September 30, 2018

Dear (School administrator/higher Ed. professional):

I am writing to request assistance in a research area that you are in the capacity to observe. I am currently seeking my doctorate in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee. I am conducting research for the purpose of my dissertation and hoping to use your expertise to identify exemplary educators. My study is entitled; HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES.

I am looking to recruit teachers of English/Language Arts who teach students in fifth grade through eighth grade. These teachers will be asked to sit down for an interview as well as allow me to observe in their classroom. No students will be researched specifically, and no student names will be used in the study report.

The type of teacher that I am looking to recruit are those that are exemplary at motivating their students in their language arts classes. This could manifest itself in a variety of structures, however the below are researched based strategies that support motivation in the classroom. I am hoping this list ignites a memory of a current educator that you could recommend for the purpose of study.

Teachers will be considered if they are exemplary at planning for and understanding motivation as evident through their classroom environments and practices. This includes;

- Creating a community of learners
- Utilizing your classroom amenities
- Expanding the institutionalization and standardization of adolescent education.
- Incorporating routines and practices that allow for student interaction
- Class objectives meet the needs of students
- Diversity consideration of texts and differentiation is important in their classroom.
- Classroom procedures allow for student autonomy
- Fosters an environment that maximizes the interconnectedness of students and learning

Sincerely,

Chelsea Faase

UW-Milwaukee
Curriculum and Instruction
Urban Education Ph.D Program

Teacher Recommendation

Teacher Name:

Teacher School:

Current Teaching Position:

Teacher Contact Information

Appendix G: Letter to Research Site

September 30, 2018

Dear (School Administrator):

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study within your organization, at _____. I am currently seeking my doctorate in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee. I am conducting research for the purpose of my dissertation and hoping to use your educational environments to highlight exemplary educators. The study is entitled; HOW TEACHERS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES THAT MOTIVATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN LITERACY EXPERIENCES.

I hope that the school administration will allow me to recruit a teacher of English/Language Arts from who teach students in fifth grade through eighth grade to interview and observe regarding their classroom practices and their understanding of motivation in the classroom. No students will be researched specifically, and no student names will be used in the study report.

If approval is granted, interviews and observations will occur at a time that is convenient and non-obtrusive to the recruited teacher. At this point, it is not intended that the data collected will be used towards any work seeking publication. No costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: cfaase@wdpsd.com.

If you agree, kindly sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Additionally, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this survey/study at your institution.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Faase

UW-Milwaukee

Curriculum and Instruction

Urban Education Ph.D Program

Approved by:

Print your name and title here

Signature Date

CURRICULUM VITAE

Chelsea J. Faase

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Urban Education Doctoral Program

Ph. D. in Curriculum and Instruction

December, 2019

Major Field: Literacy Education

Dissertation Title: How Teacher Plan for and Implement Strategies that Motivate Adolescents to Engage in Literacy Experiences

University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh

Master in Education- 2013

Reading Education

St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI

Bachelor of Science-2008

Middle Childhood to Early Adolescent

CERTIFICATIONS

Lifetime Educator License

316 Reading Teacher License- Early Childhood- Adolescent

317 Reading Specialist License- Early Childhood- Adolescent

Professional Educator- Middle Childhood- Early Adolescent

English/Language Arts Educator- Middle Childhood-Early Adolescent

English as a Second Language Educator (ESL)- Middle Childhood, Early Adolescent

Spanish Educator- Middle Childhood, Early Adolescent

PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

2013-Present

Sixth Grade Language Arts Teacher

West De Pere Middle School, De Pere WI

2009- Present

Director of GLAD Camp and Consultant for SNC Youth Programs

St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI 54115

2014-2017

Talent Development (Gifted and Talented) Coordinator

West De Pere Middle School, De Pere WI

2013-2018

Private Reading Consultant to Students with Reading Disabilities

Green Bay, WI 54115

2008-2013 Fourth Grade Teacher
Westwood Elementary School, De Pere WI

RESEARCH

Faase, C. J (2019). How teachers plan for and implement strategies that motivate adolescents to engage in literacy experiences. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

Faase, C. J (2017). Adolescents like to talk; What motivational factors come to play as adolescents discuss text. Unpublished manuscript. University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

PUBLICATIONS UNDER REVIEW

Faase, C. (2018). Expanding classroom practices to enhance motivation across races and cultures. Manuscript submitted for publication. WSRA Journal.

Lau, J., Faase, C. Kohl, S. (2019). Counteracting tensions between administration and staff in elementary and middle level schools. Manuscript in preparation. Roman and Littlefield.

COURSES TAUGHT

2015 Reading 735-Adolescent Programs and Practices
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

National

Lukens, K., **Faase, C.**, George, M. (2008). Using Global Positioning Systems in the classroom. International Society for Technology in Education National Conference. San Antonio, Texas.

State

Faase, C., (February 2017) Gifted and Talented Creative Writing in the Classroom. CESA 7 Gifted Student Leadership Council Retreat Focus on Creative and Artistically Gifted Students. Manitowoc, WI.

Faase, C., Feldhausen, J., Lutz, S., Dernbach, A., Knapp, A. (October, 2016). Gifted and Talented students in a K-12 literacy classroom. Wisconsin Talent and Gifted Statewide Conference. Wisconsin Dells, WI

Faase, C. (October, 2014). Motivating the middle school reader. Hot Topics in Literacy. University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh. Oshkosh, WI.

Local

- Faase, C.**, Rodewald, K. (2018, 2019, 2019). Co-teaching in a Regular Education Classroom; Supporting your Special Education Student. St. Norbert College Student Teacher Seminar. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C.**, Feldhausen, J., Lutz, S., Dernbach, A., Knapp, A. (2017) Literacy Differentiation K-12. West De Pere School District Wide “Suppers and Strategies” professional development opportunities. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2016) Twelve days of enrichment; Practical tools for differentiating in the classroom. West De Pere Middle School. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C.**, Krause, K. Rodewald, K. (2016). Inside the mind of our students with a learning disability. West De Pere School District Wide “Suppers and Strategies” professional development opportunities. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2016). Women in education. Women in Education Conference. St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2016) Talent development handbook proposal. West De Pere school district School Board meeting. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2015) Tired learning for GT students in the regular ed. classroom. West De Pere school district technology training. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2013) The Daily Five in the adolescent classroom. Presentation in the West De Pere School district technology trainings.
- Faase, C. (2012) Wikis in the classroom. West De Pere school district technology training. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2011) Utilizing GPS systems to engage learners in the classroom. West De Pere school district technology training. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C.**, Kempen, T. (2010-2013) “Fountas and Pinnell Continuum for Literacy Learning” West De Pere school district new teacher literacy training. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C. (2010) Motivating Male Learners. Presentation for an undergraduate class from St. Norbert College.
- Faase, C. (2009) Technology application in class. West De Pere school district School administrative team meeting. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.
- Faase, C.** Kempen, T. (2009). Reading Strategies from the WSRA. Westwood elementary school faculty meeting. West De Pere School District. De Pere, WI.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2016 | Talent Development Program Handbook (GT). West De Pere School District. West De Pere, WI. |
| 2013 | Literacy Programs and Practices. West De Pere School District. West De Pere, WI. |
| 2009 | Girls Leadership and Development Summer Camp. St. Norbert College. De Pere, WI. |

STATE AND LOCAL SERVICE

Greater Bayland Literacy Council- *Executive Board Member*
Gifted and Talented Team - *Curriculum Building Team Member*
Read Across America Committee- *Chair*
Professional Learning Networks-*Team member*
West De Pere Middle School Forensics- *Coach*
Westwood Elementary School Musical- *Assistant Director*
St. Norbert College Alumni Board- *Member*

HONORS AND AWARDS

2016 One of Green Bay's 20 Women To Know (2015)
Golden Apple Nominee (2008-2019)
E.J. Lamal Award- St. Norbert (2008)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC)
Wisconsin State Reading Association (WSR)
International Reading Association (IRA)
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted (WATG)