READING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative experimental study was to analyze how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and to determine what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level. Additionally, the study assessed the effectiveness of Socratic Seminar at creating situational interest and increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classes. While the study is qualitative in nature, quantitative data was used to support the findings. Data for this study were collected through questionnaires, surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and artifacts. The participants included thirty students and two teachers from a school in Southeast Tennessee. Findings aligned with the motivational theory of Albert Bandura’s (1977) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs in a social context and that a person’s motivation is rooted in the core belief that he/she has the power to produce certain outcomes by eliciting certain behaviors. The data showed a relationship between students’ perception of reading and English classes and motivation and engagement. Additionally, the study juxtaposed beliefs of what constitutes effective instructional strategies, from student and teacher perspectives. Also, findings from this study include best practices for engaging and motivating students in secondary English courses.

Keywords: engagement, motivation, Social Cognitive Theory, situational interest
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I would like to thank my daughter, Emerson, for understanding when I couldn’t play because I was reading, annotating, analyzing, or writing. Most of your youth has been sitting beside me while I worked on my various degrees. I hope you value education and growth as much as I do and develop into the beautiful and thoughtful individual, I know you are.

Additionally, I am very grateful to my father for teaching me to always look up, to dig a ditch to the best of my ability, to never allow anyone else to do what I could do for myself, and to leave the world better than I found it. I would never be where I am right now without you. Thank you. And to my mother, who spent countless hours reading to me and teaching me to appreciate literature, thank you for developing my passion and helping me recognize my calling. I will always be grateful to you. And, even though she is no longer with me physically, I must thank my nannie who was my strength when I was weak, my heart when I wanted to give up, the hand when I couldn’t reach out, and the voice that continues echoing in my mind, reminding me of what is possible.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to all of my students—those from the past, and those in the future. It is the thought of your growth and well-being that pushes me to be a better teacher and person. I want to be capable of being your guide, so you can find your own voices and change the world. Reading changed my life, and supportive teachers helped guide me to my passion. I just hope I will continue being a light in your lives and a guide to help you on your individual journeys.

“Don’t be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

By the time students reach high school, they are expected to have mastered reading skills, such as decoding and comprehension, in order to successfully comprehend and synthesize complex texts in multiple subject areas. However, many students never acquired the appropriate literacy skill set early in their academic careers, and therefore continue to struggle with reading or avoid it altogether. According to Paige (2011), a student’s ability to read is key for success in all academic disciplines, as well as in post-secondary endeavors. Attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement. Tasks such as reading and writing require significant motivation. Students who are intrinsically motivated to read value and employ different strategies to engage with the text compared to students who lack reading motivation or are extrinsically motivated to read. In addition, Katzir, Lesaux, and Kim (2009) posited that reading self-concept correlated with a student’s reading comprehension skills. Student perceptions, in regard to their reading ability, directly influence their reading motivation and achievement.

Background Information

Since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), there has been an increased focus on assessment and accountability in today’s schools. With increased academic expectations set by the federal, state, and local agencies, school reform continues to emphasize raising the educational achievement of all students. However, even with increased expectations and more stringent accountability measures, empirical evidence shows that students who graduate with a high school diploma are unprepared for the rigor and academic expectations of college (Harrington-Lucker, 2002). In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education projected that
2.4 million freshmen would enroll in college. Out of those 2.4 million students, 30% of them will have to take remedial courses in mathematics or reading. The irony, according to Marga Torrence, a policy analyst at the Denver-based Education Commission of the States, is that most of the students enrolled in remedial classes are likely to have good grades in high school. Some stakeholders put fault in the schools and their ability to engage and challenge students. Some argue that it lies in the students and their attitudes toward school and their willingness to expend effort on school tasks. Others suggest it stems from society’s lack of commitment to children and their education (Tollefson, 2000). This demonstrates how perspective impacts teaching and learning. These perspectives and beliefs influence teacher-student interactions and subsequently student achievement.

Since student-teacher relationships impact student achievement, it is imperative that teachers create an environment where students are engaged in the learning process. Student engagement impacts self-efficacy and motivation and has emerged as the cornerstone of high school reforms (The National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004; as cited in Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006). Student engagement strategies are implemented with the goals of managing classroom behaviors and enhancing the learning experience of each individual student in order to foster the skills required to flourish in the demanding and dynamic twenty-first century (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). However, this generation of students is unlike any other, and keeping them engaged has become one of the most prominent issues in school reform. As the population becomes increasingly diverse, and technology continues to change the way people live, learn, and communicate, it is essential that school and its curriculum reflect society and its dynamics to provide students with the tools they will need to be competitive and successful (Cook-Sather, 2002).
The Net Generation is considered a cohort of young people who have grown up in an environment in which they are constantly exposed to technology. According to Barnes, Marateo, and Ferris (2007), the Net Generation represents 7% of the population and accounted for 49.5 million students enrolled in schools in 2003. Since this is the first generation to grow up with digital and cyber technologies, it has become increasingly important to assess how they learn and provide them with a learning environment that reflects their needs. Net Geners have distinctive ways of thinking and communicating and desire independence and autonomy in their learning (Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, 2007). These students tend to become bored in traditional settings and desire more hands-on, inquiry-based approaches to learning. Engaging these students is a daunting task, especially since they prefer immediacy and are less likely to accept delayed gratification. Although they grew up in an age of media saturation, they often do not understand how the technology affects their literacy or communication skills. According to Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), Net Geners often lack literacy and critical thinking skills, which affects their academic performance and weakens their perseverance with objectives that consume their time and effort. Therefore, educational stakeholders have begun to focus on interventions and instructional strategies that will engage students in their educational endeavors. With improved engagement in classes, educators hope to increase student motivation and improve students’ academic performance.

For many students, the obstacle to learning and academic achievement is not cognitive capacity, but rather the student’s desire to learn (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; as cited in Paige, 2011). Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis (2013) found that students’ beliefs and attitudes play an important role in understanding their engagement with academic tasks and their achievement with those tasks. When students are motivated to learn, they become more enthusiastic, put forth
more effort, concentrate on completing tasks, and willingly confront challenges (Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013). Because the Net Generation is acculturated to the use of technology, schools have a more arduous undertaking to motivate them to complete tasks they might feel insignificant to meeting their long-term goals. Increasing student motivation is key to increasing student achievement and success.

According to McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths and Stothard (2014), “Adolescents’ reading skills play a crucial role in their educational success as most curriculum subjects use text-based materials for study” (p. 546). During adolescence, when reading motivation declines, is ironically the time when reading becomes a basis for performance across all subject areas (Wolter, Denton, York, & Francis, 2013). It is at this point in their development that adolescents face a myriad of social and academic pressures, from a variety of external and internal sources. Lack of desire to read and impatience with reading can develop in little time reading texts and inadequate literacy acquisition (Paige, 2011). Furthermore, poor reading skills have a significant impact on students’ post-school opportunities (McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths, & Stothard, 2014). Motivating students to engage in the reading process is essential to building the critical thinking skills and the communication skills required to be successful in all academic disciplines and to be competitive in the 21st-century.

Common Core Standards, an educational initiative from 2010, which provides a framework for what students should know and learn in each subject area and grade level, focus on students’ ability to read, write, think, and communicate effectively (Roskos, Neuman, 2013). Reading is a process, and when students have deficits, they are unable to recognize strategic ways of decoding and comprehending texts, which puts them at a disadvantage regarding their options for post-secondary goals. In addition, when students lack reading skills, it also
influences their writing and communication skills. Being able to compose structured and thoughtful written communication is highly valued in professional and educational contexts and is the basis for effective communication skills (Smedt, Merchie, Barendse, Rosseel, De Naeghel, & Keer, 2017). Literacy is an integrated process, where expressive, receptive, and reflective skills are integrated (Deane, 2011). When students lack reading skills, they also lack writing skills. Reading motivation and engagement play a significant role in student success in literacy and communication. When schools and teachers focus on engaging students in the reading process, they are increasing the likelihood of success in all academic endeavors.

Research Problem

According to Willms (2003), disengaged students are considered to be the greatest challenge facing educators (as cited in Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Students have changed over the last 20 years as a result of their immersion in technology from a young age and require a different learning environment that considers their needs, goals, and learning preferences. Research indicates that student engagement declines when students enter middle school and further declines once they reach high school (Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012). Thus, challenging and motivating students to read, write, and communicate effectively in a high school English class has become an overwhelming and problematic task for teachers. Tasks such as reading and writing require significant motivation. Students must believe that engaging in the task is enjoyable and relevant in order to be motivated to set goals and put effort into reaching those goals. Researchers have focused on how different theories of motivation influence student performance, teacher performance, and instructional practices. Many educational psychologists argued that in order for learning to occur, there must be a reinforcement, or incentive for a change in behavior. This can be intrinsic or extrinsic, both of
which can increase reading engagement. Furthermore, a student’s perception of his/her abilities also contributes to motivation. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (2009), reading motivation is the core predictor of reading performance (as cited in Reteldorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010). Reading plays a paramount role in providing students with the skill set required to be autonomous and successful life-long learners. It also helps them communicate their ideas, both written and verbal (Ansari, 2010). Good readers are often good learners, who develop proficiency and have high levels of self-efficacy. Hence, investigations on reading motivation and engagement at the secondary level are needed to ascertain what methods of pedagogy are best at improving literacy skills, which will improve students’ academic achievement.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and determine what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level. Prior empirical studies prove that students with poor reading skills are less likely to engage in the reading process and fall behind in academic endeavors. Even though there is a substantial body of research investigating the relationship between reading and motivation at the elementary level, there are significantly fewer studies completed at the secondary level. Attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement, and during adolescence is when attitudes regarding reading and reading self-efficacy decline (Paige, 2011). Many students perceive reading as a passive activity, which negatively affects their engagement with the text and their willingness to put forth effort into comprehending the text (Metzger, 1998). Therefore, implementing strategies in which students become engaged with the text is important in increasing reading comprehension and higher-level
thinking skills, which improve academic achievement. This study explored how students’ perceptions of reading influence their reading engagement and reveal what perceptions teachers and students have about what interventions and strategies they view as being most beneficial in increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classrooms.

**Theoretical Perspective**

The theoretical perspective of this research is founded upon the motivational theory of Albert Bandura’s (1977) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that learning occurs in a social context and that in order to understand this process, one must understand the relationship between the person, his/her behavior, and the environment in which the behavior occurs. According to Social Cognitive Theory, a person’s motivation is rooted in the core belief that he/she has the power to produce certain outcomes by eliciting certain behaviors. Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of self-concept. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (as cited in Koch, 2012, p.10). Perceived self-efficacy affects whether people think pessimistically or optimistically about their abilities and determines the amount of effort a person chooses to expend on certain tasks and what challenges they choose to undertake. A person’s efficacy beliefs are directly proportional to his/her confidence level. Therefore, people with the same cognitive abilities may perform differently on a given task depending on their belief in that task (Bandura, 1977; as cited in Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). Consequently, people with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of difficulty, whereas people with low-self-efficacy are likely to avoid activities they feel are challenging, feel stressed or disappointed in their abilities to overcome obstacles, and are slower to recover from failure (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010).
In addition to the Social Cognitive Theory, much of the research will rest on Wigfield and Eccles’s (2000) Expectancy Value Model, which recognized that achievement motivation is directly related to a person’s beliefs and attitudes toward a task. Researchers have found that one can predict motivation by monitoring a student’s perception of his/her competence to complete the task and the value he/she places on the task. Students’ attitudes are a function of their perception of their competency and ability. Therefore, when a person expects success and values the activity, motivation is present.

**Research Questions**

1. How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks?

2. To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses?

3. How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes?

**Rationale for the Study**

Students have changed significantly in the last 20 years due to their constant exposure to technology. Net Generation students require more interactive learning environments where they have more autonomy to create a meaningful learning experience (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). In addition, Smiley & Anderson (2011) indicated that student engagement declines when students enter middle school and further declines once they reach high school. Sylvia Edwards, a reading specialist for the Maryland State Department of Education, found that by late elementary school, students who have not learned basic decoding and comprehension skills have developed
strategies to avoid reading (Chrisophe, 2011). When these struggling readers reach the high school level, they have little to no motivation to engage in the reading process and often fall further behind. Numerous studies have revealed that reading motivation impacts reading comprehension and literacy skills. However, few studies have shown the relationship between reading motivation and academic achievement at the secondary level. This study provides a perspective of how reading is perceived at the secondary level and what instructional strategies high school students and teachers perceive as being the most effective at increasing student reading engagement and motivation.

**Researcher Personality Statement**

After 13 years in education, in five school districts, and in six schools, the researcher determined that literacy skills and reading motivation are lacking in secondary English classrooms. Students’ backgrounds, parental involvement, culture, geographical location, gender, and age seem to affect the time and effort students expend on reading and writing tasks. However, regardless of the geographical location, it is a recurring theme that student perception, in regard to reading, plays a vital role in his/her reading achievement and success in school. As an English teacher, the researcher has worked with students from grades 9-12, at varying ability levels. In reviewing the data collected every year from standardized tests, GPAs, class participation, student effort, and student attitude, it is clear that student engagement should be studied in depth and managed as a way to increase student motivation and encourage academic success. Over the last 13 years, students have changed dramatically. Since this is the first generation to grow up with digital and cyber technologies, their educational goals and their learning styles have evolved as a result. In an attempt to reach these students, schools have put more funding and emphasis on mathematics and technology, and as a result, have ignored how
literacy skills impact all disciplines of study. Throughout these experiences, the researcher has found a need to investigate how to improve reading engagement in order to help students increase literacy and critical thinking skills in order to be successful members of society.

**Definition of Terms**

**Attribution Theory:** According to this theory, people attribute the cause of behavior from two different sources: internal and external attribution. When people try to explain behavior using internal attribution, they focus on the personality, motives, and beliefs of an individual. When people try to explain behavior using external attribution, they focus on situations, events, or environmental features (Tollefson, 2000).

**Cognitive Dissonance:** A psychological term where a person engages in a behavior that simultaneously conflicts with his/her beliefs (Martinie, Olive, & Milland, 2009).

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Analyzing, evaluating, interpreting, or synthesizing information and applying creative thought to form an argument, solve a problem, or reach a conclusion (Van Den Brink-Budgen, 2000).

**Expectancy-Value Model:** Student achievement is most proximally determined by two factors: expectancies for success, and subjective task values (Eccles, 2005; as cited in Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010).

**Extrinsic Motivation:** According to Ryan & Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation refers to the “performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome” (as cited in Goldman, Goodboy, & Weber, 2017). Extrinsic motivation is usually tied to tangible awards, such as appearance, material wealth, prestige, and image (Vansteenkiste et al, 2005; as cited in Roberson, 2013).
Intrinsic Motivation: Ryan and Deci (2000), defined intrinsic motivation as a person’s tendency to “engage in activities that interest them and, in doing so, help them to learn, develop, and expand their capacities” (as cited in Goldman, Goodboy, & Weber, 2017). Researchers consider intrinsic motivation to be the most positive for a person to realize his/her full potential.

Motivation: Keller (2010) defines motivation as “what people desire, what they choose to do, and what they commit to do” (p. 3).

Net Generation: The Net Generation is considered a cohort of young people who have grown up in an environment in which they are constantly exposed to technology (Barnes, Marateo, and Ferris, 2007).

Reading Literacy: The “understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts (in different forms and by different carriers), and engagement with their content, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (as cited in Zasacka & Bulkowski, 2017, p. 83).

Reading Motivation: An “individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 405; as cited in Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010).

Reading Process: According to Karahan (2017), reading is an “act of processing, storing, and using the materials obtained from the text or environment by an individual” (p. 528).

Self-efficacy: Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (as cited in Koch, 2012, p.10). Perceived self-efficacy affects whether people think pessimistically or optimistically about their abilities and determines the amount of effort a person chooses to expend on certain tasks and what challenges they choose to undertake.
Social Cognitive Theory: considers how individuals acquire and maintain certain behaviors while considering the social context in which the individual performs the behavior (Bandura, 2001).

Student Engagement: Term used to describe meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment. Thus, “student engagement” is best understood as a relationship between the student and the following elements of the learning environment: the school community, the adults at school, the student’s peers, the instruction, and the curriculum (Martin & Torres, 2016).

Summary

Since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are complementary and share an underlying skill set, it is important that students are motivated to engage in these activities in order to become more literate and capable students. Students’ expectancies and values in regard to reading influence the amount of time reading and their perseverance in the reading process. Understanding and knowing how students learn, recognizing the internal and external barriers they face, and determining their level of engagement is essential to providing a student-centered environment where students are motivated to learn. Since motivational beliefs and attitudes decline for students as they move from elementary to middle school, it is important that literacy skills and reading motivation and engagement be studied further in order to enhance students’ attitudes and interest toward reading.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review explores how motivation and engagement play a significant role in academic success and how literacy skills impact student learning and achievement. The literature review is divided into four sections: motivation, engagement, literacy skills, and instructional strategies. Each of these sections focus on the historical significance of the concept, the theory of the concept, and the impact of the concept on teaching and learning. The final section is a summary that demonstrates the need for further research in the area.

Motivation

Motivation plays a role in the goals people make, the actions they take, and how they handle obstacles. Since motivation is considered a critical factor in determining student performance and achievement, it is important to understand the definition of this construct as well as to understand how psychologists and researchers came to their conclusions for the different theories on motivation and what implications this construct has on teaching and learning.

Definition

Motivation is a multifaceted construct that has been defined by numerous researchers since the early 1900s when behaviorist psychologists began to study physical, external reactions to internal arousal. Since that time, motivation has been studied as both an internal and external factor that determines behavior and has been expressed, studied, and measured in different ways. However, there are certain themes that permeate throughout the literature. Most definitions emphasize a person’s desire, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, to accomplish a task and his or her perspective of the significance of the task. Ju Lin (2012) defined motivation as “a general
perception of content, discipline area, or an activity that influences attitudes toward task involvement” (as cited in Digamon & Cinches, 2017, p.8). Perception is a significant factor in determining the motivation of an individual and why that person chooses to act or react in certain ways. Each person has a different perspective of what is relevant, so studying this concept is imperative to understanding how to increase an individual’s motivation. According to Gutherie and Wigfield (2000), motivation can be defined as “a state of wanting to perform an activity, with a number of complex factors contributing to that state” (as cited in Springer, Harris, & Dole, 2017, par. 7). In addition to understanding how perception affects motivation, it is significant to ascertain the internal and external factors that may be interfering with interest and motivation. Shearin (1994) identified six variables that influence motivation: attitudes, beliefs about self, goals, involvement, environmental support, and personnel attributes (as cited in Al Othman & Shuquair, 2013, p.124). These variables influence perspective and behavior and allow researchers to quantitatively measure motivation in order to determine interventions that could increase interest and engagement and explain the disregard for certain endeavors.

According to Pintrich and Schunk (1996), motivation is “a process of assistance, encouragement, and continuous use namely maintenance of a behavior to implement a purpose” (as cited in Karahan, 2017, p. 528). A person’s goals and sense of purpose influence their level of motivation and encourage them to act in certain ways. The construct of motivation is studied through many theoretical frameworks, all focusing on different variables that might influence behavior. In short, studying motivation is an attempt to study why people choose to do the things they do. Keller (2010) defines motivation as “what people desire, what they choose to do, and what they commit to do” (p. 3). This simple definition summarizes the complex construct and will be the standard definition used throughout the research.
History of Motivation

Behaviorist psychology. The Latin root word *mot* means to move, so when early psychologists began to study motivation, they focused on observable behaviors (Weiner, 1990). Behaviorists were concerned with what moved a resting object to a state of activity. They believed that different behaviors were exhibited on account of a person’s external circumstances. Therefore, these psychologists believed people were motivated by extrinsic factors such as rewards and punishments. Ivan Pavlov, one of the first to study motivation in the early 20th century, concentrated on how reflexes relate to external stimuli (Naour, 2009). In his study of the digestive systems of canines, he found that an unconditioned stimulus led to an unconditioned response. Dogs salivate when they see food. However, he later discovered that any event or object in which dogs associated with food would also trigger the same response. This has become known as Pavlovian (or classical) conditioning and is one of the first systematic studies of the laws of learning. John Watson, often referred to as the “father of American psychology,” extended Pavlov’s paradigm by concentrating on overt stimuli, responses, and observable variables that had an effect on the behavior of rats (Weiner, 1990). His studies yielded research that recognized factors that affect behavior, which have been described as *drive*, *arousal*, and *need*. For instance, behaviorist psychologist Clark Hull, held the belief that motivation stemmed from an organism’s biological need, which created an uncomfortable arousal that he termed *drive* (Roberson, 2013). Through his research, he found that this *drive*, due to need or necessity, motivated an organism to eliminate the uncomfortable emotion. This concept became known as *drive theory*. In the mid-twentieth century, by studying the empirical studies of his predecessors, B.F. Skinner took a radical approach to behaviorism and developed a new conceptual framework for studying learning and motivation, which was known as operant...
conditioning (Naour, 2009). Skinner redefined the attention to the consequences of behavior, where the focus was placed on the stimuli that are made available following behavior, instead of before. Skinner called this unit of behavior an *operant* because organisms operate on their environments by exhibiting behaviors that would achieve favorable outcomes. These studies paved the way for more research on why organisms, animals, and people act in certain ways. Behaviorists focused on external factors that influenced behavior and were limited to observable behavior. However, in the late 1960s, the focus of motivation psychology shifted from mechanisms and extrinsic factors to cognition and intrinsic motivation.

**Cognitive psychology.** The shift from focusing on mechanisms to cognition emanated from the study of the relationship between learning and motivation. Behaviorists believed motivation was separate from the learning process. However, Edward Tolman challenged this perception with his work with rats and mazes. He found that when a reward was placed in the goal box of a maze, the rats would increase their performance or *drive*, but did not necessarily accelerate their learning (Weiner, 1990). His worked showed that individuals do not merely respond to external stimuli, but they act on attitudes, perception, goals, and unstable conditions (Roberson, 2013). Tolman’s work led to the concept of latent learning, which can be defined as learning which is not apparent or measurable in the learner’s behavior at the time of learning. He proved that learning could occur without rewards, incentives, or drive reduction, but instead manifests when suitable circumstances and motivation ensue. Tolman (1932) also coined the term *cognitive map*, which presented an internal representation of an external environmental feature that he used with the rats in the maze. By using this representation of a rat’s physical environment, he found that they could get to their goal by knowing the complexity of the maze’s features. His work demonstrated that motivation can be inferred from learning and learning is
often the indicator of motivation (Weiner, 1990). His work led researchers and psychologists to move the focus from external stimuli to the complexity of the human and the factors that affect their actions and learning.

McClelland (1961) discovered that humans have three dominant needs: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power (Roberson, 2013). This proved to be a powerful paradigm shift due to the fact that his research progressed from working with rats to working with humans. He coined the phrase *achievement motivation*, which he deemed central to human survival, since the need to perform or persist in the face of obstacles is consistent with human success. In order to measure achievement motivation, he helped to create the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Roberson, 2013). This made data readily available to study and progressed research on human behavior, learning, and motivation.

Cognitive psychologists ascertained that cognitive factors predicted human behavior and to be successful in a complex and dynamic environment, one must make good judgments, know his/her capabilities, anticipate the effects of his/her actions, and regulate his/her behavior according to different situations (Bandura, 2001). This paradigm shift from the study of behaviors to cognition was largely influenced by the work of Albert Bandura (1977), who began documenting learning in a social context and found that forethoughtful and reflective capabilities are vital for survival and progress. His Social Cognitive Theory posits that learning occurs in a social context and that in order to understand this process, one must understand the relationship between the person, his/her behavior, and the environment in which the behavior occurs. In essence, The Social Cognitive Theory considers how individuals acquire and maintain certain behaviors while considering the social context in which the individual performs the behavior. This theory derives from Bandura’s study of human agency, which is defined as those acts that
humans do intentionally. Bandura concluded that there are core features of personal agency that contribute to what it means to be human, which include: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2001). Intentionality describes how individuals choose to behave in certain situations. An intentional behavior elicits certain consequences and predicts future behavior. In short, the power to control certain actions for given purposes is a key feature of personal agency. Forethought enables people to guide their behavior in anticipation of future events. When people regulate their present behavior, they adopt a course of action that will fit their desired future. Therefore, by controlling behaviors in the present, future events or goals are converted into current motivators. Self-reactiveness is the process of monitoring one’s own pattern of behavior. The self-regulation of motivation increases the likelihood of setting personal goals and standards that can give an individual a sense of self-satisfaction, pride, and self-worth. Self-reflectiveness is a metacognitive activity in which people evaluate their motivation, values, and meaning of their life pursuits. A person’s motivation is rooted in the core belief that he/she has the power to produce certain outcomes by eliciting certain behaviors. The concept of self-reflectiveness led to the study of one of the central components of the Social Cognitive Theory: self-efficacy.

Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (as cited in Koch, 2012, p.10). Perceived self-efficacy affects whether people think pessimistically or optimistically about their abilities and determines the amount of effort a person chooses to expend on certain tasks and what challenges they choose to undertake. A person’s efficacy beliefs are directly proportional to his/her confidence level. Therefore, people with the same cognitive abilities may perform differently on a given task.
depending on their belief in that task (Bandura, 1977; as cited in Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). Consequently, people with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of difficulty, whereas people with low-self-efficacy are likely to avoid activities they feel are challenging, feel stressed or disappointed in their abilities to overcome obstacles, and are slower to recover from failure (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010). Furthermore, individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to be intrinsically motivated, which increases the likelihood of success and achievement. Since self-efficacy is a product of a person’s interactions in the world and an influence of the quality of those interactions, it can be increased and enhanced to promote growth and motivations. In order for a person’s self-efficacy to change, he/she needs to engage in self-regulation, which includes self-observation and reflection (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004). Efficacy beliefs form the courses of people’s lives and what types of activities they engage in and the environment in which they choose to participate. Thus, each individual has the choice to shape what he/she will become.

Social Cognitive Theory then distinguished between three different modes of human agency: personal, proxy, and collective (Bandura, 2001). Personal agencies are the cognitive, motivational, and affective components that people exercise to produce a certain outcome. The personal agencies are directly controlled by the individual. However, people do not have complete control over the external environment and social conditions that affect their lives. The proxy agency is a socially mediated mode of agency where people try to get access to resources that will enable them to secure certain outcomes related to their well-being and security. Proxy agency relies on enlisting the supportive efforts of others. The relationships that people have with their families, significant others, friends, and mentors help them carry life’s heavy burdens and responsibilities. Collective agencies are social systems that involve an interactive group of
individuals who have shared intentions, knowledge, and skills that make up a social system. People cannot live their lives in isolation; they require the help of others to accomplish certain goals. Studies show that when a collective agency has a high self-efficacy, the more likely it is to have a higher motivational investment and morale, which makes the group more resilient to stressors and obstacles. Technology has transformed the concept of collective agencies by allowing individuals to influence a wider scope of people, which can shape their social future. However, according to Bandura (2001), these technologies can become a constraining force which controls how they think and behave. It is more important than ever to consider how social systems control and dictate personal and proxy agencies and analyze how technology will play a vital role in how people are motivated, what they believe, and how they regulate their actions. Bandura’s work prompted other psychologists to focus on humans and their social environments.

**Constructivist psychology.** Constructivists suggest that learning originates inside the child and must be an active experience to have significance to the learner. Extending from Bandura’s study of human agencies and self-efficacy, constructivists focused on individual perceptions. They believed learners construct knowledge for themselves and that learning should be presented as process of active discovery (Diaz, 2006). In addition, they determined that since learning requires a personal investment on the part of the learner, that motivation was predominately intrinsic. This theoretical framework became significant to the research of educational psychologists who focused on the role of the school on student engagement and achievement.

Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (1968) bridged the work of cognitive psychologists with theories of constructivists by analyzing the mechanisms by which cognitive development takes place and account for the different stages of cognitive development in which
all individuals undergo. His theory surmised that all cognitive development progresses toward more complex and stable levels of understanding and this stability takes place through a process of adaption, assimilation, and accommodation. The mind had structures that could help explain different responses to stimuli and memory, which he called schema. Schemas act as the building blocks for cognitive development by enabling people to form a mental representation of their world and their experiences. He believed that when a person’s mental processes developed, they produced a unit of knowledge, or schema, that influenced how an individual would react to incoming information or external stimuli. He found that with age, a child’s schemas become more numerous and elaborate. This concept was the initial theory that influenced his theory of cognitive development, which suggested that there were four main stages in the cognitive development of an individual: sensorimotor stage (ages birth to 2 years), where the child is essentially egocentric and is dominated by his/her instinctual drives; the pre operational state (ages 2-7), where thinking is still egocentric, but children begin to think about ideas symbolically; the concrete operational stage (ages 7-11), where operational thought begins and children begin to work out problems internally; and the formal operational stage (ages 11 years and over), where a child develops the ability to think about abstract concepts and make their own assumptions about the world around them. Although Piaget did not explicitly relate this theory of cognitive development to educational theory, it became one of the most influential theories in developing educational policy and teaching practices.

The study of the developmental stages of children was also an interest of Harvard professor, Erik Erikson. He believed that the stages of development occur in a specific sequence and build upon each previous stage, which is known as the epigenetic principle. With the influence and regard of Sigmund Freud’s study of the personality and psychosexual
development, Erikson proposed that a person experiences a psychosocial crisis at each stage of
development, which can lead to a positive or negative outcome of personality development
(Diaz, 2006). Erikson’s contributions to Freud’s work created the theory of psychosocial
development, which posited that there were Eight Stages of Life in which the ego is developed.
These stages include infancy, or the trust vs. mistrust stage, the toddler/early childhood, or the
autonomy vs. shame stage the preschooler, or the initiative vs. guilt stage, the school age child,
or the industry vs. inferiority stage, the adolescent, or the identity vs. role confusion stage, the
young adult, or the intimacy and solidarity vs. isolation stage, the middle-aged adult, or the
generativity vs. self-absorption or stagnation stage, and the late adult, or the integrity vs. despair
stage (Robinson, Demetre, Litman, 2017). During the adolescent stage, development depends on
the individual’s choices and behaviors. During this time, adolescents often struggle with identity
and fitting in. It is also during this time that children are most susceptible to social constructs
and begin to develop an affiliation to certain peer groups, ideals, beliefs, and morality. Since
adolescents spend a majority of their time at school, it is important to recognize the role the
school environment plays on their identity formation. Relationships, curriculum, and
instructional strategies become a significant factor in child development and achievement.

John Dewey, an American philosopher and educator, established the need for learner-
centered education and reform, which was later known as constructivism (Diaz, 2006). He
believed children were innately curious about the world around them and possessed a desire to
learn and discover, which could be developed in a creative and nurturing environment. He
considered life a series of experiments, and in a process of continuous renewal, a child could
develop his/her full potential (Henson, 2003). Therefore, he posited that learning was more than
just an assimilation of new knowledge, but a process where learners can be integrated into a
community of learners. Dewey (1977) theorized that learning occurs indirectly, by means of the environment. The learning environment could provide multiple representations of reality for the learners within it, so the environment should promote authentic tasks in a meaningful context and encourage thoughtful reflection and independence. Furthermore, in studying children in their social contexts, effort and interest were significant throughout the course of an action when effort is developed through a succession of stages. According to Dewey & Wheeler (2009), effective effort should be connected with thought, so the question should not be the amount of stress involved, but how the thought of an end induces a person to reflect upon the obstacle and persevere. Dewey’s work with student-centered learning, effort, and the influence of social environments led to more research on how understanding a child’s cognitive and emotional development could lead to an increase in student engagement, motivation, and achievement.

Another influential figure in constructivism was Russian psychologist and sociologist, Lev Vygotsky, who studied children in collaborative environments. Vygotsky suggested that cognitive development results from the combination of the child and his/her social environment (Diaz, 2006). He believed strongly in the community’s role in a child’s learning process. Unlike Piaget, who believed that a child’s development precedes his/her learning, Vygotsky argued that social learning precedes development (Henson, 2003). Similarly to Dewey, Vygotsky believed that children are innately curious and are active participants in their own learning. He also noted the significance of the environmental conditions on a child’s learning process. Vygotsky argued that higher-order thinking skills first appear on the interpersonal level, or the social level, and then on an intrapersonal level, or individual level (Pihlgren & Billings, 2010). Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory asserts that dividing social and cognitive development is impossible and promotes three major themes for his theory: social interaction, the more knowledgeable
other, and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Social interaction plays a significant role in cognitive development and appears twice, first socially, then independently. The more knowledgeable other is any person who has a higher ability level or a better understanding of a concept than the learner. The Zone of Proximal Development is considered the distance between a student’s ability to perform a task with the help of the more knowledgeable other and the student’s ability to solve the problem independently. This zone creates parameters that define the learner’s range of potential. In order for learning to occur, instruction should neither fall below the lower threshold or above the upper threshold of the parameters (Smagorinsky, 1995). This concept places more emphasis on the effects of teaching strategies on students’ capacity to learn. Rather than children leading themselves towards competency, the teacher, or the more knowledgeable other, should help the learner do more to live up to his/her intellectual potential.

**Humanistic psychology.** The constructivists’ focus on individualism and self-increased the popularity of humanism, which was a psychological approach that studied the whole person and his/her uniqueness. This theory emphasized freedom, choice, personal responsibility, purpose, and autonomy (Diaz, 2006). This theory asserts that people have a desire to make themselves and the world better and are motivated to self-actualize. Humanistic psychologists argued that a person’s subjective reality, or perspective of reality, is more important than an objective reality. Sometimes this approach is labeled phenomenological because it concentrates on the study of an individual’s subjective experience. Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, through his observation of monkeys noticed an unusual pattern of behavior based on individual needs (Poston, 347). He asserted that when all of the monkeys’ physiological needs were met, then their behavior changed; no longer were they worried about food or water;
they were focused on establishing social roles and dominance. Maslow then transitioned this concept over to human behavior and created The Hierarchy of Needs. His theory revealed that when an individual lacked something, he/she had a deficit, which he termed *deficit needs* and that certain needs had to be met before others. He comprised a five-tier model of human needs, which he depicted in a pyramid. The pyramid starts with a human’s basic needs for survival and then moves up to self-actualization needs that constitute a person’s value and personal fulfillment, which is considered the ultimate goal. However, this cannot be experienced until all other levels of needs have been met. Each individual’s environment and personalities differ, and the experiences that a child has can positively or negatively impact his/her self-confidence and self-esteem, which affects his/her foundation and can impact his/her achievement, goals, and learning. Maslow’s model presents a motivational framework that impacts how teachers perceive students’ needs and helps teachers and mentors to understand a child’s desires, wants, and behaviors.

Rogers (1969), a humanistic psychologist, agreed with the assumptions of Abraham Maslow, but emphasized that as a person develops, he/she needs an environment that provides genuineness, acceptance, and empathy. Rogers defined genuineness as entering into a relationship without displaying a façade (as cited in Diaz, 2006, p.53). Rogers believed a person’s behavior was directly related on his/her perception of the environment. Furthermore, he suggested that in order for a person to achieve self-actualization, he/she must be in a state of harmony. Only then could a person be fully functioning, which is considered a rare, and ultimately an unachievable goal. A fully functioning person should be open to experience, able to work through negative feelings, avoid preconceptions, able to live in the present instead of dwelling on the past or focusing on the future, trust their feelings and instincts to be the right
ones, seek new experiences and take risks, and always be searching for new challenged and experiences (Cornelius-White, Motschnig-Pitrik, & Lux, 2013). From an educational viewpoint, Rogers’ theory encourages teachers to be empathetic to the needs of their students and to encourage students to work toward goal attainment. The facilitation of learning should include trust, realness, empathy, acceptance, and prizing, which is praising and appreciating an individual’s feelings and opinions.

Types of Motivation

The previous psychological theories explain how a person develops cognitively and socially and describe the role of internal and external factors on those constructs. A person is ultimately responsible for his/her actions, beliefs, and goals, so motivation is a contributing factor in assessing a person’s success and achievement. According to research, there are two basic types of motivation that encourage people to act in certain ways: intrinsic and extrinsic.

**Intrinsic motivation.** Ryan and Deci (2000), defined intrinsic motivation as a person’s tendency to participate in activities of interest in order to develop his/her talents and capacities (as cited in Goldman, Goodboy, & Weber, 2017). Researchers consider intrinsic motivation to be the most positive for a person to realize his/her full potential. When a person is intrinsically motivated, he/she is more likely to engage in the task, overcome obstacles, and undertake learning for its own sake. Intrinsically motivated individuals select activities and choose to continue them in order to acquire inherent awards, such as sense of personal mastery, control, challenge, or curiosity (Lepper, 1988). Variables associated with intrinsic motivation are time spent on the task, a person’s focus of attention on the task, and his/her selection of problems and goals. Each of these variables are controlled and generated by the individual, so his/her self-efficacy increases as a result. People who choose their task are more likely to view the activity
as a means instead of an end; this encourages feelings of mastery and confidence. Furthermore, people who are intrinsically motivated often choose tasks that involve a challenge and degree of difficulty. Therefore, to be intrinsically motivated means to willingly engage in learning activities where mental effort is required. According to Digamon & Cinches (2017), there is a significant interconnection between engagement and motivation. Therefore, people are often intrinsically motivated to participate in certain endeavors when they are interested in the subject and have a desire to achieve personal goals. When a person is engaged, he/she is often motivated to complete a task, willingly and with effort. No external awards are required to incite an intrinsically motivated person to engage in a task; He/she continues the task based on interest. Interest can be defined as state of engaging in a task, activity, or event and then reengaging in the task over a period of time (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; as cited in Bernacki & Walkington, 2018). Interest can be emerging or well-developed, but persists over time and involves knowledge, value, and enjoyment. Bernacki & Walkington (2018) posit that when a person is interested in an activity, he/she engages longer and with more effort. In addition, the researchers discovered that positive and effective feedback is essential to ensure that a person’s effort continues and he/she remains intrinsically motivated. A person wants to feel a sense of accomplishment, so feedback is inherent. Without feedback, the person could lose interest and become less engaged in the activity.

**Extrinsic motivation.** According to Ryan & Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation refers to participating in an activity in order to attain some separable outcome (as cited in Goldman, Goodboy, & Weber, 2017). Extrinsic motivation is usually tied to tangible awards, such as appearance, material wealth, prestige, and image (Vansteenkiste et al, 2005; as cited in Roberson, 2013). For students, in an educational setting, extrinsic motivation includes rewards
such as grades, certificates, or verbal accolades. In short, people who are extrinsically motivated involve themselves in tasks in order to obtain a reward or avoid punishment. Instead of learning for the sake of learning, people who are extrinsically motivated learn in order to achieve a certain goal. Since people who are extrinsically motivated choose to engage in tasks only when the activities yield certain rewards, they often put forth less effort and utilize less time to complete the task. Empirical studies indicate this type of motivation may enhance rote learning and memorization but decrease conceptual learning, which is more beneficial for academic achievement (Lepper, 1988). In a classroom setting, extrinsically motivated students often select the easiest problems in order to engage in the least amount of effort to receive the extrinsic award. In their empirical study, Condry and Chambers (1978) found that students who were offered a tangible reward for successful solutions to problems displayed less efficient, less logical, and less effective techniques (as cited in Lepper, 1988). Although some studies show that extrinsic motivation may have positive effects on learning when the task is simplistic in nature and has little value to conceptual learning, most researchers agree that intrinsic motivation has profound instructional benefits and that teachers should focus on increasing engagement in order to increase intrinsic motivation. However, teachers often utilize extrinsic motivation such as praise, free time, food, and rewards to encourage student participation and engagement. Williams & Williams (2011) suggested that healthy motivation is not exclusively intrinsic or extrinsic, but a mixture of both (Digamon & Cinches, 2017). When a person becomes engaged in an activity, the more likely he/she is to become motivated to complete the activity with maximum effort.

One strategy to encourage motivation and connect with disengaged adolescents can involve the use of extrinsic motivation to tap into their interests. Situational interest can be
described as temporary, short-term attention to a topic (Schunk, Meece, Pintrich, 2014, p.212). Spontaneous, environmentally activated, and triggered interest can engage the learner and encourage reengagement with the topic or activity. Situational interest can be subdivided into value-based situational interest, which accounts for the learner’s awareness of the usefulness of the topic and individual interest, which is the enduring preference for certain activities that persist over time. Hidi and Renninger (2006) developed a four-phase model of situational interest, which begins when interest has been captured but may not be maintained. The second phase occurs when interest is held over a period of time. The third phase occurs when the person sees value in the topic or activity, and the fourth stage ensues when the learner attaches personal meaning to the topic or activity and well-developed interest evolves (as cited in Paige, 2011).

Teachers can create environments where situational interest is utilized to engage students. Their engagement with the topics and activities may result in intrinsic motivation, which is most beneficial for life-long learning.

**Theory**

There are many theories that explore the construct of motivation and provide recommendations about how to increase motivation and achievement. These ideas create a theoretical framework in which to examine the multifaceted construct and help teachers and educational stakeholders create classroom environments where students are engaged, and learning is occurring at the highest level.

**Self-determination theory.** Edward Deci and Richard Ryan created a theory of motivation that is concerned with supporting a person’s intrinsic tendencies to behave in healthy ways. Their theory for motivation, the Self-Determination Theory, represents a broad framework of the study of motivation and personality. The self-determination theory approaches
motivation by researching inherent growth tendencies and the innate psychological needs of individuals (Roberson, 2013). The theory defines motivation based on three psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. They suggested that when people are able to satisfy these three needs, the result will be more regulated behavior and greater psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; as cited in King & Howard, 2016). By taking a humanistic approach, this theory places the importance on self-efficacy as the basic agent in human functioning. Ryan and Deci (2001) distinguished between two types of well-being: hedonic, which centers on pleasurable experiences that lead to personal happiness, and eudaimonic tradition, which emphasizes living life well in order to be an authentic and helpful human being. Beyond biological traits, people have choices that influence their perception of well-being and success. In this respect, Self-Determination Theory provides a framework for identifying autonomous (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic) reasons for behaving. Students prefer choice and autonomy rather than demand and control.

**Attribution theory.** Fritz Heider was predominately concerned with what individuals attribute or explain as the cause of their behaviors. His theory extends from the premise that people try to bring order to their lives by developing theories about why things happen in certain ways (Tollefson, 2000). Heider believed that people tend to see cause and effect relationships in order to make sense of the world. According to this theory, people attribute the cause of behavior from two different sources: internal and external attribution. When people try to explain behavior using internal attribution, they focus on the personality, motives, and beliefs of an individual. When people try to explain behavior using external attribution, they focus on situations, events, or environmental features. For students who are learning new tasks and engaging in rigorous work, motivation levels can be connected to how students attribute reasons
for their underachievement or success. According to Dornyei & Ushioda (2009), learners who attribute their performance to task difficulty have a poorer motivation. In contrast, learners who attribute failure or success to effort may result in higher levels of motivation (as cited in Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013). Students’ classroom behaviors reflect their own personal theories of success and failure. School-based research has shown that students who expect to perform well in school have higher grades and a better record of achievement than those students who expected to fail (Battle, 1966; Eccles, 1983; as cited in Tollefson, 2000). The attribution theory relates to Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy. The higher an individual’s self-efficacy, the more likely he/she will expend effort on a task and expect to be successful.

**Expectancy-Value model.** Wigfield and Eccles (2000) recognized that achievement motivation is directly related to a person’s beliefs and attitudes toward a task. Motivation is predicted by a student’s perception of his/her competence to complete the task and the value he/she places on the task. There are several dimensions of motivation examined through this model, such as competency, self-efficacy, perceived difficulty, perceived control, and anxiety. A student’s attitudes are a function of his/her perception of his/her competency and ability. Self-efficacy reflects student’s perception of his/her ability to execute or perform a certain task successfully. Perceived difficulty is the perception of the amount of effort and time a person will have to contribute in order to complete a task. Perceived control reflects a person’s belief that he/she have control over his/her ability to complete a task successfully. Anxiety is the worry that students relate to the endeavor (Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis, 2013). Therefore, when a person expects success and values the activity, motivation is present.

**ARCS model.** John Keller’s theory of motivation is one of the first theories dedicated to classroom instruction that included problem-solving components (Roberson, 2013). According
to this model, there are four steps for promoting and sustaining motivation: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. The first step incorporates the theory of motivation. The second step includes tactics to improve motivation. The third focuses on an individual’s expectations for achievement. The fourth applies application of reinforcement. Each of the four categories is a psychological construct proven, by previous research, to be necessary for motivation. Attention is required for engagement, but the goal for teachers is to sustain that attention. Strategies for gaining attention include: inquiry, participation, novelty, concreteness, choice, and humor (Keller, 1987b). Students want to know why the tasks are relevant in order to make connections. Strategies for creating relevance include: experience, modeling, choice, and needs matching. A person’s perception of his/her ability influence persistence and accomplishment. Strategies for inducing confidence include: clear expectations, difficulty level, attributions, and self-efficacy. The last construct, satisfaction, includes all conditions that reinforce students’ achievements. Strategies for improving satisfaction include: natural consequences, unexpected rewards, positive outcomes, positive feedback, and negative influences. In order to implement the ARCS model, Keller includes four steps: define, where the problem is classified and the objectives are prepared; design, which involves brainstorming ways to generate strategies; develop, which calls for the materials and instructional elements; and evaluate, in which instructors measure persistence, effort, and attitude.

**Implications for Teaching and Learning**

Researchers have focused on how different theories of motivation influence student performance, teacher performance, and instructional practices. Many educational psychologists argued that in order for learning to occur, there must be a reinforcement or incentive for a change in behavior. This can be intrinsic or extrinsic, both of which can increase engagement.
Furthermore, a student’s perception of his/her abilities also contributes to motivation. Bandura (1986, 1997) suggested that there are four sources that can be used to make judgments about self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological state (Featonby, 2012). A student’s experiences, schemata, and social environment contribute to his/her motivation to engage in certain tasks. In addition, students must find relevance in the task and value how the task will inform their own interests and goals. There are certain reasons, goals, and purposes that students adopt when they engage in academic work. Without understanding a student’s perception of these beliefs and ascertaining his/her goals and identifying obstacles that could interfere with those goals, motivation could be limited, which affects achievement.

Tasks such as reading and writing require significant motivation. Students must believe that engaging in the task is enjoyable and relevant. According to Wigfield & Guthrie (2009), reading motivation is the core predictor of reading performance (as cited in Reteldorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010). Reading motivation can be defined as “the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; as cited in Reteldorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010, p. 550). The concept of reading motivation is closely related to the expectancy-value model and attribution theory. Numerous factors can affect how people view themselves as readers; some of which include: environmental factors, gender, self-efficacy, their beliefs about the relevance of reading, their perceived competence, and their cognitive ability. Students with poor reading skills are less likely to engage in the reading process and fall behind in academic endeavors. Students’ expectancies and values in regard to reading influence the amount of time reading and their perseverance in the reading process. Katzir, Lesaux, and Kim (2009) posited that reading self-concept was positively related
to reading comprehension skills. McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths and Stothard (2014) examined
the extent to which adolescents’ reading motivation and behavior predicted different components
of reading. Their study employed 312 students, from diverse backgrounds, who live in the
United Kingdom. The researchers used multiple assessments to measure student motivation,
gender differences, and reading skills, including YARC, SWRT, reading comprehension tests,
reading habits questionnaires, and Motivation to Read Profile. Results from their study showed
that reading motivation predicted comprehension, decoding, and fluency.

In summary, motivation and reading fiction works were significant predictors of
adolescents’ reading comprehension, summary skills, and text reading speed. Thus, reading
motivation is directly related to students’ reading skills, comprehension, and academic success.
Additionally, since reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are complementary and share an
underlying skill set, it is important that students are motivated to engage in these activities in
order to become more literate and capable students. Successful previous experiences can
increase a learner’s self-efficacy in a specific domain. Teachers can scaffold instruction and
slowly increase difficulty, while concentrating on skills needed for each task, in order to enhance
their confidence and efficacy. In addition, situational interest, a form of extrinsic motivation, can
be utilized to engage students in literacy skills.

Paige (2011) proposed a model that connects extrinsic motivation for reading, oral
reading fluency, comprehension, and academic achievement to demonstrate how situational
interest for reading can be influenced by the classroom teacher to engage struggling readers.
Participants for his study included 112 6th grade students and 115 7th grade students from a
middle school in the southeast United States. A variety of questionnaires were used, including
the MRQ, the TOWRE, GORT-4, TORC-3, and statewide proficiency exams. The data from his
study concluded that content and interest can affect a student’s motivation for reading and that situational interest correlates with extrinsic motivation but can lead to intrinsic motivation. In order to provide students with an equitable and rigorous educational experience, teachers must understand how students learn and what factors influence their learning.

**Engagement**

Like the construct of motivation, student engagement is a multidimensional concept that affects student learning and achievement. Loosely defined, engagement refers to individuals being actively involved in their own learning (Lei, Cui, & Zhou, 2018). While engagement is related to motivation, many researchers have determined that the two concepts are distinct from one another. Motivation is related to a person’s drive to participate in certain behaviors and explains underlying psychological processes. In contrast, engagement can be described as the connection between a person and an activity. According to Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly (2006), motivation is necessary, but not sufficient for engagement and is worthy of study in its own right. The study of engagement is vital within studying motivational frameworks and theories as it interacts cyclically with internal and external variables and affects academic, behavioral, and social outcomes. Engagement provides an explanation for the gradual process in which students disconnect from school and contributes to appropriate interventions to manage school dropout rates and foster students’ achievement motivation.

The principles of engagement have been studied and measured since the 1950s, but not until recently, when educational stakeholders began focusing on the problems in schools and the apathy of the students, have current researchers attempted to categorize and clarify the construct. Measuring student engagement encompasses studying the relationship between the student and his/her environment. Early studies involved measuring engagement in terms of observable
behaviors, such as level of participation, effort, and time taken to complete a task (Brophy, 1983; as cited in Lei, Cui, & Zhou, 2018). Later, researchers began exploring the affective aspects of the experiences students had while learning. Recently, Bryson and Hand (2007), recognized the complex nature of the construct and began to conceptualize student engagement as a multidimensional phenomenon (as cited in Lester, 2013). The 21st-century demands more critical and creative thinkers, so it is the responsibility of schools to ensure that students are equipped with the tools they need to be successful. In addition, since student engagement increases positive student outcomes, it becomes necessary to understand the new Net Generation student and his/her perspective of school and style of learning. Net Generation students require more interactive learning environments where they have more autonomy to create a meaningful learning experience (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

**Theory and Empirical Studies**

There are many theories surrounding engagement and measuring the multidimensional construct. In Finn’s (1989) participation-identification model of school withdrawal, student engagement is defined as a student’s identification with school. This refers to a person’s perception of the benefits of school and his/her sense of belonging. Finn predicted that when students identified more with school, their participation would increase (as cited in Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009). Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) determined there were three dimensions of student engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioral engagement consists of positive conduct, involvement in learning, and participation in school activities. Emotional engagement focuses on student attitudes and values and how they interact with other students, faculty, the curriculum, and the institution. Lastly, cognitive engagement includes a psychological component that emphasizes a student’s motivation to learn and a
cognitive component that involves the strategy that students take in their thinking and learning. Cognitive engagement reflects students’ perceptions about their abilities and their competency towards a subject and impacts their task-oriented goals.

The majority of research has focused on academic and behavioral engagement, since these components are observable and easier to measure. However, research has found that cognitive engagement is related to goal orientation and psychological engagement has been associated with adaptive school behaviors, so studying these two components is imperative to understanding and intervening with student disengagement.

Smiley & Anderson (2011), examined the effectiveness and factor structure of a cognitive engagement measurement. The researchers wanted to examine cognitive engagement within arts, humanities, and literature courses. A revised Attitudes Towards Mathematics Survey was used in the study to assess cognitive engagement in alternative contexts, as well as the Student Opinion Scale, and Achievement Goal Questionnaire. Participants included 243 undergraduates from a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic university. The data showed a positive and moderate correlation between cognitive engagement and motivation. The constructs are related, yet distinct from each other. Furthermore, the findings show that deep engagement is positively related to mastery approach. Appleton, Christenson, Kim, and Reschly (2006) determined there were two subtypes of student engagement with school: cognitive and psychological engagement. The researchers used the Student Engagement Instrument to explore the multidimensional construct to determine interventions needed to increase student engagement. The participants included 1,931 diverse 9th graders in an urban district in the upper Midwest. The researchers concluded that student cognitive and psychological engagement is central to improving the learning outcomes of students, especially for those at high risk of educational failure. Other
studies have shown that a student’s cultural background, socioeconomic status, and gender affect a student’s engagement with school and learning. Since there is very little empirical research conducted on the nature and course of student engagement and its effect on dropout rate, Archambault, Jamosz, Fallu, & Pagani (2009) tested the behavioral, affective, and cognitive attributes of engagement, separately and as a global construct. The sample included 11,827 7th-9th grade students, from 69 schools in Canada. The participants were given a battery of questionnaires and surveys that measured student perception and engagement. Findings show patterns in concepts related to engagement: attendance, discipline, liking school, interest in academic work, willingness to learn. Furthermore, data indicated that the behavioral dimension of engagement predicted dropout and boys tend to be less engaged than girls. In summary, student engagement can be a valid predictor of learning and development and can be linked positively to critical thinking and academic success.

**Types and Levels of Engagement**

As previously stated, engagement is a multidimensional construct. It addresses facets related to human development that may interfere with learning and achievement. Several types of engagement have been studied, such as academic, cognitive, intellectual, institutional, emotional, behavioral, social, and psychological, but most researchers agree that engagement encompasses three main dimensions: behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions and is a process that evolves over time (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Davis and Murrell (1993) concluded that a student’s effort most influences student growth (as cited in Lester, 2013). Since student effort is attributed to student achievement, Schlechty’s (2002) Student Engagement Continuum claimed that student engagement required commitment to an activity or a subject and that this occurred when they found relevance in the activity and valued what they were learning.
Schlechty (2002) identified five different levels of engagement that he placed on a continuum: authentic engagement, strategic compliance, ritual compliance, retreatism, and rebellion. Each level considers a student’s personal disposition and his/her relationship with the environment. In the bottom level, rebellion, students have diverted attention and no commitment to the task. They often refuse to complete the work and cause disruptions. These students usually develop a negative attitude toward school and have a weak work ethic. In the next level, retreatism, students exhibit no attention and show no commitment. Students are often disengaged and have a low self-efficacy. They put forth little or no effort because they believe they have deficient capabilities and find little relevance in the task. In the next level, ritual compliance, student have low attention with no commitment. These students complete the minimal requirements to avoid negative consequences. In the next level, strategic compliance, students have high attention, but low commitment. These students find value in the task or activity, but only because of the extrinsic awards it yields, such as grades, class rank and teacher and parent approval. The last level, authentic engagement, is the goal of educators and considered the highest level of engagement because students find the activity personally meaningful and have the desire to complete the task and perform well. Engaged students become more intrinsically motivated and have a desire to set goals and achieve them. Increasing opportunities for students to become authentically engaged in a task increases the likelihood of student success and growth.

**Implications for Teaching and Learning**

According to Willms (2003), disengaged students are considered to be the greatest challenges facing educators (as cited in Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Students have changed over the last 20 years as a result of their immersion in technology from a young age and require a
different learning environment that considers their needs, goals, and learning preferences. Research indicates that student engagement declines when students enter middle school and further declines once they reach high school. Schlechty’s Student Engagement Continuum Model theorizes students’ experiences are determinants of their engagement. The researchers in this study explored the role of teachers in student engagement. The participants included 164 grade 11 students in Gingoog City in Southern Philippines. Researcher-made questionnaires were used in the study to measure the teacher-student relationship and its impact on student engagement. The data revealed that the levels of student engagement were found to be significantly related to extrinsic motivation and peer-to-peer interaction. Furthermore, the study revealed that students’ engagement level can be explained by teacher factors. Teacher dispositions, instructional strategies, and curriculum choices have been found to heavily impact student engagement. Understanding and knowing how students learn, recognizing the internal and external barriers they face, and determining their level of engagement is essential to providing a student-centered environment where students are motivated to learn. In order to measure engagement, teachers and educational stakeholders must consider student perspective. According to Cook-Sather (2002), “There is something fundamentally amiss about building and rebuilding an entire system without consulting at any point those it is ostensibly designed to serve” (p. 1). In order to improve the conditions in schools, it must start with understanding students’ psychological investment in the learning process and providing them with an appropriate environment in which they can explore their strengths and find their niche. This starts with a shift from a vertical to a horizontal classroom, where students are responsible for their own learning. This type of teaching involves creating relationships, providing a safe environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their opinions, and providing students with opportunities to explore their
curiosities and make choices about what and how they learn. When learning becomes personalized and individualized, student engagement and motivation increases (Bermacki, 2018). Giving students choices in what and how they learn increases interest, which is essential for engagement (Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001).

Increasing engagement in reading and writing is essential in helping students develop their literacy skills and become more effective communicators. Emotional factors associated with reading influence reading fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment. Reading engagement also influences writing engagement. In order to increase student literacy skills, it is essential to determine what beliefs about reading need to be adjusted and provide students with opportunities to become engaged in the reading process. This might include the incorporation of young adult literature and graphic novels, providing students with a choice in what they read, showing students the relevance of what they are reading, and creating a classroom environment that sparks situational interest through discussions and group activities.

**Literacy Skills**

Individuals pursuing occupations in the 21st-century require higher-order thinking skills. However, empirical evidence suggests that many students are lacking the higher-order thinking skills required for college and successful autonomy in a democratic society. Reading plays a paramount role in providing students with the skill set required to be autonomous and successful life-long learners. It also helps them communicate their ideas, both written and verbal (Ansari, 2010). Good readers are often good learners, who develop proficiency and have high levels of self-efficacy. Moreover, during adolescence, reading skills become a basis for performance across multiple areas of study and play a crucial role in academic success. Poor reading skills are likely to have a profound negative impact on the possibilities students will have after high
school. Therefore, engaging students in reading and building their literacy skill set should belong at the top of the educational reform agenda. A society is as successful as its people and an educated population is essential for a successful society.

**Reading Process**

Reading is a dynamic and complex process that varies from reader to reader and from text to text. The relationship between the reader and the text is significant to increasing reading skills and understanding deficits. Reading is an act of decoding and processing, in which the reader receives the writer’s messages, comprehends the nuances, and makes a personalized meaning for him/herself. By definition, reading involves comprehension; so, when an individual does not comprehend the message or the content, he/she is not reading. According to Karahan (2017), reading is a process of storing information and then using the information obtained from the text. When students do not learn these skills at a young age, they will be confronted with various obstacles and barriers that will prohibit them from comprehending more complex texts in middle school and high school. When students lack self-efficacy and the basic skills required for decoding and comprehending texts, they begin to find coping mechanisms that allow them to abstain from reading. Sylvia Edwards, a reading specialist for the Maryland State Department of Education, found that by late elementary school, students who have not learned basic decoding and comprehension skills have developed strategies to avoid reading (Chrisophe, 2011). When these struggling readers reach the high school level, they have little to no motivation to engage in the reading process and often fall further behind. In addition, students who are considered proficient in reading might not have sufficient motivation to acquire skills and strategies that will help them comprehend more difficult and complex texts. This lack of desire can lead to less time with texts and inadequate literacy acquisition, resulting in what Stanovich (1986) called the
Matthew Effect, a biblical analogy of the rich becoming richer, and the poor getting poorer (as cited in Paige, 2011). Reading deeply and analytically is a skill that helps students become more critical thinkers and creative problem solvers. Exposure to extended texts and fiction books has been found to be significant indicators of reading skills. Being able to comprehend and connect with complex texts helps students become aware of the themes and messages intended by the author, so they can make meaning for themselves.

According to Ansari (2010), there are two views of reading instruction: the bottom-up view of reading and the top-down view of reading. Bottom-up reading takes on a more passive perspective of reading since the primary focus involves skills such as decoding, deciphering, and processing the letters and words to make meaning. This type of approach assigns more importance to the text rather than the reader. Bottom-up views of reading involve the interpretation of small chunks of language, which may affect a reader’s fluency and retention. The top-down view of reading takes into consideration the reader and his/her experiences and expectations as part of the reading process. This view of reading is founded on the concept of schemata, or the variety of knowledge a person stores in different sections of his/her mind. These sections are activated when the reader connects to and find relevance in the text. This view of reading promotes autonomy and confidence. However, reading proficiency occurs when both views of reading are applied. In this view, researchers understand the value of decoding texts to acquire the information, but emphasis is still awarded to the reader and his/her experience with the text. McClelland and Rumalhart (1981) called this the interaction activation model for reading. Students must be able to understand the language, but also find value and meaning in their reading tasks. To be lifelong readers, individuals must read often, enjoy the
reading experience, comprehend complex texts, and persist when reading becomes difficult (Springer, Harris, & Dole, 2017)

**Reading Motivation and Engagement**

Students who are intrinsically motivated to read value and employ different strategies to engage with the text than students who lack reading motivation or are extrinsically motivated to read. When reading practice increases, a student’s reading ability increases. Students who are not interested in a subject will be unlikely to engage with the content or persevere through obstacles or barriers. When students are interested in a text, their comprehension improves, and their motivation increases (Springer, Harris, & Dole, 2017). Alvermann (1998) posited three intrinsic motivations for reading: involvement, in which learners find enjoyment in the task; curiosity, in which learners read more about topics that pique their interests; and socialization, in which students engage in meaningful conversations about what they read. Furthermore, several strategies designed to motivate students to read were suggested: building students’ self-efficacy, spark new learning through a variety of instructional strategies, build connections with the students to learn their interests, incorporate a variety of texts, such as graphic novels, young adult literature, documentaries, movies, song lyrics, YouTube videos, magazines, art, and poetry, and give students a choice in what they read (Arrowsmith, 2012). Even with the growing interest in reading motivation, few studies have been completed with adolescents. McKenna (2014) concluded that only 8% of reading motivation studies had been conducted with older students, and only nine studies could be found to include children over the age of 11 (as cited in McGeown et al., 2014). Since motivational beliefs and attitudes decline for students as they move from elementary to middle school, it is important that literacy skills and reading
motivation and engagement be studied further in order to enhance students’ attitudes and interests toward reading.

In addition, reading motivation and student engagement should not be considered in isolation, but in relation with the reading process. Reading engagement enables students to read longer, more complex texts and maintain a positive attitude in regard to reading for pleasure and reading for purpose. Karahan (2017) attempted to determine the correlation of reading motivation and reading engagement with reading comprehension skills for boys and girls. The sample of the study consisted of 183 8th-grade students in Turkey. The researchers used several motivational scales and a reading comprehension exam to assess student motivation and engagement. The researchers concluded that motivation plays a significant role in reading performance and reading skills. Despite previous data and assumptions, they did not find any differences between boys and girls regarding reading motivation and engagement. Finally, their data showed that individuals who were not engaged in the reading process and had difficulty in reading avoided reading and did not value reading. For adolescents, social influences become extremely prominent in influencing their attitudes toward school. As children grow older, their beliefs and attitudes about school become less adaptive (Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis, 2013). Therefore, reading engagement and reading motivation both contribute to time reading and attitudes toward the value of reading.

**Student Attitude and Teacher Perspective**

Due to rigid accountability measures and an increase in standardized testing, many teachers have shifted the focus away from student motivation and engagement to core-focused instruction and test preparation. Due to the nature of standardized tests and traditional forms of assessment, students look for the *right* answers in the text instead of comprehending it for
themselves. This has decreased student motivation for reading and has had detrimental effects on teacher autonomy and perspective.

Attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement. Many students perceive reading as a passive activity, which negatively affects student engagement (Metzger, 1998). Therefore, implementing strategies in which students become engaged with the text is important in increasing reading comprehension and higher-level thinking. Reading and comprehending complex texts leads to components of critical thinking and other higher-order thinking skills. Research proves that the skills possessed by proficient readers, such as synthesizing and evaluating information, become deciding factors in who will succeed academically (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Struggling readers have usually had repeated experiences with failure while participating in the reading process, which lowers their self-efficacy and increases their perceptions of task difficulty. This may cause students to devalue reading and adopt maladaptive behaviors that interfere with their academic achievement. Fisher & Frey (2012) conducted a survey at their small, urban school in which they asked students about English courses and their interest in reading. Nico, a high performing student, reported “I didn’t read because I found all the answers to the worksheet on the Internet.” Another student, Eric, replied, “She [the teacher] talks about the book every day, so I didn’t read it, I just listened to her” (pg. 590). So, it is evident that efforts should be awarded to incorporating strategies that help improve student engagement in reading. This begins with learning more about the students and their perspectives of reading and incorporating more diverse and creative instructional strategies to engage them in the learning process.
Reading Interventions and Instructional Strategies

Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) suggested that creating an environment in which students are excited to participate and have a choice in what and how they learn, creates situational interest. If teachers can hook students’ interest and help them sustain that interest over a long period of time, they will increase their intrinsic motivation, growth, and achievement. Even when children lack the intrinsic motivation to read, a certain amount of autonomy and interest can be accomplished through extrinsic motivation, or situational interest. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), reading enjoyment and reading for interest are two fundamental aspects for creating situational interest to engage and motivate students to read (as cited in Retelsdoff et al. 2011). Reading should be considered a tool for learning about topics of interest instead of a chore that must be completed for extrinsic awards, such as grades and praise. Interventions to promote reading motivation should focus on encouraging autonomy and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs. Interventions for improving student motivation and engagement include: providing students with choices, offering a rationale for readings and activities, getting to know students and their interests, offering support and guidance through scaffolding, and providing feedback (De Naeghel, Van Meer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012).

Utilizing creative instructional strategies and creating a student-centered learning community can also impact student engagement and motivation. Reading engagement begins with interest. When students are given a wider range of texts to choose from, the more likely they will be to find a text that both interests them and is suitable for their reading level. Graphic novels provide a way of engaging at-risk students and incorporating visual literacy, which is a prominent skill of the 21st-century (Hughes, King, Perkins, & Fuke, 2011). Well-organized and high-coherence texts stimulate interest and increase self-efficacy. When students are interested
in what they are reading and feel confident about their abilities to read the text successfully, the more likely they will be to engage in the task and work through their obstacles. In addition to content choices, cooperative learning has been found to successfully increase students’ level of understanding, develop critical thinking skills, increase long-term retention, and engage students in the learning process (Farzaneh & Nejadansari, 2014). Lastly, encouraging inquiry in the classroom can increase situational interest. When teachers allow students the freedom to inquire into topics and issues, they are educating them about democracy and the vital issues in society (Wolk, 2013). Critical literacy can be defined as reading texts with the purpose of examining and questioning the social, political, and economic conditions of the society in which the texts were written (Freire, 1970; as cited in Koss & Williams, 2018). This pluralistic view of pedagogy will give students opportunities to find their voices, discuss their ideas, and learn to engage in discussions and debates where they must find value in the comments of others while creating their own beliefs and values.

**Connection Between Reading and Writing**

Writing is not an isolated skill. It builds upon reading skills and requires critical thinking skills. Reading is a complex process in which the reader must create meaning using specific skills. According to Brzezińska (1987), there are three categories of skills required for reading: technical—the recognition of letters and phonics; semantic—associating the symbols and letters with prior knowledge or experiences; and critical-creative—assessing and interpreting the content literally and figuratively (as cited in Zasacka & Bulkowski, 2017). According to Federowicz (2010), reading literacy can be defined as “understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts (in different forms and by different carriers), and engagement with their content, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in
society” (as cited in Zasacka & Bułkowski, 2017, p. 83). In short, reading skills are required in order to effectively communicate ideas.

In order to effectively communicate ideas in a written format, students must be capable of thinking about the subject matter while concentrating on rhetorical and conceptual formatting (Deane, 2011). Similar to reading skills, writing requires confidence and is affected by prior experience and an individual’s perspective of his/her competence.

Writing Motivation

Effective communication skills are pertinent to being successful in the 21st-century. The ability to write effectively and successfully express one’s ideas in a logical way is a prerequisite for most careers and occupations. Writing requires a set of cognitive skills, processes, and knowledge (De Smedt, et al.). Many students, who have not mastered reading skills and comprehension perceive writing as a daunting and complicated task. In addition, educational prompts and writing style may not interest students, which negatively impacts their motivation to engage in writing tasks. Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck (1984) found that self-efficacy significantly contributes to writing performance. Individuals’ beliefs about their abilities determines how much effort they invest in an activity or persist through adversity. Raising self-efficacy in reading and writing may lower anxiety in performing writing tasks and increase their level of engagement. Writers must be motivated to dedicate time and effort in the writing process if they hope to learn to communicate effectively and increase their skills. De Smedt, Merchie, Barendse, & Rosseel (2017) provided more insight into how cognitive and motivational challenges correlate with students’ writing performance and whether these relations vary for boys and girls and students of different achievement levels. The participants for this study included 1,577 5th and 6th grade students from random elementary schools in Flanders, Belgium.
Students completed a battery of questionnaires regarding their self-efficacy, writing motivation, and writing strategies. In addition, students completed two writing prompts: one informational and one narrative. Findings include self-efficacy for writing conventions was negatively related to students’ writing strategies. This could be due to low-level transcription skills, failing to apply higher-order thinking skills or teachers focusing on teaching basic writing skills.

Furthermore, the researchers concluded that providing students with explicit instructions in why, how, and when to apply writing strategies raises student awareness and confidence. Lastly, the researchers concluded that to increase students’ writing performance, it is important to stimulate their autonomous writing motivation. Similar to reading skills, motivation and engagement are two constructs that significantly impact writing performance.

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological term where a person engages in a behavior that simultaneously conflicts with his or her beliefs (Martinie, Olive, & Milland, 2009). It is conceptualized as a motivational state that results from negative psychological tension. Even though this happens subconsciously, it causes people to behave in certain ways. The connection between emotions, cognitive capacity, and behaviors influence self-efficacy and can inhibit performance. Martinie et al. (2009) examined the effects of cognitive dissonance on writing performance. The researchers conducted two separate experiments. In the first experiment 50 Psychology majors at Poitiers University were told to compose a good essay in 20 minutes. While composing the essay, students were instructed to react as rapidly as possible whenever they detected a signal. In the second experiment, 88 psychology students were asked to compose an essay while also memorizing series of 3-5 digits and then recalling them. Results from the study show that dissonance has an effect on the level of arousal. Data show that dissonance improves performance in simple tasks but not in complex ones. Therefore, performance is
facilitated with simple tasks and is impaired with complex ones. In writing, self-efficacy beliefs, external barriers, and the social environment can cause dissonance. Lessening the dissonance is linked to the motivational drive of needing consonance, or the agreement between behavior and beliefs. Improving students’ skills in writing while building self-efficacy can improve writing engagement and motivation.

**Implication for Teaching and Learning**

The English curriculum is a spiral in which students practice the same basic processes (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) every year, at increasingly sophisticated levels (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004). However, when students do not receive or maintain the literacy skillset, they come to high school at a disadvantage and with reading and writing deficits. Graves (2007) presented seven tenets of engaging students in the writing process:

1. Writing is a social act.
2. Writing is a process.
3. People become better writers by writing.
4. To become engaged in the writing process, students need time, encouragement, and choice.
5. Writing reflects critical thinking, so writing should be completed in all subject areas.
6. Writing is an essential form of communication.
7. Writers need to worry about conveying their ideas before working on clarity, accuracy, and correctness.

Finding ways to encourage writing and giving students multiple opportunities to enhance their writing skills is essential to improving literacy skills. Before students can become effective writers, teachers should scaffold the skills relevant to the writing process. These skills include
social skills, conceptual skills, textual skills, verbal skills, and lexical skills (Deane, 2011). When students learn the skillset, they can work on improving their technique. Researchers define five components for best instructional practices for teaching writing: student outcomes, knowledge and preparation, management of the learning environment, teaching style, and teaching process (Koch, 2012). The concepts provide a framework for designing strategies that will engage students in the writing process. Group work, writing workshops, scaffolding, feedback, brainstorming as a class, peer review, and essay exemplars can help students increase their confidence level in the writing process and encourage them to set goals and work toward meeting those goals.

**Instructional Strategies**

In the last 10 years, the need for more innovative strategies for engaging students has become a prominent response to the demands of the 21st-century. Restructuring schools to encompass curriculum that encourages higher-order thinking skills has become essential, because critical thinking is essential in order to be successful in a democratic society (Kalelioğlu & Gülbahar, 2014). Therefore, teachers must now think about the importance for students to learn content skills, but also intentional ways of thinking and discovering (Langer, 2001). Rogers (1969), who focused on client-centered therapy, believed that people are innately curious about their world, so meaningful learning occurs through active participation (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014).

**Effective Instructional Strategies for Reading and Writing**

The Socratic method is one of the most influential instructional strategies to engage students in the learning process and heighten critical thinking skills, inquiry, creativity, and literacy skills. The New AVID Coordinator (2005) describes the Socratic Seminar as a highly
motivating form of intellectual discourse because its goal is to take participants to a deeper understanding of complex issues (as cited in Morgan, 2006, pg. 17). The seminar incorporates dialogic discussion, which is distinguished by three characteristics: relevant content, group-determined understanding, and the relinquishment of teacher authority (Billings & Fitzgerald, 2002). Therefore, the seminars act as opportunities for students to engage in scholarly discussions in which ideals, values, social issues, and principles are critically scrutinized in nonthreatening environments (Polite & Adams, 1996). Accordingly, students become engaged in reading and use books as a catalyst to discover what they think about society (Fisher & Frey, 2012). Increasing student interest and engagement increases self-efficacy and trains students to practice evaluation, judgment, and creative thinking while employing prior knowledge. This helps students become more intrinsically motivated to engage in rigorous, active learning (Carvalho-Grevious, 2013).

Socratic seminars engage students in active learning and encourage students to work together, through systematic questioning, to discover truth and improve literacy skills. Students learn cooperative learning, text analysis skills, vocabulary acquisition, improve synthesis and evaluation skills, improve problem-solving skills, and learn to appreciate other points of view. According to Tredway (1995), in order to engage students in the learning process, teachers must relate the content and activities to their own experiences. Socratic questioning does just this. It allows students to think about content, then explain, listen, and construct new knowledge in a social context. This strategy enables educators to increase motivation through increased situational interest, which is generated by certain conditions in the environment (Guthrie, Wigflied, & Humenick, 2006). Vygotsky’s sociocultural framework suggests learning is a social experience in which both teachers and students participate in thoughtful discourse where they
examine content and emotions. Therefore, the way in which people acquire knowledge is reliant on the environment in which the learning takes place (Langer, 2001). This implies that people become more literate and reflective thinkers, not alone with content, but in a social context. In a Socratic seminar, higher-order thinking skills occur at two levels: interpersonal and intrapersonal. Students move from simple comprehension, through analysis, and finally to evaluation and divergent thinking (Pertanika, 2010). This method, which focuses on discussion rather than lecture, is what John Erskine, professor at Columbia University, describes as the most natural of all methods (Schneider, 2012).

There are numerous variations of the Socratic method of questioning that utilize dialogic discussion. The Paideia Seminar, advocated by Mortimer Adler, is a method of teaching that engages students in discussing the ideas and values surrounding a particular text (Billings & Fitzgerald, 2002). Socratic Seminars are characterized by fostering open participation to create open-ended questions, using textual references to support ideas, and discussing concepts in a formal, intellectual way (Orellana, 2008, as cited in Pihlgren & Billings, 2010). Regardless of the type of dialogic discussion, the role of teacher is significant. The seminars are meant to be student-centered, so the teacher acts as coach, model, collaborator, guide, participant, or sharer, depending on the age of the participants and the experience they have with the technique (Aulls, 1998, as cited in Billings & Fitzgerald, 2002). As students gain confidence, they become more resilient and authentically engaged in the task (Carvalho-Grevious, 2013).

Ultimately, instruction which engages students most of the time, through situational interest, and encourages them to think critically, is the key to student learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993). Authentic instruction, such as the use of Socratic Seminars, engages students to be active learners. Empirical evidence shows that students who are actively engaged in the
learning process are more likely to be motivated to pursue information and increase critical thinking proficiency. One theoretical approach for increasing intrinsic motivation and self-esteem in high school literature classes is the application of situational interest to encourage student involvement and self-efficacy. Socratic seminars provide students with the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and construct their own knowledge. In turn, students will be more motivated, more engaged, and better equipped to be successful and thoughtful citizens.

Another way to encourage critical thinking skills and improve student engagement and motivation is to utilize technology. The Net Generation grew up digital natives, so using technology as a tool to create interest and personalization in the classroom encourages students to be active participants in their own learning. Net Geners learn differently from their predecessors, often having a short attention span and prefer hands on, self-directed learning. Technology enables teachers to differentiate the curriculum and provide students with choices. However, even though students are digital natives, they do not necessarily understand how to use their technology for educational purposes. Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in different forms (Zemmels, 2012). Teaching students how to use their resources helps expand their skills of inquiry, while building self-efficacy. This approach to teaching and learning assumes that students can apply their knowledge of media and its conventions to show their learning. For Net Geners, life takes place on a screen where they can construct their own world and create their own identity. Rather than being passive consumers of technology, teachers can utilize this source to help individuals become active, knowledgeable consumers of technology and more engaged students.
According to Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), Net Geners often lack literacy and critical thinking skills. Accordingly, reading instruction is essential to equipping them with the skills required to be successful after high school. Reuters (2007) surveyed 81,000 students in 26 states and found that two-thirds of high school students complain of boredom (as cited in Roskos & Neuman, 2013). Reading engagement and motivation is directly related to literacy skills. In order to construct an environment conducive to learning, teachers must design curriculum that encourages situational interest, employ instructional strategies that allow choice and group work, and set high expectations for every learner. Helping students find value in reading is critical to motivating students to read more often and more critically. Springer, Harris, and Dole (2017) proposed several strategies to build on student interest, including selecting interesting and relevant texts, pairing fiction and informational texts, generating inquiry-based projects, designing hands-on activities, and giving students opportunities to discuss texts with their peers. Porter-O’ Donnell (2004) suggested that teaching annotation skills promotes active reading and helps students reach a deeper level of engagement. Students must be taught that reading is a process and requires effort and patience. Annotation helps students work through this process through reflection and metacognition. Students can make sense of difficult text by slowing down the reading process and making the cognitive process visual. This way, students can analyze the literal information on the page to generate their own interpretation.

Generating situational interest is one of the most effective ways to promote reading engagement. Texts must be interesting and relevant to students and encourage them to question the world and challenge their beliefs. Good books encourage students to investigate the human condition, society, and democracy. However, according to ample research and a variety of poll data, the Millennial Generation (1980-2000) are characterized as being politically apathetic. In
fact, according to the pew Research Center (2009), a survey given to 3,000 college students reported that 20% would sell their next vote for an iPod and half said that for $1 million, they would give up their right to vote forever (Wolk, 2009, as cited in Ames, 2013). These feelings of futility have led to a generation of youth who are alienated from their world. Even for a generation who has constant access to news, events, and information, they feel disconnected from the world’s problems. This is often due to media’s sensationalistic culture and the fact that because they are constantly connected, they have become desensitized to troubles and catastrophes in the world. Reading or viewing gruesome or perverse news stories has become a norm. Furthermore, many young people believe that a person’s individual voice is insignificant to generating change.

One of the primary aims of school should be to educate the youth to be active members of a complex democracy (Wolk, 2013, p.45). However, today’s schools seem to be more economy and work-centered, focusing on standards and testing. In fact, the US Department of Education’s entire mission is “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (US Department of Education, as cited in Wolk, 2013, p. 46). Books have the power to bring awareness to civic issues and help students think about their world and their place in it. Utopian and dystopian literature can serve as a catalyst for these types of investigations because the works encourage students to view their society with a critical eye for the purpose of questioning norms and exploring ideologies in order to make rational decisions about their identity and beliefs (Hintz & Ostry, 2003, as cited in Ames, 2013).

Dystopias are characterized as societies that have a repressed and controlled governing system, a powerful authority figure, issues of conformity and surveillance, and invasive
technologies (Spisak, 2012). Pieces of fiction depicting dystopias criticize reality, forcing students to analyze the world, while at the same time escaping it (Hintz & Ostry, 2003, as cited in Ames, 2013). Furthermore, the works will not only appeal to a younger audience but will provide a platform for inquiry in regard to the problems in society and an individual’s responsibility to make changes to make the society a better place. Adolescence is a difficult time in human development—Authority figures appear repressive, young people are constantly under surveillance, and they have very little autonomy over their own lives. Westerfield (2011) describes high school as being a dystopia of sorts, where students have very little power over his/her own existence. Teenagers are bound by the rules of teachers, parents, and society which can make them feel like they live in an authoritarian state (Ames, 2013). Since teenagers feel disconnected to their world, reading dystopian literature gives students the opportunity to experience, analyze, and discuss social situations. Students need opportunities to explore real world problems and examine options for improving their world. Through working with these texts, students will be able to work on their research skills, their writing and speaking skills, their analytical skills, and be challenged to question social norms, government, education, world issues, and identity.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explore research in the areas of motivation, engagement, literacy, and instructional approaches found to enhance motivation and engagement in the English classroom. The section on motivation detailed the history of motivation, empirical studies related to motivation, the different types of motivation, and different motivational theories that influence pedagogy and educational reform. The section on engagement noted the history of research on engagement, empirical studies related to engagement, student and teacher
attitudes regarding curriculum and instructional strategies, and the different types and levels of engagement students may exhibit. The section on literacy skills explored the reading process, the connection between reading and writing skills, reading and writing engagement and motivation, empirical studies related to reading and writing motivation, students’ attitudes toward reading, and reading and writing interventions. The section on instructional strategies presented best practices for engaging students in English classrooms, such as the Socratic method, inquiry-based learning, the use of dystopian literature, and annotation skills. Previous studies suggest that reading engagement and motivation is directly related to reading performance and achievement. However, very few empirical studies have been completed at the secondary level. From this research, it is evident that more research should be completed to examine how to improve reading engagement and motivation in high school English classrooms to foster critical thinking skills and provide students with the skillset required to be successful in the 21st-century.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how students’ perceptions of reading influence their reading engagement and reveal the perceptions teachers and students have on what interventions and strategies they believe to be most beneficial in increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classrooms. In this study, a qualitative research approach was used to obtain teacher and student perceptions of reading engagement and what instructional strategies were most effective in increasing student reading engagement, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. This chapter begins with a description of research design and rationale, moves to the population and sample used for the research, next provides the data collection procedures, then determines the ethical considerations for the study, and finally concludes with the data analysis procedures.

Research Questions

1. How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks?
2. To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses?
3. How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes?
Research Design and Approach

A qualitative research design was implemented in order to gather information about how teachers perceive effective instructional strategies for engaging high school students in English courses and how student’s self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions influence the effort in which they expend on reading and writing tasks. Qualitative research seeks to gain understanding of what motivates people’s behaviors and thoughts. This type of research approach focuses on individuals and their beliefs about society and culture. Since this approach focuses on a group’s perception and their subjective truths, the researcher was careful to remain neutral throughout the research process in order to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. Three or more forms of data were collected for each research question in order to achieve triangulation and increase the trustworthiness of the study. Data collected included: interviews, surveys and questionnaires, focus group interviews, notes from observations, and artifacts. Furthermore, to achieve trustworthiness and credibility in the study, peer debriefing and member checks were implemented.

To learn more about how students’ perceptions influenced their motivational beliefs and attitudes towards reading, students were given surveys, based on questionnaires from previous empirical studies, and participated in a focus group interview. Artifacts, such as student grades in past English course work, were used to achieve triangulation. In order to learn more about how teachers and students perceive effective instructional strategies, students and teachers completed a questionnaire and participated in focus group interviews, and observations of class time were used to ascertain if there are differences between teacher and student perception and if the Socratic Seminar is an effective instructional strategy to improve student engagement. In order to discover student self-efficacy beliefs, students were given the Morgan-Jinks Student
Efficacy Scale, The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire, were interviewed in a focus group, and were observed during their English class. Focus group interviews were used as the primary instrument for obtaining information due to its collaborative nature. Using this method ensured that teachers and students drive the research and the researcher remained neutral, which increased the trustworthiness of the research. Also, utilizing reliable questionnaires and survey questions from previous empirical research enhanced the trustworthiness of the data.

Due to the nature of this study as an attempt to ascertain how student perceptions influence student behaviors and beliefs, a phenomenological approach was utilized. A phenomenological study is designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who participated in it (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2014). Phenomenology is most concerned about the study of an experience from the perspective of the participants. This research approach is less-structured, subjective, and driven by the participants. Since this research concentrates on individual beliefs, motivation, and perception, it is the most appropriate lens to explore the experiences of the participants and make sense of reading motivation and reading engagement.

Population and Sample

Participants involved in the study came from one high school in Southeast Tennessee. Participants included students in 11th grade, from a variety of socioeconomic statuses, races, and ethnicities who were enrolled in an ELA class at the time of the study. In addition, participants included high school teachers who teach 11th grade ELA and were willing to try certain instructional strategies. The high school is composed of approximately 800 students, 53% male and 47% female. Of these 800 students, 40% qualify for free or reduced lunch, and 13.8% are
students with disabilities. The school has a diverse population: 59.7% white, 24.9% African American, 13.8% Hispanic, and 1.6% Asian (State Report Card, 2018). The school has a 76.1% graduation rate and a 19 Average ACT Composite Score.

**Data Collection Procedures**

First, the researcher obtained permission from the Carson-Newman University Institutional Review Board to begin the study. Subsequently, the researcher obtained permission from the research district in which the school is located and then from the principal at the school. Next, the researcher acquired teacher approval forms that were used for the teachers selected to be in the study from the school. Lastly, before students could participate, a parental consent, signed by the parent, and assent for a minor, signed by the student for minors, or a participant consent was obtained from students who were 18 years of age or older. The researcher provided the forms to the teachers, who then distributed the forms to the students and when collected, turned the forms in to the researcher. One high school from a public-school system in Southeast Tennessee was chosen to take part in the research. All 11th grade students, enrolled in ELA at the time of the study, were provided the questionnaire, but only the first thirty to return their signed consent took part in the study. When all necessary forms had been completed, the qualitative study began.

To begin the study, students completed a short open-ended survey. Then, they were given the *Morgan-Jinks Efficacy Scale* (MJSES) (Jinks & Morgan, 1999) which was designed to ascertain information about student efficacy beliefs that might be related to school achievement. Additionally, students were given the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire (AMSR) (Coddington, 2009). The AMSR measures six constructs of motivation in Reading/Language Arts class: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, prosocial interactions,
avoidance, perceived difficulty, and antisocial interactions. The questions were to measure student perceptions of reading, writing, teacher effectiveness, instructional methods, and English courses. Teachers were given an open-ended survey and created a lesson based on the Socratic method. The researcher observed the students and teachers during the lesson. A journal was used to record immediate thoughts and observations about student and teacher attitude. The observations were transcribed and coded. After participating in the teacher-created lesson, students participated in a focus group study about their perception of the lesson. Students who participated in the lesson contributed their perceptions of its effectiveness in a focus group interview. A framework of questions was used, but the teachers and students dictated the direction and topics of the interview. The focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

**Ethical Considerations**

Before any data were collected, the researcher received authorization from the Carson-Newman University Institutional Review Board, which affirmed that the methods and procedures proposed followed the ethical principles regarding all research involving humans as subjects. In addition, before the study, the researcher obtained the necessary permission from the research district, the principal of the school, and the individual participants. Participants signed an informed consent, which provided the possible risks and benefits of the study. The names of the school and participants were kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used to identify the participants throughout the study. All participants were reminded it was a voluntary study and permission was obtained from each participant before any recordings took place. All interviews and observations were transcribed and coded to ensure that all data was an honest portrayal of
the participants’ beliefs and perceptions. Techniques such as peer debriefing and member checks were used to verify dependability and credibility throughout the research.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

After each interview, observation, or focus group interview, all recordings were transcribed and then checked for accuracy. In addition, field notes from each of the interviews were analyzed and coded. Peer debriefing was used to explore and analyze transcripts and member checking confirmed that all responses were accurately transcribed. After ensuring all recordings were transcribed and checked for accuracy, and after collecting the data from the surveys and questionnaires, the researcher began the process of data coding.

Data coding is an analytical process used to categorize information obtained through data collection and facilitate analysis in order to answer the research questions. The evaluation of the data was obtained through a thematic content analysis, which emphasizes recording and examining patterns across the various forms of data. After collecting the data, the researcher began pre-coding (annotating) journal notes and transcripts by marking specific quotes and details that seemed relevant or repetitive. Open coding was used to divide data into categories. In addition, the constant comparison method, where themes were grouped and regrouped after multiple reads, ensured the validity of the study. Then, through axial coding, the researcher divided the categories into core themes. Axial coding was completed in a six-step process: read transcripts, label relevant pieces, organize the codes, label the categories, decide rank or hierarchy, and write up results. Coding is a cyclical act, so reading, coding, and categorizing concepts and identifying patterns and themes was completed multiple times and at different points in the research process. Peer debriefing was used after transcribing interviews and after
open and axial coding. The librarian, English department head, and a colleague at the school examined the text and data to clarify and analyze categories and themes.

**Summary**

A qualitative study was employed to analyze how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level. The qualitative research project followed a Naturalistic Inquiry Design, which examined student perceptions of reading engagement, self-efficacy, and effective instructional strategies, and teacher perceptions of student engagement and effective instructional strategies. A quantitative portion was used to support qualitative findings. The study occurred in Southeast Tennessee at one secondary school. A phenomenological approach was used to explore the research questions. The participants at the school guided the research through their answers to surveys and questionnaires, and their participation in focus group interviews and individual interviews. In order to employ triangulation, the research utilized artifacts, such as GPA and demographic information to code research. Also, field notes were taken during class observations and focus group interviews. All of the data were coded and analyzed to reveal patterns and common themes. Peer debriefing and member checks were employed to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research. The research followed the guidelines for ethics as provided by the Carson-Newman Institutional Review Board for research involving humans as subjects. The results obtained from this study will help inform the body of research on reading engagement and reading motivation for high school students and will indicate which instructional strategies are best for engaging students in English courses at the secondary level.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative experimental study was to analyze how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and determine what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level. Additionally, the study assessed the effectiveness of Socratic Seminar at creating situational interest and increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classes. While the study is qualitative in nature, quantitative data was used to support the findings. This chapter begins by explaining the process of data collection and provides information regarding the instruments utilized in the quantitative portion of the research. The chapter then reports the thematic findings from the qualitative portion of the research.

Data for this study were collected through questionnaires, surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and artifacts. Participants included thirty students who were enrolled in 11th grade ELA and two 11th grade ELA teachers participated in the study. Students, in the study, were given the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale, The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire, participated in a focus group interview, and were observed during their English class. Artifacts, such as grades in past English courses, were used to correlate with surveys and questionnaires. The initial survey administered included six open-ended questions and was used to ascertain student preferences in reading genres and instructional strategies, and their strengths and weaknesses in past English courses. The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale provided information regarding students’ perceptions of their own academic self-efficacy. The format of the test is a four-point Likert-type scale. The scale has 34 questions that are
divided into three categories: talent, content, and effort. Internal consistency was estimated at .082 (Jinks & Morgan, 1999). The scale was used to determine the correlation between students’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy and their grades in English courses. The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire consists of 42 items that measure six different constructs of motivation in English classes. Each construct has been reviewed for reliability: intrinsic motivation (.92), self-efficacy (.89), prosocial interactions (.80), avoidance (.75), perceived difficulty (.92), and antisocial interactions (.84). The format of the test is a four-point Likert scale (Coddington, 2009). This questionnaire was used to establish students’ perceptions of reading and determine how perceived difficulty and intrinsic motivation correlate with students’ perception of reading and effective instructional strategies. Participants were chosen for observation based on their grade level, willingness to participate, and class period. Detailed notes were taken during the observation and an audio recording was utilized. The recording was transcribed, and then coded for themes. The focus group interviews were conducted with five participants at a time, using 5 semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix D). The interviews ranged from 15-25 minutes in length and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. For the quantitative portion of the research, artifacts, such as grades in past English courses, were used to correlate with surveys and questionnaires.

The surveys administered to teachers included five open-ended questions which revolved around their perception of student engagement and best practices. The teachers were then introduced to best practices, from the researcher’s literature review, and chose Socratic Seminar as the instructional strategy to employ to test how situational interest affects student engagement. They prepared a lesson (see Appendix J), implemented the lesson, and then participated in a
focus group interview where they answered five semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix D). The interview lasted 26 minutes and was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Research methods were used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks?

2. To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses?

3. How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes?

Presentation of Descriptive Characteristics of Participants

Participants involved in the study came from one high school in Southeast Tennessee. The high school is composed of approximately 800 students, 53% male and 47% female. The school has a diverse population: 59.7% white, 24.9% African American, 13.8% Hispanic, and 1.6% Asian (State Report Card, 2018). Participants included 30 students in 11th grade, who come from a variety of socioeconomic statuses, races, and ethnicities, and were enrolled in an ELA class at the time of the study. Before students could participate, a parental consent, signed by the parent, and assent for a minor, signed by the student for minors, or a participant consent was obtained from students who were 18 years of age or older. Furthermore, participants included two high school teachers who teach 11th grade ELA and were willing to try certain instructional strategies. The researcher acquired teacher approval forms that were used for the teachers selected to be in the study. The surveys and questionnaires were incorporated into Google Forms and were completed on Google Classroom. Each student and teacher used a
numeric code as a pseudonym so that all results remained anonymous. After receiving the results from the surveys, the researcher conducted observations and focus group interviews over the course of three weeks.

Survey Data

Appendix A shows the survey questions administered to the 30 students. The survey was incorporated into a Google Form and administered on Google classroom. The open-ended survey was employed to determine student perception of reading and English courses, and their strengths and weaknesses in English courses. Of the 30 participants, 24 students said they enjoyed English courses. The eight students who wrote they disliked English courses attributed teachers, interest, and their perceived ability in the subject area. While responses differed in what students viewed as their strengths and weakness in English courses, six of 30 (20%) participants reported that writing was a weakness. In addition, nine out of 30 (30%) students mentioned the lack of focus or interest as a weakness. Also, four of the 30 (13%) students believed that the subject was too difficult.

Appendix B displays the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Rating Scale and the four-point Likert scale statements. The scale provided data on students’ perceptions of their talent, content, and effort. Table 4.1 exhibits student perceptions of their ability as an English student compared with their grades in 9th and 10th grade English courses. They rated themselves on the statement, “I am a good English student.” Of the 30 participants, 60% agreed or kind of agreed they were a good English student, and 43% of students said they disagreed or kind of disagreed they were a good English student. When juxtaposed with their grades in 9th and 10th grade English courses, it shows there is no correlation between student self-efficacy and their numerical grades. On a grading scale of an A constituting a score of 90 or higher, a B considered a score from 80-89, 70-
79 considered a C, and 69 and below considered an F, 97% of students scored a C or higher as an
average in their previous two English courses. Of those participating in the study, fifty percent
made an A average in 9th and 10th grade English courses, and 43% of the participants scored
themselves low in self-efficacy in English. However, 83% of students scored a B or higher as an
average in their previous English courses.

Table 4.1 Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Rating Scale and Grades in English courses

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| Average   | 87.4 | 2.4 |
Appendix C displays The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading (AMSR) questionnaire and the four-point Likert scale statements. The AMSR scores students in six different constructs. For this research, the two constructs of intrinsic motivation and perceived difficulty were analyzed. Figure 4.1 below illustrates student perceptions of their intrinsic motivation in English courses. Students scored themselves based on how successful they feel when they read for English class. Of the 30 participants, 43% of students felt successful when they read for English class. This statement falls under the intrinsic motivation construct and indicates a relationship between motivation and student perception of self-efficacy. More than half of the participants do not feel a sense of accomplishment when reading for English class.

*Figure 4.1 Students Reporting on Their Feelings of Success When Reading*

![Bar chart showing the frequency of students reporting their feelings of success when reading.]

Figure 4.1 exhibits the frequency of students who answered the question: I feel successful when I read for English class.

Figure 4.2 illustrates how students feel about the challenge of reading for English courses as an enjoyable endeavor. This is another component of the intrinsic motivation scale on the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire. Of the participants, thirty-seven percent scored themselves a 2 in this construct, and 17% of participants scored themselves a 1,
which demonstrates that over half of the participants fail to enjoy challenge in English courses. This shows the relationship between intrinsic motivation and student perception of perceived difficulty.

Table 4.2 displays how students perceive the difficulty of English classes compared with their grades in 9th and 10th grade English courses. This question is a component of the perceived difficulty scale on the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire and required students to rank themselves on the following statement: Reading for English class is difficult for me. Of the 30 participants, 60% perceive English to be a difficult subject. Additionally, eight of 30 (27%) students scored themselves a 4 (a lot like me). However, 83% of students made a B or higher as the average grade in their 9th and 10th grade English courses. This shows a negative correlation between perceived difficulty and academic achievement, which indicates a relationship between intrinsic motivation and student self-efficacy.
### Table 4.2: Adolescent Motivations for School Reading Likert Scale

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<td>94</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Average   | 87.4           | 2.7             |

Appendix D displays the survey questions administered to the two teachers. The survey was incorporated into a Google Form and given on Google classroom. The open-ended survey was employed to determine teacher perception of effective instructional strategies to increase
situational interest and engagement. One of the questions asked was, “What percentage of students would you say are intrinsically motivated to read?” Teacher A responded that while it depended on the class, she would say that 40% of students were intrinsically motivated to read, whereas the Teacher B predicted that 20% of her students were intrinsically motivated to read. The follow-up question to this question was “What instructional strategies do you use to increase their motivation?” Their answers included hands-on activities, group projects, learning communities, scaffolding, the use of technology, and seminars.

**Participant Observation Data**

For the experimental portion of the research, the two teachers tested the effectiveness of a Socratic seminar as a strategy to increase engagement and motivation in their class. Each teacher was provided a handout of what a seminar should consist of (Appendix I) and created an assignment that met the guidelines (Appendix J). Both teachers executed the same assignment, which consisted of having students read a novel, and then assigning students 20 open-ended questions. Before the seminar, students had to write a paragraph containing two quotes from the novel for each of the 20 questions. Then, each teacher devoted one class period to the Socratic Seminar. The researcher observed each of these seminars, audio recorded each of the seminars, coded the transcripts, and took field notes during the observation. Peer debriefing and member checks with the two participating teachers, participating students, and librarian were used to maintain validity and transferability throughout the process.

The first participant observations were conducted on January 22, 2019. The first participant used for observations was a Caucasian female with seven years of teaching experience in secondary English. The observation was conducted during an Honors 11th English course. Field notes were taken during the observation, transcribed, and analyzed for themes.
The second participant used for observations was an African American male in an Honors 11th grade English class. The third participant used for observations was a Caucasian female in an Honors English course. The fourth participant was a Caucasian male in an Honors English course. The participants were chosen from the 30 students who turned in parental consent forms by using a list randomizer.

The second participant observations were conducted on January 23, 2019. The first participant used for observations was a Caucasian female with 13 years of teaching experience in secondary English. The second participant used for observations was African American female in an English 11 class. The third participant used for observations was a Hispanic female in an English 11 class. The fourth participant used for observations was a Caucasian male in an English 11 class. The participants were chosen from the 30 students who turned in parental consent forms by using a list randomizer.

**Focus Group Interview Data**

In Appendix E, the interview question used in the teacher and student sessions are displayed. Focus group interviews occurred after the observations of the teacher lesson that utilized Socratic Seminar as an instructional method to increase student engagement. One focus group interview session was devoted to teacher perception of the lesson. The questions were semi-structured and open-ended to allow participants to have an in-depth discussion about the topics. The interview lasted 26 minutes. The interview was recorded and transcribed for coding. The other three focus group interviews were devoted to student perception. The questions were semi-structured and open-ended to allow participants to have an in-depth discussion about the topics. The interviews were conducted with five students at a time, using a list randomizer. Each interview lasted from 15-25 minutes. Peer debriefing was used to validate the data and
guarantee fidelity. Additionally, member checking was used by allowing the participants to review the transcribed interview to ensure that their words were interpreted correctly.

**Study Findings**

The research was conducted through a naturalistic approach in order to analyze how student perception of reading influences their motivation in English courses at the secondary level and how teacher perception of best practices affects students’ engagement in English courses at the secondary level. Triangulation of data, prolonged engagement with the participants, peer debriefing, and member checks were completed to ensure credibility in the study. The evaluation of data was obtained through thematic content analysis after extensive coding of raw data. Each observation, focus group transcript, and survey went through a cycle of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding enabled the researcher to label concepts from the data and begin to define different categories. Axial coding was used to analyze the categories and to create subcategories in order to find relationships between concepts and their correlation with the categories defined in open coding. Axial coding was used to examine the relationships between the categories and subcategories in order to make connections and find patterns and themes. Selective coding was used to make conclusions about the data in relation to the research questions. In this qualitative study, the selective codes were used to explore common themes that would answer each research question. To answer the first research question of student perception of reading, coding revealed student perceptions revolved around teacher discretion of books and instructional strategies, student interest and choice, and perceived ability. To answer the second research question in regard to teacher perception of effective instructional strategies, the data analysis indicates that teachers utilize instructional strategies that incorporate technology, attempt to increase student interest, and scaffold and chunk literacy
material for easier comprehension. Additionally, after analyzing data for the third research question, which explores how teachers and students perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and student engagement, coding revealed that student interest, making a connection with text, and effective communication among peers seem to increase student engagement. Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 provide a visual representation of the coded data categorized by research question.
**Table 4.3**

*Data Sorted in Levels of Coding for Research Question One: How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>Open Coding</th>
<th>Axial Coding</th>
<th>Selective Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t like reading when it is assigned.”</td>
<td>Teacher choice affects engagement</td>
<td>Teacher choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When teachers force us to read something, some kids can’t take their time, and then get behind.”</td>
<td>Assigned books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t like reading when teachers give us a book and then make us read every day.”</td>
<td>Time requirements for reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It really depends on the book, if I want to read it or not.”</td>
<td>Student choice of book</td>
<td>Student interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when I can choose my own book.”</td>
<td>Type of book - genre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I want to read books that interest me.”</td>
<td>Student interest level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I don’t like the topic, I will totally zone out.”</td>
<td>Annotation/ Writing</td>
<td>Perceived difficulty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Reading is boring.”</td>
<td>Breaking down concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I wish we could read without having to annotate so much.”</td>
<td>Analyzing books in depth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t understand why we have to look at every little detail in a book. Let’s just read it.”</td>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I only understand things when the teacher tells me what it means.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We always have to write afterwards and it’s too hard.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes I don’t even want to try because I know I won’t do a good job”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It takes too much time.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4  
*Data Sorted in Levels of Coding for Research Question Two: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>Open Coding</th>
<th>Axial Coding</th>
<th>Selective Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I like any kind of group activity. I hate working alone.</td>
<td>Group projects</td>
<td>Best Practices for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Google Classroom has all assignments in one place, so kids always know</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what they are supposed to do and then receive feedback immediately.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Using video clips, music, and Ted talks from youtube.com really helps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep their interest.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like to do projects where I get to be creative.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when we have seminars, so we can talk about things together.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when the teacher reads to me or when we read as a group.”</td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Teacher role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I understand everything better when the teacher reads to me.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I put students in learning communities, so they can teach each other.</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That way I can walk around and help guide them through the literature.”</td>
<td>Class discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when the teacher tells us the historical background before we</td>
<td>Teacher reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I really like when we get to have discussions about the book. It really</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helps me understand it better.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I hate when teachers just expect me to understand how to do something.”</td>
<td>Annotation skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I try to help them annotate to break down those difficult concepts, so</td>
<td>Breaking down concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they can understand the literature better.”</td>
<td>Scaffold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Since I have so many levels, I scaffold more challenging tasks.”</td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like when we can talk about the book as a class.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Differentiating the novels, activities, and tests helps reach more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students at different levels.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers and students perceived that best practices for engagement, the teacher’s role in instruction, and the delivery of literary material had the most significant impact on student engagement in English class.
Table 4.5
Data Sorted in Levels of Coding for Research Question Three: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>Open Coding</th>
<th>Axial Coding</th>
<th>Selective Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“They were definitely engaged. I would say the majority of students participated and enjoyed the activity.”</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>Students and teachers perceived Socratic Seminars as effective in increasing student interest, helping students making a connection with text, and teaching effective communication skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All students were active listeners, and no one was distracted by other work or by their phones.”</td>
<td>Active listeners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Like, the seminar really teaches you about yourself.”</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like hearing other people’s opinions.”</td>
<td>Teaches about oneself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They were able to relate to the themes of the novel and see why reading is important. I think when students can make connections to a book, the more likely they are to be engaged in the lesson.”</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I felt I was able to acquire more knowledge about the book this way.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The seminar was great! The students definitely showed growth in the way they communicated with each other and used quotes from the text to support their answers.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A lot of students who rarely speak out in class participated in the seminar, which is a win for me.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Seminars help me with being nervous.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It really helps us learn communication skills which we will need for our jobs.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category One

Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and focus group interviews, the following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the first question of this qualitative study: How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks? The themes found from the levels of coding are: perceived ability, student interest, and teacher choice.

**Perceived ability.** From the data collected from the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Rating Scale, students scored themselves on their perceptions of the abilities in school and in different subjects. They rated themselves on the statement, “I am a good English student.” Of the 30 participants, 60% agreed or kind of agreed they were a good English student. Furthermore, forty-three percent of students said they disagreed or kind of disagreed they were a good English student. However, their grades do not reflect their beliefs about their abilities. Additionally, 43% of the participants scored themselves low in self-efficacy in English, but 83% of students scored a B or higher as an average in their previous English courses.

According to the data collected from The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire, 43% of students felt successful when they read for English class. More than half of the participants do not feel a sense of accomplishment when reading for English class. During one of the focus group interviews, Student 10 said, “Reading is just too hard. I don’t understand, so I just get frustrated.” Of the 30 participants, 60% perceive English to be a difficult subject, but 83% of students made a B or higher as the average grade in their 9th and 10th grade English classes. In a focus group interview, three students agreed that they felt defeated in English classes because they felt they were not good writers. Student 5 said, “Sometimes I don’t even want to try because I know I won’t do a good job.”
**Student interest.** Throughout the focus group interviews and surveys, a common theme was how the perception of reading and English class affected students’ interest and engagement. Schlechty’s (2002) Student Engagement Continuum claimed that student engagement required commitment to an activity or a subject and that this occurred when they found relevance in the activity and valued what they were learning (Digamon & Cinches, 2017). In the focus group interviews, the phrase, “reading is boring,” occurred eight different times. Student 14 said, “It isn’t fun to read, so I don’t want to unless I have to.” During the focus group interview, students were asked the following question: “How often are you engaged in English class?” The answers to this question ranged from 50-96% of the time. The mean value of the responses was 80%. The participants associated their engagement percentages with the types of books read in class, the type of work they had to do, the teacher they had, or the fact that they did not like the subject area. Several students made comments regarding the time it took to read and complete a novel. Student 7 commented, “I have a lot of better things to do then sit for hours trying to read a book.”

When asked the question, “What would your ideal English class look and feel like,” five students claimed it would be a place where they did not have to read. Student 24 suggested watching more movies. Participant 9 said he preferred more hands on-activities. Participant 6 suggested that “English class should look and feel like a café where you sit around and talk about life.” Four different students suggested that teachers should offer more student choice regarding comes to reading material for the course. Student 9 said, “English class would be a whole lot better if we could learn about stuff we were actually interested in instead of that old stuff.”

**Teacher choice.** The surveys and focus group interviews indicated that teacher choice of reading material and instructional strategies greatly affect students’ perception of reading and
influences student engagement. During the focus group interviews, a particular recurrence was the pivotal role teachers play in student perceptions of reading and English courses. When students were asked about how past experiences affected how they felt about reading, 16 of the 30 participants accredited their feelings toward reading with their past experiences with teachers. Participant 17 said, “Teachers have always made me read what I am not interested in, so now I only read when I have to.” Several students said that teachers made them analyze books for meaning instead of allowing them to just enjoy reading. This was also mentioned in the students’ answers for the question, “What activities do you dislike in English class?” Many students attributed teachers and their choice of instructional strategies as a reason for low engagement and motivation. Of the students, fourteen mentioned they hated when teachers made them annotate a book to identify literary devices. Student 2 said, “How does she even know what he (the author) means. She doesn’t.” Other students mentioned they disliked when teachers assigned them to groups instead of allowing them to choose their own. A number of students mentioned they did not like the novels they had to read in class. In fact, seven students mentioned reading books they were not interested in during English classes. According to the data collected from student surveys, the majority of students prefer fiction, but a growing percentage of students prefer nonfiction texts. Seventeen of the students chose fiction, and eleven of the participants chose nonfiction. Two of the students stated they had no preference. During the focus group with teachers, both teachers stated they preferred fiction and taught more fiction in their English classes.

From the surveys administered to teachers, participants identified several ways they try to engage students during class. Teacher A said, “I try, at some point in the semester, to create activities to interest all different learning styles.” Teacher B said, “I think giving students
different choices on assignment helps motivate them to participate more often.” According to Student 3, teachers who are excited about the material make reading more engaging.

**Category Two**

Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and focus group interviews, the following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the second question of this qualitative study: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses? The themes found from the levels of coding are: best practices for increasing engagement, the teacher’s role in the classroom, and the delivery of literary material.

**Best practices for increasing engagement.** Teacher perception of what students need and their decisions regarding curriculum and instructional strategies have been regarded as important components in student engagement and achievement. According to the focus group interview, teachers believe that the most effective instructional strategies to engage students include: hands-on activities, group projects, learning communities, scaffolding, use of technology, and seminars. When students were asked the same question, during their focus group interview, students mentioned group activities, small group projects, debates, independent reading time, teacher-led discussions, and lectures. Teachers and students agree that group work, seminars, the use of technology and hands-on projects are effective instructional strategies to increase situational interest and student engagement in English classes.

During the focus group interviews with students, thirteen of the 15 participants agreed that group work is the best way to keep students engaged. Student 7 said, “I like any kind of group activity. I hate working alone.” Both teachers agreed that they believed group work
motivated students to complete assignments. Students and teachers both agreed that the use of technology engages students in assignments and literary tasks. Of the students, seven out of 15 said that they liked when they could complete projects that allowed them to use technology. Student 1 said, “I like when I get to use apps and tools online to complete a project. It allows me to be creative in a different way.” Both teachers agreed that being a one-to-one school, where each student has a device, helps motivate students to complete tasks and engages them in literary tasks. Teacher A said, “Google Classroom has all of the assignments in one place, so kids always know what they are supposed to do and then receive feedback immediately.” Teacher B said, “Using video clips, music, and TED Talks from youtube.com really helps keep their interest. In addition, according to the surveys and focus group interviews, discussions and seminars are perceived to be an effective instructional tool for engaging students in reading and communication. Student 2 said, “I like when we have seminars, so we can talk about things together.”

Teacher role. During the focus group interview, four of the students mentioned that they enjoyed when the teacher read to them. Several of the students agreed that lectures and teacher-led reading and discussions are effective at engaging students in the reading process, whereas many teachers perceive these concepts as poor instructional strategies. Student 4 said, “I like when the teacher reads to me or when we read as a group.” Of the fifteen participants, nine agreed that they preferred the teacher reading aloud over reading independently. Student 14 said, “I understand everything better when the teacher reads to me. Four of the students said they enjoyed when teachers lectured about the historical background or about the content of the literature. Student 2 said, “I like when the teacher tells us the historical background before we read.” During the focus group interview with teachers, both agreed that being a facilitator was a
better than lecturing. Teacher B stated “I put students in learning communities, so they can teach each other. That way I can walk around and help guide them through the literature.”

**Delivery of literary material.** According to the surveys and focus group interviews, students agree that how teachers deliver instruction affects their engagement in English courses. Three of the participants said that some teachers expected them to have prior knowledge of skills they did not have, which made them less motivated to complete assignments. Student 4 said, “I hate when teachers just expect me to understand how to do something.” In the survey provided to teachers, Teacher A said, “Since I have so many levels, I scaffold more challenging tasks.” Both teachers said they used scaffolding and chunking to help students learn how to annotate and understand literacy tasks. Teacher B said, “I try to help them annotate to break down those difficult concepts, so they can understand the literature better.” Both students and teachers agreed that student choice is a significant factor for student engagement. Teacher B said, “Differentiating the novels, activities, and tests helps reach more students at different levels.” In the student survey, seven of 30 students mentioned they would like more choices in what they read and how they learned the material. Student 19 stated, “I like when we get to do independent reading. I don’t mind reading when I get to choose my own book.” Student 21 stated “One time we got to choose any topic and create a documentary about it. That was one of my favorite things I have done in high school.” Discussing novels as a class and seminars were another common delivery method chosen by both teachers and students. Student 9 said, “I like when we talk about the book as a class.” Both teachers agree that seminars are effective at engaging students and helping them understand the relevance of literature.
Category Three

Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and focus group interviews, the following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the third question of this qualitative study: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes? The themes found from the levels of coding are: student engagement, connection with texts, and communication skills.

**Student engagement.** In the post-Seminar focus group with teachers, both teachers rated the lesson a 9 out of 10 and felt that it was a success at engaging students. Teacher A said, “They were definitely more engaged. I would say the majority of students participated and enjoyed the activity.” Teacher B said, “A lot of the students who rarely speak out in class participated in the seminar, which is a win for me.” Both teachers were impressed that the instructional strategy kept students off their phones and eliminated other distractions. When teachers were asked if they thought they were successful at creating situational interest, Teacher A said, “Yes, definitely. Most of the students were active and interested throughout the entire seminar. Teacher B said, “I thought it was amazing that all the students were listening, not on their phones, and talking about important and relevant issues. I wish class could be like this every day.” In the focus group with students, most students said they enjoyed the activity and learned more than they would have in a traditional setting. Student 3 said, “Everyone was interested in the topics and participated, so I think that is a good thing.” Thirteen of the 15 participants said they wanted to participate in another seminar. Student 15 said, “I think they will get better the more we do them, but I like it a lot better than writing essays.”
Connection with texts. When students were asked about their thoughts on the effectiveness of the lesson, four students said they enjoyed being allowed the freedom to voice their own opinions. One student said, “Like, the seminar really teachers you about yourself.” Seven students said they learned more about the book through participating in the seminar. Three students said they enjoyed hearing different opinions and perspectives. When students were asked if they learned something as a result of the lesson, all 15 students said they learned something as a result of participating in the seminar. Student 9 said, “I learned we are our own worst critics.” Student 11 added, “I learned that we all wear masks that we want other people to see.” Additionally, student 12 said, “I learned how perceptions lead us to an identity.” All 15 participants mentioned themes they had learned from the novel. Four students said it helped them understand why the book was important to read. When teachers were asked if students showed growth during the lesson, Teacher A said, “Yes, they were able to relate to the themes of the novel and see why reading is important. I think when students can make connections to a book, the more likely they are to be engaged in the lesson.”

Communication skills. After participating in the seminar lesson prepared by the teachers, students and teachers participated in a focus group interview. Teachers rated the lesson a 9 out of 10. The average rating given by students was an 8 out of 10. Most of students enjoyed the seminar. Nine students said they really enjoyed the activity. Thirteen of 15 said they would like to participate in another seminar. The two students who did not like the activity admitted they were shy and just needed more practice before they felt confident and comfortable to speak in front of the class. Student 5 said, “Everyone seemed really interested and participated.” Student 9 said he enjoyed the seminar because it helped with communication skills, which he felt was very important in helping them get a job. Teacher B added, “The seminar was great! The
students definitely showed growth in the way they communicated with each other and used quotes from the text to support their answers.” In the focus group interview, students were asked what activities they would like teachers to try in future lessons. Fourteen of the 15 said they would like to participate in more seminars. Student 7 said, “I want to do more seminars. It gives us more time to socialize and talk about our opinions.”

**Quantitative Data**

To gain a further understanding of the qualitative data, a focus on the correlation between intrinsic motivation and student achievement and perceived ability and student achievement supported the themes found through the coding process of the qualitative data. To analyze the correlation between intrinsic motivation and student academic achievement, calculations were performed on the intrinsic motivation construct of the *Adolescent Motivations for School Reading* and students’ average numeric grade in 9th and 10th grade English classes. Table 4.5 shows the results of the ANOVA test in a regression plot. Scrutinizing the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval, zero is not in the range. This implies that there seems to be a relationship between a student’s intrinsic motivation score and his/her grades in 9th and 10th grade English courses. This supports that students’ perception of reading affects their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks and influences their academic achievement.
Table 4.8

ANOVA test and regression graph for Intrinsic Motivation construct and numeric grade average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>441.4473404</td>
<td>441.4473</td>
<td>7.633476</td>
<td>0.0100093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1619.25266</td>
<td>57.83045</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>2060.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>t Stat</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>58.56781915</td>
<td>5.563301</td>
<td>5.96E-06</td>
<td>37.003152</td>
<td>80.1324863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Variable 1</td>
<td>43.61170213</td>
<td>2.762875</td>
<td>0.010009</td>
<td>11.27779698</td>
<td>75.94560728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze the correlation between perceived difficulty and student academic achievement, calculations were performed on the perceived difficulty construct of the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading and students’ average numeric grade in 9th and 10th grade English classes. Table 4.6 shows the results of the ANOVA test in a regression plot. In the regression plot, zero is in the range of the upper and lower 95% interval, which means that the X-coefficient could be 0. The p-value indicates there is approximately an 80% chance that the model is unreliable. The results do not seem to show a relationship between a student’s
perceived difficulty score and this/her grades in 9th and 10th grade English courses. This shows that there is not distinct relationship between perceived difficulty and student achievement.

Table 4.10

ANOVA test and regression graph for Perceived Difficulty construct and numeric grade average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
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<td>4.830175</td>
<td>4.830175</td>
<td>0.065785</td>
<td>0.79945126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2055.87</td>
<td>73.42392</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2060.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>t Stat</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Lower 95%</th>
<th>Upper 95%</th>
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<td>Intercept</td>
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Quantitative Summary

The quantitative data taken from the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire supports the data and themes found from the qualitative research. The results demonstrate that there does not seem to be a correlation between the participants’ perceived difficulty score and the grades they received in their 9th and 10th grade English classes. Although
the results of the questionnaire indicate students perceive the class to be difficult, it is not necessarily reflected in their grades. Furthermore, the results show that there seems to be a relationship between student motivation and student grades. The data reflects the qualitative findings that student motivation and interest is related to student performance. Students who scored higher grades in their English classes in 9th and 10th grade scored higher in the intrinsic motivation component of the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire. This supports the themes of student interest and student engagement.

Summary

Data for this study were collected through questionnaires, surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and artifacts. The study was qualitative but used quantitative data to support its themes. Reliability and validity were established by using instruments that had previously been established through empirical research, and by using triangulation, member checks, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement. The research examined if the use of the Socratic Seminar was effective at creating situational interest, thus increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classes. Additionally, the study analyzed how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level.

The coding process helped to focus data by identifying common themes for each research question. Several categories were found through the coding process for question one: How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks? During axial coding, the following themes were determined: perceived ability, student interest, and teacher choice of instructional strategies. It was determined that student perception affects
student engagement and motivation and influences their perspective of reading and English courses.

The same levels of coding were completed for question two: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses? During axial coding, the following themes were determined: best practices for increasing engagement, the teacher’s role in the classroom, and the delivery of literary material. For the second research question, it was determined that teachers and students share many similarities in what they perceive as effective instructional strategies, but students seem to enjoy teacher-led activities just as much as small group work. It also confirmed that both teachers and students found the seminar lesson effective at engaging students and increasing motivation.

Opening and axial coding were also completed for research question three: How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes? During axial coding, the following themes were determined: student engagement, connection with texts, and communication skills. For the third research question, it was determined that teachers and students perceive Socratic Seminars as an effective instructional strategy to increase student engagement in secondary English classes.

Research indicates that attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) suggested that creating an environment in which students are excited to participate and have a choice in what and how they learn creates situational interest. If teachers can foster students’ interest and help them sustain that interest over a long period of time, students will increase their intrinsic motivation, growth,
and achievement. Even when children lack the intrinsic motivation to read, a certain amount of autonomy and interest can be accomplished through extrinsic motivation, or situational interest. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), reading enjoyment and reading for interest are two fundamental aspects for creating situational interest to engage and motivate students to read (as cited in Retelsdoff et al. 2011). In Finn’s (1989) participation-identification model of school withdrawal, student engagement is defined as a student’s identification with school. Finn predicted that when students identified more with school, their participation would increase (as cited in Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009). Schlechty’s (2002) Student Engagement Continuum claimed that student engagement required commitment to an activity or a subject and that this occurred when they found relevance in the activity and valued what they were learning (Digamon & Cinches, 2017). Throughout this chapter, the findings from surveys, questionnaires, observations, and interviews were presented. Chapter 5 will provide further discussion of the results of the data, the implications and limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Summary of Study

For many students, the obstacle to learning and academic achievement is not cognitive capacity, but rather the student’s desire to learn (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; as cited in Paige, 2011). Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis (2013) found that students’ beliefs and attitudes play an important role in understanding their engagement with academic tasks and their achievement with those tasks. When students are motivated to learn, they become more enthusiastic, put forth more effort, concentrate on completing tasks, and willingly confront challenges (Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013). Because the Net Generation is acculturated to the use of technology, schools have a more arduous undertaking to motivate them to complete tasks they believe might not be significant to meeting their long-term goals. Increasing student motivation is key to increasing student achievement and success.

According to McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths and Stothard (2014), “Adolescents’ reading skills play a crucial role in their educational success as most curriculum subjects use text-based materials for study” (p. 546). During adolescence, when reading motivation declines, is ironically the time when reading becomes a basis for performance across all subject areas (Wolter, Denton, York, & Francis, 2013). It is at this point in their development that adolescents face a myriad of social and academic pressures, from a variety of external and internal sources. Lack of desire to read and impatience with reading can develop in little time reading texts and inadequate literacy acquisition (Paige, 2011). Furthermore, poor reading skills have a significant impact on students’ post-school opportunities (McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths, & Stothard, 2014). Motivating students to engage in the reading process is essential to building the critical thinking
skills and the communication skills required to be successful in all academic disciplines and to be competitive in the 21st-century.

According to Paige (2011), a student’s ability to read is key for success in all academic disciplines, as well as in post-secondary endeavors. Attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement. Tasks such as reading and writing require significant motivation. Students who are intrinsically motivated to read value and employ different strategies to engage with the text compared to students who lack reading motivation or are extrinsically motivated to read. In addition, Katzir, Lesaux, and Kim (2009) posited that reading self-concept correlated with a student’s reading comprehension skills. Students’ perceptions, in regard to their reading ability, directly influence their reading motivation and achievement.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze how students’ perceptions of reading affect their reading engagement and motivation and what instructional strategies teachers and students perceive to be most effective in increasing reading engagement and motivation at the secondary level. Prior empirical studies prove that students with poor reading skills are less likely to engage in the reading process and fall behind in academic endeavors. Although there is a substantial body of research investigating the relationship between reading and motivation at the elementary level, there are significantly fewer studies completed at the secondary level. Attitude toward reading is the greatest indicator of reading development and engagement, and during adolescence is when attitudes regarding reading and reading self-efficacy decline (Paige, 2011). Many students perceive reading as a passive activity, which negatively affects their engagement with the text and their willingness to put forth effort into comprehending the text (Metzger, 1998). Therefore, implementing strategies in which students become engaged with the
text is important in increasing reading comprehension and higher-level thinking skills, which improve academic achievement. This study explored how students’ perceptions of reading influence their reading engagement and reveal the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the interventions and strategies they view as being most beneficial in increasing student engagement and motivation in secondary English classrooms

**Statement of the Problem**

According to Willms (2003), disengaged students are considered to be the greatest challenge facing educators (as cited in Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Students have changed over the last 20 years as a result of their immersion in technology from a young age and require a different learning environment that considers their needs, goals, and learning preferences. Research indicates that student engagement declines when students enter middle school and further declines once they reach high school (Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012). Thus, challenging and motivating students to read, write, and communicate effectively in a high school English class has become an overwhelming and problematic task for teachers. Tasks such as reading and writing require significant motivation. Students must believe that engaging in the task is enjoyable and relevant in order to be motivated to set goals and put effort into reaching those goals. Researchers have focused on how different theories of motivation influence student performance, teacher performance, and instructional practices. Many educational psychologists argued that in order for learning to occur, there must be a reinforcement, or incentive for a change in behavior. This can be intrinsic or extrinsic, both of which can increase reading engagement. Furthermore, a student’s perception of his/her abilities also contributes to motivation. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (2009), reading motivation is the core predictor of reading performance (as cited in Reteldorf, Köller, & Möller, 2010).
Reading plays a paramount role in providing students with the skill set required to be autonomous and successful life-long learners. It also helps them communicate their ideas, both written and verbal (Ansari, 2010). Good readers are often good learners, who develop proficiency and have high levels of self-efficacy. Hence, investigations on reading motivation and engagement at the secondary level are needed to ascertain what methods of pedagogy are best at improving literacy skills, which will improve students’ academic achievement.

**Research Questions**

1. How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks?
2. To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses?
3. How do students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes?

**Discussion**

In order to answer the research questions, data were collected through questionnaires, surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and artifacts. Out of the students who were currently enrolled in 11th grade ELA, the first thirty students who turned in parental consent participated in the study. In addition, two 11th grade ELA teachers participated in the study. Students, in the study, were given the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale, The Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire, participated in a focus group interview, and were observed during their English class. Artifacts, such as grades in past English courses were used to correlate with surveys and questionnaires. All data collected were coded using open coding,
axial coding, and selective coding. Quantitative data were used to support that qualitative data. The following sections analyze each of the categories found throughout the data coding and analysis process.

**Category One**

Reading motivation and engagement play a significant role in student success in literacy skills and communication. When schools and teachers focus on engaging students in the reading process, they are increasing the likelihood of success in their academic endeavors. The first research question focused on student perception of reading and how it affects their motivation and engagement in secondary English classes.

Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and focus group interviews, the consensus is that student perception of reading does influence their motivation to participate in literary tasks and their engagement in English classes. The following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the first question of this qualitative study: How do students’ perceptions of reading influence their motivation and engagement in literacy tasks? The themes found from the levels of coding are: perceived ability, student interest, and teacher choice.

For the theme of perceived ability, the surveys, questionnaires, and focus group interviews show that student perceptions of their ability and their grades in English classes are not necessarily related. Wigfield and Eccles’s (2000) Expectancy Value Model recognized that achievement motivation is directly related to a person’s beliefs and attitudes toward a task. Researchers have found that one can predict motivation by monitoring a student’s perception of his/her competence to complete the task and the value he/she places on the task. Students’ attitudes are a function of their perception of their competency and ability. Therefore, when a
person expects success and values the activity, motivation is present. For the Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire, students scored themselves based on how successful they feel when they read for English class. Of the 30 participants, 43% of students felt successful when they read for English class. More than half of the participants do not feel a sense of accomplishment when reading for English class. This shows the relationship between motivation and student perception of self-efficacy. During the focus group interviews, a general consensus was that participants’ perception of reading was negative. Of the 30 participants, 60% perceive English to be a difficult subject. Many students said they lacked interest, and as a result, did not like English class. Perceived self-efficacy affects whether people think pessimistically or optimistically about their abilities and determines the amount of effort a person chooses to expend on certain tasks and what challenges they choose to undertake. A person’s efficacy beliefs are directly proportional to his/her confidence level. So, even though many students received good grades in their English classes, they view their ability as an English student as weak.

For the theme of student interest, the general consensus was that students often perceive reading as a tedious and time-consuming activity and that the choice of the reading material influences engagement. Authentic engagement is the goal of educators and considered the highest level of engagement because students find the activity personally meaningful and have the desire to complete the task and perform well. Engaged students become more intrinsically motivated and have a desire to set goals and achieve them. Increasing opportunities for students to become authentically engaged in a task increases the likelihood of student success and growth. In the focus group interviews, the phrase, “reading is boring,” occurred eight different times. Of the participants, four students suggested that teachers should offer more student choice regarding
reading material for the course. Student 9 said, “English class would be a whole lot better if we could learn about stuff we were actually interested in instead of that old stuff.” From the focus group interviews and surveys, it can be inferred that creating situational interest for students can increase their engagement in literary tasks.

Regarding teacher choice, several students mentioned the pivotal role teachers play in their perceptions of reading and English courses. When students were asked about how past experiences affected how they felt about reading, 16 of the 30 participants accredited their feelings toward reading with their past experiences with teachers. Many students mentioned that they did not like when teachers made them annotate texts for meaning. Many participants noted that the choice of reading material also affected their perception of reading and English class. Increasing engagement in reading and writing is essential in helping students develop their literacy skills and become more effective communicators. Emotional factors associated with reading influence reading fluency, comprehension, and enjoyment. Reading engagement also influences writing engagement. In order to increase student literacy skills, it is essential to determine what beliefs about reading need to be adjusted and provide students with opportunities to become engaged in the reading process.

Category Two

Reading plays a paramount role in providing students with the skill set required to be autonomous and successful life-long learners, and it helps them become better communicators and more equipped to articulate their ideas. Good readers are often good learners, who develop proficiency and have high levels of self-efficacy. Moreover, during adolescence, reading skills become a basis for performance across multiple areas of study and play a crucial role in academic success. Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations,
and focus group interviews, the following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the second question of this qualitative study: To what extent, if at all, are there differences in how teachers and students perceive what instructional strategies are best for improving student engagement in secondary English courses? The themes found from the levels of coding are: best practices for increasing engagement, the teacher’s role in the classroom, and the delivery of literary material.

In relation to best practices for increasing engagement, teachers and students agree that group work, seminars, the use of technology, and hands-on projects are effective instructional strategies to increase situational interest and student engagement in English classes. The Net Generation is considered a cohort of young people who have grown up in an environment in which they are constantly exposed to technology. These students tend to become bored in traditional settings and desire more hands-on, inquiry-based approaches to learning. Both teachers and students agree that the use of technology increases engagement and helps motivate students to complete more tasks. The consensus for teachers and students is that group work is the most effective instructional strategy to motivate students to complete literary tasks. Most of the participants stated they preferred small group settings over working individually. Both teachers and students agreed that giving students more choices for tasks and reading material helped create situational interest and increased motivation.

Regarding the teacher’s role in the classroom, both teachers, who participated in the study, said they perceived the best approach to instruction was to take on the role of facilitator. However, many students agreed that they enjoyed teacher-led reading and discussions over individual reading. The general consensus from students is that teachers greatly impact their engagement in the class. Several students noted they preferred teachers who were more excited
about the material and who read to them aloud. Several of the students agreed that lectures and
teacher-led reading and discussions are effective at engaging students in the reading process,
whereas many teachers perceive these concepts as poor instructional strategies.

In terms of delivery of literary material, students perceived the ways in which teachers
deliver instruction can affect their engagement in English courses. Both teachers and students
agreed that significant factor for student engagement. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) suggested
that creating an environment in which students are excited to participate and have a choice in
what and how they learn, creates situational interest. If teachers can hook students’ interest and
help them sustain that interest over a long period of time, they will increase their intrinsic
motivation, growth, and achievement. Even when children lack the intrinsic motivation to read,
a certain amount of autonomy and interest can be accomplished through extrinsic motivation, or
situational interest. Teachers said they scaffold and differentiate in order to meet the needs of
the students in their classrooms. According to the data collected from focus group interviews,
teachers and students perceive class discussions as effective tools at creating situational interest
and increasing engagement.

Category Three

Reading is a dynamic and complex process that varies from reader to reader and from
text to text. The relationship between the reader and the text is significant to increasing reading
skills and understanding deficits. Reading deeply and analytically is a skill that helps students
become more critical thinkers and creative problem solvers. Exposure to extended texts and
fiction books has been found to be significant indicator of reading skills. Being able to
comprehend and connect with complex texts helps students become aware of the themes and
messages intended by the author, so they can make meaning for themselves. The Socratic
Method is one of the most influential instructional strategies to engage students in the learning process and heighten critical thinking skills, inquiry, creativity, and literacy skills. Socratic seminars engage students in active learning and encourage students to work together, through systematic questioning, to discover truth and improve literacy skills.

Based on the data collected from the surveys, questionnaires, observations, and focus group interviews, the following three sections represent the themes from the coding process and fundamentally answer the third question of this qualitative study: To what extent, if at all, are there difference in how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of Socratic Seminars to increase situational interest and engagement in secondary English classes? The themes found from the levels of coding are: student engagement, connection with texts, and communication skills.

Regarding student engagement, students and teachers perceive seminars to be an effective instructional strategy to increase student engagement. Many students said they perceive reading as a passive activity, but that seminars make reading a more active process. Instead of listening to what the teacher has to say about the text, students become more responsible for their own learning. Additionally, because students are actively engaged in the material, it fosters more participation, which builds student confidence. Observations supported these perceptions. All students were active listening and discussing the novel. Both teachers were impressed that the instructional strategy kept students off their phones and eliminated other distractions. Thirteen of the 15 participants said they wanted to participate in another seminar.

In relation to the connection with the texts, most students agree that the seminar helped them connect to and find relevance in the literature. Seminars allow students to think about content, then explain, listen, and construct new knowledge in a social context. Seven students
said they learned more about the book through participating in the seminar. All participants said they learned something as a result of the seminar. In general, it was perceived that if students have more of a choice and voice in how they learn, then the more likely they are to stay engaged throughout the lesson. Seminars more effectively target student interests and prompt student motivators while adapting to individual learning needs. Both teachers agreed that the students showed growth because of the lesson. Students were able to find themes and support their ideas using support from the novel.

In terms of communication skills, student and teacher perceptions in the surveys and focus group interviews indicate that seminars greatly impact how effectively students can communicate. Effective communication skills are pertinent to being successful in the 21st century. The ability to write effectively and successfully express one’s ideas in a logical way is a prerequisite for most careers and occupations. Accordingly, reading skills are required in order to effectively communicate ideas. Several students mentioned they showed growth in the way they communicated with each other. Both teachers were impressed with the fact that the seminars encouraged even shy students to speak out. Some students mentioned they enjoyed the seminar because it helped with communication skills, which they believed was critical in helping them get a job.

Conclusions

This study investigated how student perception of reading impacts their engagement in literary tasks, how teachers and students perceive effective instructional strategies for increasing student engagement, and if Socratic Seminars are effective at increasing situational interest and student engagement in secondary English classes. While perceptions varied in response to the research questions, common perceptions included that student perception of reading and the
teacher’s choice of instructional strategies affects student engagement. Furthermore, students and teachers had similar perceptions about best practices for increasing student engagement, which included group work, the use of technology, discussion, and hands-on projects. Finally, students and teachers perceive that Socratic Seminars are effective tools for increasing student engagement. During the data coding process, several themes were identified: perceived difficulty, student interest, teacher’s choice of instructional strategies, best practices for increasing engagement, the teacher’s role in the classroom, the delivery of literary material, student engagement, connection with texts, and communication skills.

Based on surveys, questionnaires, and focus group interviews, students often have a negative perception of reading which affects their motivation and engagement in literary tasks. Certain best practices for student engagement should be included in secondary English classes to increase situational interest and help students receive the tools they will need to be successful. Engaging the Net Generation is a daunting task, especially since they prefer immediacy and are less likely to accept delayed gratification. Although they grew up in an age of media saturation, they often do not understand how the technology affects their literacy or communication skills. Because the Net Generation is acculturated to the use of technology, schools have a more arduous undertaking to motivate them to complete tasks they believe may be insignificant to meeting their long-term goals. Increasing student motivation is key to increasing student achievement and success. Motivating students to engage in the reading process is essential to building the critical thinking skills and the communication skills required to be successful in all academic disciplines and to be competitive in the 21st-century. Authentic instruction, such as the use of seminars, debates, and discussions engages students to be active learners and better
communicators. When students are more engaged in the task, the more likely they will to be motivated to pursue information and strengthen their literary skills.

**Implications**

Overall, this study indicated that students’ perception of reading has an impact on their interest and engagement in English classes. Teachers who incorporated instructional strategies that increased situational interest and gave students more choice were more effective at increasing student engagement. Literacy tasks require significant motivation and increasing engagement leads to increased motivation. Students who are intrinsically motivated to read value and employ different strategies to engage with the text compared to students who lack reading motivation or are extrinsically motivated to read. Instruction which engages students and gives them the opportunity to think critically is the key to student learning and growth.

Teachers play a pivotal role in how students perceive reading and English classes. Students want more freedom and choice in how they learn and what they learn about. Several of the students mentioned they did not enjoy reading the books chosen by their teachers. Teachers should be cognizant of their choices for reading materials and delivery of content. The incorporation of Socratic Seminars has been proven to increase student engagement by creating situational interest. When participating in seminars, students become more literate and reflective thinkers, not alone with content, but in a social context.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of this qualitative study is that all of the participants came from one public school in Southeast Tennessee. Studies conducted with a larger sample size would provide a more accurate global picture of how student perception of reading affects student engagement and motivation. Study participants were in eleventh grade. This limits the results of
the perceptions to a small number of teachers and students in the county to one grade level. Student demographics and other variables, such as socio-economic status, parent involvement, and home and school climate could affect student motivation and achievement.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

There are several recommendations that could be made for future studies. A similar qualitative study would be appropriate to complete at each level of high school English. Since there is limited research on the effects of reading motivation and reading engagement completed at the secondary level, more studies would be beneficial to help teachers find best practices to increase engagement. Other studies in which Socratic seminars could be tested to improve student engagement would be a significant way to determine the effectiveness of the method. Using a control group and experimental group to determine the effectiveness of the strategy would be advantageous.

Further studies in relation to this topic could involve principals, educational stakeholders, parents, and other grade-level and subject-area teachers. Future studies should incorporate participants from different geographic locations in order to ascertain a comparison in student perceptions and teacher instructional strategies.

**Summary**

Previous studies suggest that reading engagement and motivation is directly related to reading performance and achievement. However, few empirical studies have been completed at the secondary level. From this research, it is evident that more research should be completed to examine how to improve reading engagement and motivation in high school English classrooms to foster critical thinking skills and provide students with the skillset required to be successful in the 21st-century. This study proved that students’ perceptions regarding reading affects their
engagement and motivation in secondary English classes. Teachers and students agreed that certain instructional strategies, such as group work and seminars, were more effective at increasing situational interest and student engagement. Teachers play a significant role for student engagement in secondary English classrooms. When teachers give students more choices in reading material, students become more engaged and find relevance in the works. Seminars provide students an active role in reading and critical thinking. By employing this strategy, teachers create situational interest and increase student literary skills.
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can be motivating for struggling students and reluctant readers, and can also support
development of the multimodal literacy skills needed for school and workplace success in
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dystopian-literature-evolution-of-dystopian-literature-from-we-to-the-hunger-games


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Introductory Student and Teacher Survey
Introductory Student Survey

1. Have you liked English courses in high school? Why or why not?
2. Would you rather read fiction or nonfiction texts?
3. What are some of the activities you have enjoyed in your English classes?
4. What are your strengths in ELA classes?
5. What are your weaknesses in ELA classes?
6. What topics would you enjoy reading about?

Introductory Teacher Survey

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. What are some of the common issues you have in trying to engage students in English class?
3. What percentage of your students would you say are engaged daily in your class?
4. What strategies have you tried in the past in order to motivate students?
5. Which strategies would you say have been most successful at engaging students in 11th grade English class?
6. Which “best practice” strategy would you like to implement for research? What will this lesson look like and measure in terms of student growth?
Appendix B

Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale
### Children’s Perceived Academic Self-Efficacy subscale from The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES)
Jinks and Morgan (1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Really agree 1</th>
<th>Kind of agree 2</th>
<th>Kind of disagree 3</th>
<th>Really disagree 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I work hard in school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I could get the best grades in class if I tried enough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Most of my classmates like to do math because it is easy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I would get better grades if my teacher liked me better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Most of my classmates work harder on their homework than I do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I am a good science student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I will graduate from high school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I go to a good school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I always get good grades when I try hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Sometimes I think an assignment is easy when the other kids in class think it is hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I am a good social studies student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Adults who have good jobs probably were good students when they were kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. When I am old enough, I will go to college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I am one of the best students in my class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. No one cares if I do well in school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. My teacher thinks I am smart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. It is important to go to high school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. I am a good math student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. My classmates usually get better grades than I do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. What I learn in school is not important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. I usually understand my homework assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. I usually do not get good grades in math because it is too hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. It does not matter if I do well in school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Kids who get better grades than I do get more help from the teacher than I do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. I am a good reading student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. It is not hard for me to get good grades in school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. I am smart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. I will quit school as soon as I can.</td>
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Appendix C

Adolescent Motivations for School Reading Questionnaire
School Reading Questionnaire

Please read the following statements and select the response that best fits how YOU feel about reading for your Language Arts/Reading class this school year.

When answering the questions think about anything you read for Language Arts/Reading class this school year. This could include any of the following materials: fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, and Web sites.

For each question think about how similar the statement is to YOU and how YOU feel about reading for your Language Arts/Reading class this school year. Decide whether the statement is: a lot like you, somewhat like you, not like you or not at all like you.

Sample Questions

1. I enjoy playing sports for school.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me

2. I believe Language Arts/Reading class is important for my future.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me

Remember to answer the questions honestly based on your own experiences. There are no right or wrong answers. Your teachers, parents and friends will not see your answers.

1. I enjoy the challenge of reading for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me

2. I share my opinion about what I read for Language Arts/Reading class with my classmates.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me

3. I choose to do other things besides read for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me

4. I can figure out difficult words in reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Not
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
   - Like Me
5. I make fun of my classmates’ opinions about what they read for Language Arts/Reading class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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6. I believe I am a good reader for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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7. I enjoy finding new things to read for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
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<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td>Like Me</td>
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8. I respect my classmates’ opinions about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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9. I read as little as possible for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
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<th>A Lot</th>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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10. I feel successful when I read for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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11. I am good at reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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12. I enjoy it when reading materials for Language Arts/Reading make me think.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

13. I enjoy reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
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<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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14. I choose easy books to read for Language Arts/Reading class so I don't have to work hard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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</table>

15. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is boring to me.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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16. I try to convince my classmates that the reading for Language Arts/Reading class is a waste of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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</table>

17. I skip words when reading for Language Arts/Reading class.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td>Like Me</td>
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</table>

18. I respect other students’ comments about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td>Like Me</td>
<td>Like Me</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
19. I have a hard time recognizing words in books for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

20. I share what I learn from reading for Language Arts/Reading class with my classmates.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

21. I show interest in what my classmates read for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

22. Reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class are difficult to read.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

23. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is usually difficult.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

24. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is difficult for me.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

25. It is hard for me to understand reading materials for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

26. I keep what I learn from reading for Language Arts/Reading class to myself.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

27. I enjoy reading in my free time for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

28. I think I am a good reader for Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot

29. I make fun of other students’ comments about what they read in Language Arts/Reading class.
   - Not At All
   - Somewhat
   - A Lot
30. I think reading for Language Arts/Reading class is hard.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

31. I offer to help my classmates with reading for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

32. Reading for Language Arts/Reading class is a waste of time.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

33. I leave my classmates alone when they have problems reading for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

34. I am good at remembering words I read for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

35. I recognize words easily when I read for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

36. I make lots of mistakes reading for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

37. I keep my opinion about what I read for Language Arts/Reading class to myself.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

38. I am uninterested in what other students read for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

39. I avoid reading for Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me

40. I try to cheer my classmates up if they have problems with reading in Language Arts/Reading class.
   Not At All   Not   Somewhat   A Lot
   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me   Like Me
41. I like to read for Language Arts/Reading class.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not At All</th>
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<tr>
<td>Like Me</td>
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42. I think I can read the books in Language Arts/Reading class.

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<th>Not At All</th>
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Appendix D

Teacher and Student Focus Group Interview Questions
Focus Group Interview Questions

For Teachers:

1. What specific interventions and instructional strategies do you use to engage students in reading?
2. Have you used a seminar in class before? If so, what was the result? If not, what changes did you make to the lesson?
3. Did you feel like the Seminar was effective at engaging students in the reading process?
4. What percentage of your students would you say are intrinsically motivated to read?
5. Did the students show growth during the lesson? What form of assessment did you use to ascertain this?
6. Based on your perception, how would you rate this lesson? Were you able to create situational interest for the students in the class? What will you change for next time?

For Students:

1. How do you feel about reading? How often do you read for pleasure? What past experiences have you had that might affect your answer?
2. What are your thoughts on the lesson your teacher prepared for you today? Did you pay attention, were you interested in the topic, did you learn something as a result?
3. How often are you engaged in your English class? What activities do you enjoy? What activities do you dislike?
4. Based on your perception, how would you rate this lesson? What were the positives and negatives?
5. What would your ideal English class look like? What type of reading do you prefer: fiction or nonfiction? What activities would you like to participate in during future classes?
Appendix E

Approval from District
December 7, 2018

Ms. Cassie Worley,

We are pleased to inform you that your request for data from [redacted] Department of Education has been approved by the Research Approval Committee.

The research division of the Accountability and Research team will begin work on the data you have requested, taking into account the requested due date listed on your application, and will reach out to you through email once the request has been completed.

If you have any specific questions, please reach out to [redacted] with any questions and she can direct you to the most appropriate contact within our office.

We look forward to receiving a final copy of your findings, sent by email to [redacted] once your work is complete.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Director of Accountability and Research
Appendix F

Approval from School
Yes, you have my permission to move forward. It sounds like a great study. If you will write the letter for me, I will add it Letterhead and sign.
Appendix G

IRB Approval
Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2018 5:51 PM
To: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Cassie Worley IRB Application

This request is approved

In His service,

Gregory A. Casalenuovo, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, FNP-C
Professor of Nursing
Associate Director, Honors Program
Carson-Newman University
C-N Box 71883
Jefferson City, TN 37760

Office: Heritage Hall #11
Phones: (865) 471-3236, office; (865) 471-4574, fax

"It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss." Francis Chan
Appendix H

Consent Forms
Student Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Reading Motivation and Reading Engagement in High School English Courses

Principal Investigator:
Cassie Worley
Carson-Newman University
Email: caworley@cn.edu, cworley3@gmail.com

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Information and Purpose: The study for which you are being asked to participate in is a part of dissertation research that is focused on reading motivation and reading engagement in a high school setting. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what instructional strategies increase high school students’ motivation and engagement with reading, in order to increase literacy and communication skills for the dynamic culture of the 21st-century.

Your Participation in Study Procedures: Your participation in this study will consist of two questionnaires, a focused group interview, and reflection surveys. Your participation is strictly voluntary. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Participants will complete:
1. Morgan-Jinks Efficacy Scale (MJSES) (Jinks & Morgan, 1999) which was designed to ascertain information about student efficacy beliefs that might be related to school achievement.
2. Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire (AMSR) (Coddington, 2009). The AMSR measures six constructs of motivation in Reading/Language Arts class: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, prosocial interactions, avoidance, perceived difficulty, and antisocial interactions.
3. Focus group interview.
4. Classroom observations.
5. Surveys.

The duration of the study will be completed over a two-week period. Audio and video taping will be used throughout the research. These recording will be kept confidential. Each participant will be given a pseudonym for the duration of the research. All recorded material will be kept secure and private.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, the benefit of your participation is to contribute to helping teachers identify more effective teaching methods to increase literacy skills in order to prepare students for the demands of the 21st-century. This may assist current teachers with resources and tools to
implement in their classrooms. There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in the study.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses on the questionnaires, surveys, and interviews will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/pseudonyms for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Cassie Worley at caworley@cn.edu, or her supervisor, Dr. Barnes at tbarnes@cn.edu.

**Subject’s Understanding**

- I agree to participate in this study that I understand will be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the EdD degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Carson-Newman University.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that all data collected will be limited to this use or other research-related usage as authorized by the Carson-Newman University.
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final product.
- I am aware that all records will be kept confidential in the secure possession of the researcher.
- I acknowledge that the contact information of the researcher and her advisor have been made available to me along with a duplicate copy of this consent form.
- I understand that the data I will provide are not be used to evaluate my performance in my classes.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse repercussions.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue my participation in the study at any time.

Signature__________________________________________________________

Date_______________
Title of Study: Reading Motivation and Reading Engagement in High School English Classes

Description of the research and your child’s participation

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Cassie Worley, from Carson-Newman University. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what instructional strategies increase high school students’ motivation and engagement with reading, in order to increase literacy and communication skills for the dynamic culture of the 21st century.

Your child’s participation will involve:
1. Morgan-Jinks Efficacy Scale (MJSES) (Jinks & Morgan, 1999) which was designed to ascertain information about student efficacy beliefs that might be related to school achievement.
2. Adolescent Motivations for School Reading questionnaire (AMSR) (Coddington, 2009). The AMSR measures six constructs of motivation in Reading/Language Arts class: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, prosocial interactions, avoidance, perceived difficulty, and antisocial interactions.
3. Focus group interview.
4. Classroom observations.
5. Surveys.

The amount of time required for your child’s participation will be two weeks.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known risks associated with this research.

Potential benefits

There will be no direct benefit to your student for their participation in this study. However, the benefit of their participation is to contribute to helping teachers identify more effective teaching methods to increase literacy skills in order to prepare students for the demands of the 21st century. This may assist current teachers with resources and tools to implement in their classrooms.

Protection of confidentiality
Responses on the questionnaires, surveys, and interviews will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following: Assigning code names/pseudonyms for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents. Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor.

**Voluntary participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate or withdraw your child from the study at any time. Your child will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to allow your child to participate or to withdraw your child from this study.

**Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Cassie Worley at caworley@cn.edu or Dr. Tammy Barnes at tbarnes@cn.edu.

**Consent**

I have read this parental permission form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my permission for my child to participate in this study.

Participant’s signature_______________________________ Date:_________________

Child’s Name:_______________________________________

A copy of this parental permission form should be given to you.
Teacher Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Reading Motivation and Engagement in High School English Classes

INTRODUCTION: You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY: The study for which you are being asked to participate in is a part of dissertation research that is focused on reading motivation and reading engagement in a high school setting. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of what instructional strategies increase high school students’ motivation and engagement with reading, in order to increase literacy and communication skills for the dynamic culture of the 21st-century.

Participation will consist of implementing reading interventions, focus group interviews, classroom observations, and surveys.

RISKS: There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in the study.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY? There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, the benefit of your participation is to contribute to helping teachers identify more effective teaching methods to increase literacy skills in order to prepare students for the demands of the 21st-century. This may assist current teachers with resources and tools to implement in their classrooms.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses on the surveys and interviews will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:
- Assigning code names/pseudonyms for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone other than the research supervisor.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT: Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate or withdraw your child from the study at any time. Your child will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to allow your child to participate or to withdraw your child from this study.
CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?
Please contact me at caworley@cn.edu if you have questions about the study, any problems, unexpected physical or psychological discomforts, any injuries, or think that something unusual or unexpected is happening. The chair of this study may also be contacted:
   Dr. Tammy Barnes, Associate Professor of Education, Carson-Newman
Appendix I

Socratic Seminar Guidelines
SOCRATIC SEMINAR GUIDELINES

Before the Socratic Seminar

Read and prepare your text before the seminar using the critical reading process.

1. Make sure you understand your purpose for reading. Follow the teacher’s reading prompt, if provided.
2. Pre-read by previewing the text and determining how it is structured, thinking about any background information you already know or you discussed in class, and noticing the questions you have before you read.
3. Interact with the text so you read it closely.
   This includes:
   - Marking the text: 1
     1. Number the paragraphs
     2. Circle key terms
     3. Underline important parts of the text that are connected to your purpose for reading
   - Making annotations and/or taking notes:
     1. Write notes in the margins or use sticky notes to write your thoughts and questions
     2. Use Cornell notes, a dialectical journal, or some other form of notetaking to keep track of your thoughts, paying close attention to noting passages/paragraph numbers, page numbers, etc. You want to easily reference the text.
4. Extend beyond the text by writing several open-ended, higher-level questions that have no single right answer and will encourage discussion. Areas to consider for questions:
   - Ask “Why?” about the author’s choices in the text, about a character’s motivation, about a situation described in the text, etc.
   - Ask about viewpoint or perspectives (realist, pessimist, optimist, etc.)
   - Examine the title, or tone of the text, or connect to current issues, theme, etc.
   - Ask, “If the author were alive today, how would s/he feel about...?”
   - Ask questions that explore your own interpretation of the reading.
   - Ask about importance: “So what...?” “What does it matter that...?” “What does it mean that...?”

During the Seminar

Use all of your close reading to participate in a discussion that helps you understand the text at a deeper level. Be ready to discuss the text like the scholar you are!
1. Be prepared to participate and ask good questions. The quality of the seminar is diminished when participants speak without preparation.
2. Show respect for differing ideas, thoughts, and values--no put-downs or sarcasm.
3. Allow each speaker enough time to begin and finish his or her thoughts—don’t interrupt.
4. Involve others in the discussion, and ask others to elaborate on their responses (use “Academic Language Scripts”).

5. Build on what others say: ask questions to probe deeper, clarify, paraphrase and add, synthesize a variety of different views in your own summary.

   Examples:
   - Ask questions to probe deeper: “Juan makes me think of another point: why would the author include…?” or “Sonya, what makes you think that the author meant…?”
   - Clarify: “I think what Stephanie is trying to say is….” or “I’m not sure I understand what you are saying, Jeff. What is….?”
   - Paraphrase and add: “Lupe said that…. I agree with her and also think….”
   - Synthesize: “Based on the ideas from Tim, Shanequia, and Maya, it seems like we all think that the author is….”

6. Use your best active listening skills: nod, make eye contact, lean forward, provide feedback, and listen carefully to others.

7. Participate openly and keep your mind open to new ideas and possibilities.

8. Refer to the text often, and give evidence and examples to support your response. Example: “The author has clearly stated in line 22 that…”

9. Discuss the ideas of the text, not each other’s opinions or personal experiences.

10. Take notes about important points you want to remember or new questions you want to ask.

**After the Seminar**

Think about what you’ve learned as a result of participating in the Socratic seminar.

1. Summarize: Use writing to think about and summarize the content of the seminar, especially to capture new understandings of the text. Examples of Summary Questions/Prompts:
   - Based on this seminar, what are the most important points about this text?
   - How does my understanding of the text connect to other things I’m learning?
   - What major ideas do I better understand about this text after the seminar? There are three main ideas I’m taking away from this seminar…

2. Reflect: Use writing to think about and reflect on the process of the seminar--both your contribution and the group's process. Examples of Reflection Questions/Prompts:
   - How did I contribute to this discussion—what did I add to it?
   - What questions do I now have as a result of this seminar?
   - Who helped move the dialogue forward? How?
   - At what point did the seminar lapse into debate/discussion rather than dialogue? How did the group handle this?
   - Did anyone dominate the conversation? How did the group handle this?
   - What would I like to do differently as a participant the next time I am in a seminar?

3. Set Goals: Be prepared to set goals for improvement in the next seminar. Examples of Goal-setting Questions/Prompts:
   - What will I do differently to make the next seminar better?
   - Two things I will do in the next seminar to be a more active listener….
   - To be better prepared for the seminar, I will do ______________ with the text.
Appendix J

Teacher Created Lesson
The Great Gatsby Socratic Seminar Questions

Socratic Seminar is a method of student discussion where you and other classmates will sit in a circle discussing the novel The Great Gatsby. A question will be posed, and students will respond by agreeing or disagreeing with thoughtful opinion and textual evidence. Follow the directions carefully to prepare for this task. Grades will be based on the number of times (no fewer than four) you respond during the discussion, on the quality of your responses and on written preparation.

Tasks:

1. **Respond to the questions from the discussion question list in writing.** Find at least two quotations per question in the text to support your answers. Your answer should be at least a paragraph in length. Make sure you label your responses.
2. **Be prepared to be part of the discussion.** We will be doing this over a portion of 2 periods so be prepared for each question below. Questions will be drawn out of a basket randomly.

Grading:

40 pts = Written Preparation (Responses are due on day of Socratic Seminar)

60 pts = Spoken Portion- Contribute least 4 insightful comments during the seminar

- You will be graded on your responses AND on your participation in the discussion.
- When answering questions, keep in mind the thematic concepts, symbols, and other literary elements we have discussed.
- **If you are absent:** answer 6 of the questions to receive credit for the assignment. Your answers should be at least 1 page in length.

**Written Portion:** (40 points = 2 points per written response) **Respond to the following questions,** citing evidence from the novel as justification for your response. **The written portion is due the day of the seminar.**

**Discussion Portion:** (60 points) You should be prepared to discuss **ALL** of the questions below for the seminar.

**Oral Response Scoring System**

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1. Analyze Daisy’s character and make inferences as to why she doesn’t divorce Tom and marry Gatsby? Consider scenes form the novel and make your own inferences.

2. The two most significant men in Daisy Buchanan’s life are Tom and Gatsby. Compare and contrast the two men and include a discussion about what Daisy finds attractive in each.

3. Compare Tom to George (Wilson). What attributes does each possess? Would George have been able to transcend his class and circumstances to rise above the ashes? What is class structure like in America today? Can the poorest of the working poor leave their circumstances surrounding their situation? Why or why not?

4. Consider the last three paragraphs of the novel (which begin “And as I sat there brooding.”) These paragraphs speak of the unfulfilled longing of Gatsby. They also address the unfulfilled American dream. Compare Gatsby’s goals and desires with the desires that most Americans have.

5. The automobiles in The Great Gatsby are more than just a means of transportation. Examine the different automobiles and discuss what they could symbolize. Look at the many traffic accidents (not just the death scene). Examine the car accident after Gatsby’s party. How might it be similar to the final car accident? What kind of driver is Jordan and how does her last comment to Nick underscore her character?

6. What is Nick Carraway’s role in the novel? Consider Nick’s father’s advice in chapter one: “Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.” Does telling the story from Nick’s point of view make it more believable? Why or why not? Do you feel that Nick Carraway is a reliable narrator? Can we trust that his reporting in the story is unbiased? Is he objective? Does he make assumptions? What are his values, biases? Does social status or gender affect his opinions? Give some examples to back up your argument.

7. Gatsby spends five years dreaming about Daisy and being reunited with her. Describe Daisy the “colossal” illusion. How does his relationship with Daisy change during the story? Consider her actions at the end. As the driver of the death car, Daisy is complicit and a murderer, having struck and killed Myrtle Wilson. What allows her to retreat back into her world, unscathed by the events?

8. Perhaps we’re a bit too rough on Daisy. Both Daisy and Gatsby fell in love with a perception of the other. Recount all the narrative flashback scenes and examine each carefully. Consider Jordan’s perspective in chapter 4, Gatsby’s in chapter 6, and Nick’s own views, based on Gatsby’s stories, in chapter 8. Make inferences based on your perceptions of the Louisville encounters.

9. What is the significance of the Valley of the Ashes? What images does Fitzgerald use to describe the landscape? How does the setting seem to affect the people who live there? There is a remarkable contrast in the atmosphere of the “valley of the ashes” with the atmosphere of West Egg and East Egg as well as that of Manhattan.
10. At the end of the novel, only Tom and Daisy remain together, unscathed by the novels many tragedies and disappointments. Knowing what you do about these two characters, why do things turn out this way? What allows Tom and Daisy to escape much of the pain of what they contributed to? Nick shares his last, most recent meeting with Tom. Describe the meeting and make inferences.

11. Fitzgerald uses the symbolism of Dr. T.J. Eckleberg to comment on the moral, relations, and spiritual values of his day. Explain what the author has to say through the sign that presides over the valley of ashes. How does it reflect the morally corrupt values of the characters?

12. At the end of the novel when he leaves Gatsby for the last time. Nick says, “They’re a rotten crowd. You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.” And at the beginning of the novel, he asserts “Gatsby turned out all right at the end.” Explain how Nick can make such statements.

13. What does Mr. Gatz reveal about his son’s ambitions? What is the purpose of Gatsby’s father in the novel? What does he reveal about Gatsby and how does his reaction to Gatsby’s death compare to the reactions of the other characters? What was his relationship with Gatsby like?

14. Why is the novel entitled The Great Gatsby? He did have his flaws as well as many strengths. List those, compare, and comment on the significance of the title and Nick’s altering attitude toward him. Re-read the beginning of the book to make some significant claims. What made Gatsby great?

15. At the end of the novel, Nick states, “I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all - Tom, and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.” (p. 176) What does Nick mean by this? Does this change these characters’ statuses? Are the morals and attitudes of these characters associated with the West or East?

16. Compare when Nick is introduced to Tom and when Nick is introduced to Gatsby. What do Nick’s first encounters with the two show about their character? How does Fitzgerald’s description of Tom and Gatsby’s homes and lifestyles develop an understanding of society in the 1920s?

17. How does Gatsby represent the American dream? What does this suggest about the “American Dream” in the 1920’s? What seems to be the author’s message concerning the Dream as found in the last four paragraphs of the novel?

18. How does Tom represent a symbol more than a character in The Great Gatsby?

19. Examine the main and minor characters. How are they created and developed? What do their behaviors and interactions indicate about the world in which they inhabit? What conflict, internal and external, become pivotal for them?

20. How does Fitzgerald rely on imagery and figurative language to develop his setting and characters? How does he use symbolism to develop theme and conflict? Consider the use of colors (green, yellow, gray), names, and objects (the eyes of T.J. Eckleburg, the Valley of Ashes, the light at the end of the dock, Gatsby's house, etc.).
**Soeratic Seminar Grading Rubric**

Name: ____________________

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**Oral Response Scoring System**

- ✓ + = 20 points  Thoughtful Comment with quotes
- ✓ ✓ = 17 points  Thoughtful Comment, no quote
- ✓ - = 10 points  Repetitive or obvious statement
- *   = 15 points  Personal Connection/Real World Connection
- ^   = 20 points  Connection to another work of literature
Appendix K

Approval for Questionnaires
Permission to use The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES)

VM

Vicky Morgan <VMorgan@CSM.edu>

| Wed 10/24/2018, 11:56 AM |

Hi Cassie,

Congratulations on being to the point of writing your dissertation! Yes, you have permission to use the scale. Let me know if you get some interesting results!

Vicky Morgan, Ph.D.
Associate Dean Faculty Development
Director, Teaching and Learning Center
College of Saint Mary
7000 Mercy Rd
Omaha, NE 68106

Office phone: (402) 399-2675

CW

Good morning Dr. Morgan,

I am a doctoral candidate at Carson-Newman University writing my dissertation on reading motivation and engagement at the high school level, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Tammy Barnes, who can be reached at tbarnes@cn.edu.

Would you please consider giving me your permission to utilize the The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) as one of the instruments for my research? I will use the surveys only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities. In addition, I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument.

If these are acceptable terms, please reply to this email.

I appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,
Cassie Worley
Permission to use Motivations for Reading Questionnaire

Allan L. Wigfield <awigfiel@umd.edu>
Thu 10/18/2018, 9:46 AM
Hello Cassie - the measure is in the public domain now so you can use it.

Please see www.cori.umd.edu for information about the MRQ as well as some of our more recent measures of reading motivation that may be better for you to use.

Allan Wigfield

Cassie A Worley
Thu 10/18/2018, 9:33 AM
awigfiel@umd.edu
Good morning Dr. Wigfield,

I am a doctoral candidate at Carson-Newman University writing my dissertation on reading motivation and engagement at the high school level, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Tammy Barnes, who can be reached at tbarnes@cn.edu.

Would you please consider giving me your permission to utilize the MRQ as one of the instruments for my research? I will use the surveys only for my research study and will not sell or use it compensated or curriculum development activities. In addition, I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument.

If these are acceptable terms, please reply to this email.

I appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,
Cassie Worley

Get Outlook for iOS