Perceived gender differences in reading achievement and motivation

By

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Reading, Motivation, Gender

This Master of Teaching Research Project is a qualitative study on the topic of gender differences in reading achievement and motivation at the elementary school level. Particularly, I wanted to explore why female students have higher reading achievement than male students. The question guiding my research is: what kind of teaching strategies are teachers using to help students improve their reading? I used a series of questions to conduct face-to-face interviews with participants who consented to my study. The interviews were used as a means to gain insight into teachers’ attitudes, opinions, concerns, and aspirations as educators, to provide depth and analysis to my research study. The overarching themes of the findings are: teaching strategies, the role of home environment, gender differences or the lack thereof, and external challenges that affect students’ reading abilities. As a child, my parents provided me with the books and support I needed to enjoy reading and its therefore my intention to uncover methods of teaching that will motivate, support and enhance the reading experience of students in the elementary grades.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Research Study

Learning how to read effectively and reading for understanding are important goals teachers have for their students. It is reasonable that the ability of a student to comprehend what they are reading will impact how they retain content from the textbooks, novels, newspapers and magazines they have read. As I take on the responsibility of encouraging young students to develop a love for reading, I have come to understand through my experiences as a student and a beginning teacher that not all students have the same love and appreciation for reading. My aim is to focus on how a teacher can use teaching strategies that will help students become intrinsically motivated readers. I believe that a student who is intrinsically motivated to read will enjoy reading more and will experience greater reading achievement. My goal is to instill a love for reading where students want to read for the love of reading and gaining knowledge rather than reading for external rewards. I want to use this research project to enhance my teaching practices where I can help all my students retain and understand what they have read, whether it is a novel, science textbook or newspaper article. I have come to understand from my experiences volunteering in a private school and from practicum that students learn better when they are intrinsically motivated. I also now understand the importance of literacy education because being able to read effectively and comprehend what is read is essential for success in school, the job market and social life.

Background of the researcher

My research interest involves studying teaching methods that can help male students improve their literacy development. I also question the type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) boys need to become better readers and how teachers can foster motivation to meet the needs of
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these male students. My interest in this topic stems from my experiences in the public education system. In my elementary school years, I was an average reader. I struggled a lot during the Primary years with fluency, pronunciation and understanding vocabulary. I believe my challenges stemmed from coming from a family where my parents mostly spoke Urdu at home, although they were fluent in English.

When I reached high school, I actually started getting As in my course work for English at the academic level. One particular incident was a Grade 10 Final Exam on Romeo and Juliet. When I went to check my exam mark, to my surprise I got 100% on the exam! It wasn’t solely the writing I did well on; my teacher told me I had a great understanding of the play, Shakespearean language and literary devices and overall strong reading comprehension answers. After this final exam, it boosted my confidence and motivated me to strive harder to do well in Grades 11 and 12 English. I believe this was an example of extrinsic motivation, because I received high marks for quality work. However, I also believe intrinsic motivation played a role too because I was highly motivated not only to achieve high grades, but also to do well in my subsequent English classes because I enjoyed reading so much.

Although I never received the grades I wanted during elementary school, I did receive them in high school. I believe I found further success in high school because I challenged myself to improve my reading and writing to receive better grades. Although grades are an external motivator, my goal was to learn how to be a better reader and writer. Hence, I would like to examine the role of motivation in reading amongst elementary school-aged students, and particularly gender to see if there are differences between males and females in this age group. Whether there are differences or not, I want to learn strategies and teaching practices educators employ to increase the motivation of students to read and to improve their reading ability. I also
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feel that as a male teacher, I will be able to relate to male students and can use gender as a way to analyze the literature on literacy and motivation.

Some findings by Gambrell and Marinak (2010) show that females are doing better in reading assessments. I was in a Grade 8 class for practicum, and I clearly noticed the girls were getting better grades than the boys as I graded their non-fiction summaries. I graded several different pieces of writing they submitted to me. I have also noticed in other practicums during silent reading time, the female students enjoyed this time to read more than the male students. Also, my students submitted to me a culminating project on Data Management, where the female students were more elaborate in the parts of the assignment that required written answers.

Evidently, I did notice some of the boys were quite strong in their reading and writing skills, but the girls did better overall. I would like to study literacy achievement in boys, the differences between boys and girls when it comes to reading and use motivation as one of the factors to guide my research. I noticed that the girls put more effort into writing neatly (printing their letters clearly, avoiding messy marks from the eraser), used good paragraph structure and provided strong details to support arguments in their writing. Furthermore, I think it's important for me to also consider why girls tend to do better. Thus, as this research project progresses, I would also like to focus on gender differences.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to inform my teaching practice as a Language Arts and Literacy Educator. Within a North American (Canada and USA) and European context, I would like to study if there are gender differences in academic achievement in reading. My research project will examine if there are factors that lead to boys’ lower reading achievement in
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Comparison to girls and how a teacher can help students improve their literacy skills, particularly reading. I am also interested in the role motivation plays in reading, and if the motivation to read differs between elementary male and female students.

Further, if there are gender differences in reading levels, I want to find out if there are any ideas or strategies teachers have to bridge the gap between male and female students. This is important in the field of education to understand the differences between male and female students, especially for public schools because many school-aged children are educated in this institution. One of the factors that have been widely studied is the role of motivation in learning. Students who have a mastery goal orientation are willing to put forth the effort to master a skill, and have intrinsic motivation to do well, whereas students with a performance goal are motivated to simply finish a task or appear competent (Svinicki, 2005). Although this research illustrates the role of motivation in learning, I feel there is a gap in the research about the role of motivation and reading ability. While a teacher may try to improve a student’s vocabulary or fluency in reading, without the intrinsic motivation to read, students may never reach their full potential as literacy learners (Gambrell & Marinak, 2010).

I would like to research and explore issues on gender differences in reading achievement between boys and girls at the elementary school level. One US finding in 2006 found boys lag a year and half behind the typical female student, and female students consistently are better readers than male students at grades 4, 8, and 12 (Marinak, 2010). I would like to use motivation as a key term to study gender differences and boys lower reading achievement. Furthermore, I examined research and teaching strategies that were being implemented to improve reading achievement in boys, increase their motivation, and reduce the gender gap. Finally, even if a student does have intrinsic motivation for reading, I would like to research other factors that lead
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to lower reading achievement outcomes among male students.

Research Questions

The main research question guiding this study is: what kind of teaching strategies are teachers using to help students improve their reading? Using this main question as a starting point, I have several sub-questions to help guide my research:

• Do teachers notice a difference in reading ability between male students and female students?
• What kind of books do male students like to read? What type of books are female students interested in?
• Are there other factors that influence the motivation to read and the ability to read?
• What are teacher perceptions of gender differences in their students’ motivation and ability to read?
• What strategies do elementary teachers use to motivate their male students to read and increase their reading ability overall?

Using these research questions to guide the way, I wish to know the role of motivation and teacher practices to help support students enjoy reading and improve in their reading ability and comprehension.
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Chapter 2: Literature Review

Reading Motivation

A study from the United States by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that female students in grades 4, 8, and 12 consistently performed better than their male counterparts in reading achievement. They also found the typical male student lags a year and half behind the typical female student. The trend of elementary school girls performing better than boys suggests that gender is related to attitude and motivation amongst young readers (Gambrell and Marinak, 2010). There is also more evidence suggesting there has to be an improvement in teaching to help these boys. In the United States, according to the Education Alliance report, “the preponderance of available evidence suggests that there is a ‘crisis’ in the literacy achievement of boys” and more research is needed in order to help construct appropriate instructional strategies and interventions (Gambrell and Marinak, 2010). The Education Alliance also proposes that gender and motivation factors have to be considered when studying literacy achievement amongst elementary school students.

There is also further research on girls’ reading competency that describes them as being able to follow science instruction better than boys. A study that analyzed a school that participated in the Scientific Literacy Project (SLP) found that first grade girls tend to score significantly lower than boys on both science content and application, but that they match or even surpass the boys following science instruction (Patrick et al., 2009). This study suggested that boys like and score higher in science, but girls are still able to understand the vocabulary and science language better than boys, providing further evidence the importance of reading competency to succeed in other subjects. The evidence from Patrick’s article underscores Marina
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and Gambrell’s argument. The latter argue improvements in instructional delivery for boys are necessary and this has consequences because it affects boys’ ability to succeed in other subjects.

Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity of interest and desire to truly do something. A person is extrinsically motivated when they do an activity for an external purpose, such as a reward. When considering reading at the Primary level, intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of reading than extrinsic motivation, but often declines during the elementary school years (Guthrie et al., 2000, p. 331). Thus, it is important to consider teacher and classroom practices that illustrate the role of motivation in reading.

There is evidence suggesting that students’ intrinsic motivation is positively influenced when teachers foster a sense of autonomy and competence. For example, students who perceived the classroom as supportive, such as being given a choice in the learning task, were more likely to be intrinsically motivated to learn (Guthrie et al., 2000, p. 331). Using this information, a teacher can have a positive influence on a student’s intrinsic motivation to read by providing a wide selection of books and materials for students to choose from. Guthrie’s research also suggests that effective teaching practice, such as providing clear goals and choice, intrinsically motivate students (2000, p. 331). This is important to reading, because if a student understands why they are reading a certain book and they can gain knowledge from reading, it develops their sense of competence and intrinsically motivates them to read even more.

Gender differences

One difference between boys and girls at the elementary school level is the attitude students have towards reading. In a 1995 study, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) used a stratified national sample of 18,185 children in grades 1 through 6 and found that
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Girls had more favorable attitudes toward reading than boys at all grade levels in both recreational and academic reading. Also, they found positive attitudes toward reading for male students started to decline in the fourth grade (Gambrell and Marinak, 2010). Interestingly, Gambrell and Marinak cite other similar results from research almost ten years after this study. They found that girls enjoyed reading significantly more than boys. Differences were also seen in the types of books read, where boys reported liking comic and humorous books, girls enjoyed adventure books (Gambrell and Marinak, 2010). The findings show that girls enjoy reading more than boys and the types of books they read provide them with the academic language that helps them improve their reading and writing skills.

There is additional research that connects to Gambrell and Marinak’s study on gender differences when it comes to reading. There are several factors that influence why a boy might not be as motivated to read as a girl. Male students might not read as much due to peer pressure because it isn’t considered “cool” and lack of interesting reading materials to choose from (Merisuo-Storm, 2006, p. 113). Another gender difference in reading might be that male students like to read different genres. For example, boys prefer texts that have a purpose: getting information, making things, and helping others (Merisuo-Storm, 2006, p. 113). In other words, boys tend to enjoy non-fiction things to read more. Interestingly, Merisuo-Storm also introduced the idea of life reading – reading based on their interests and usually consists of short passages. Male students contrast school reading and life reading; school reading includes textbooks and novels they are not interested in. Boys would prefer, and are motivated to life read, which includes reading that involves media, video, television, music lyrics, Internet sites, and popular culture magazines (Merisuo-Storm, 2006, p. 113). This further shows the importance of bringing in relevant forms of reading to stimulate male interest in reading.
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Although my focus is on male students in elementary schools, there is interesting evidence on gender differences and motivation in reading in the high school setting. Among high school students in the UK, a study by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007, found a gender gap in educational attainment mainly due to differences between males and females in language and literacy skills, reflecting differences in performance in English and other subjects, which are literacy based (Atkinson, 2009).

Factors not related to motivation

Atkinson (2009) gathered information from teachers about reasons why male high school students are underachieving in reading and writing. They found that school-based practices either facilitate or inhibit a male student’s reading engagement and motivation. One teacher suggested the curriculum does not meet the needs of these students, “the curriculum doesn’t reflect the students’ needs and the thing is, you’re only allowed so many books on the National Curriculum which is unfortunately set by people who can read and read a lot, and probably like classic books. But they don’t live in an inner city area as a kid with limited literacy skills, so ... well that’s the way the education system works isn’t it. Certain people make the rules for people in a completely different set of circumstances” (Atkinson, 2009, p. 246). Thus, one reason suggested by the author is that the curriculum in the UK is not socio-culturally relevant.

Other problems indicated by the teachers in this study is that teachers need a voice in planning the curriculum, “what might be nice, once in a while, is while they were setting the National Curriculum, to come to see the English Coordinators and ask them what they think should be on there (Atkinson, 2009).” Furthermore, certain teachers are reported to have said the boys in their classrooms want more access to the library, and a wider range of materials such as
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comic books and ‘hard books’. According to Atkinson’s findings, teachers want to improve language instruction and boys want to improve, but need the curriculum to change.

Moving along, there is further evidence that elementary school male students do not enjoy reading as much as female students. Serafini (2013) states that many teachers and researchers on education blame boys themselves for not wanting to read. He argues that there has to be factors outside a child’s motivation that contribute to the gender gap between boys and girls. One documented challenge is that boys tend to spend less time reading than girls do in elementary school (Serafini, 2013).

There is further Canadian research, which suggests further educational reform is needed to help the reading problem with boys. For example, the issue of boys’ failure and under-achievement relative to girls on literacy benchmarked testing measures has generated considerable debate and concern in media and policy-making, identifying the source of the problem, and also advocating certain strategies to improve boys’ literacy skills (Martino and Kehler, 2007). Some areas that need to be addressed include the need for a more male-friendly curriculum, which should be inclusive of boys’ distinctive interests and learning needs; the need for more male teachers who, as a consequence of being male, are supposedly better equipped to relate to boys and to address their learning needs; and the need for single-sex classes in English where boys do not have to worry about girls and where teachers can more easily cater to boys’ interests and learning styles (Martino and Kehler, 2007). Thus, according to these researchers there have to be major changes in the way language education is delivered to male students at the elementary grade levels.
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Gender-based literacy reform

Researchers Kehler and Martino (2007) provide insights about literacy reform for male students in Canadian public schools. According to them, the discussion around male students’ underperforming in reading and writing compared to girls is because of the feminization of schools. Teachers in Ontario and Canada tried to accommodate for male students after identifying that female teachers dominated schools and the content of books and other texts were more suited for female students. Kehler and Martino do recognize the reason for this accommodation but suggest that a school being dominated by females is not the only factor. The consequence of attributing boys’ failure at literacy to the feminization of schooling, has resulted in advocating specific strategies to address this problem that ignore the impact of factors such as race relations, economic disadvantage, ethnicity, sexuality, and geographical location in terms of their capacity to impact on school performance (Kehler and Martino, 2007). Essentially, they argue that a curriculum reform should not solely be gender-based.

Kehler and Martino also support their stance that more male teachers can have a positive effect on male students’ learning. They state, “although boys, overall, do not achieve as well as girls in literacy, middle class boys are still doing better than working class girls” (Kehler and Martino, 2007). In Toronto, students from East Africa and the Caribbean are twice as likely to drop out of school as students from China, Korea, or Japan. This “gap in learning,” cannot be attributed to lack of ability, but is related to questions of access to cultural and financial resources needed to stimulate and support learning (Kehler and Martino, 2007). Although I am considering motivation and gender differences between male students, it is important for me to understand there are other factors outside of gender that contribute to male students’ lack of
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reading and writing skills compared to female students.

**Strategies suggested by the Government of Ontario**

There was a report published in 2004 by the Ontario Ministry of Education called ‘Me Read? No Way!’ that outlines important research and strategies that educators can use to help male students improve their reading and writing skills. The report mentions important facts that address the issue. Firstly, there is increasing evidence that gender is a significant factor in both choice of reading materials and reading achievement for boys and girls. Also, male students typically score lower than female students on standardized tests in language classes. Finally, high school dropout rates are higher for boys than for girls and boys are less likely than girls to go to university (Ministry of Education, 2004). Additionally, research relevant to Ontario, such as the EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) Test results also shows that female students do better than male students on the reading and writing parts of the test.

Research by Kylene Beers identifies three types of students who *can* read but don’t, which she calls *aliterate students*: the dormant reader, the uncommitted reader and the unmotivated reader (Ministry of Education, 2004). The dormant reader will say something like, “I’m too busy right now!” The uncommitted reader says, “I might be a reader someday.” Finally, the unmotivated reader, “I’m never gonna like it!” The ‘Me Read? No Way!’ report also suggests that as male students get older, they increasingly describe themselves as non-readers. Few have this attitude in their early schools years, but nearly fifty per cent describe themselves as non-readers by the time they enter secondary school (Ministry of Education, 2004). Undoubtedly, this Ontario report provides valuable insight into gender differences in literacy performance between male and female students in Canada. It also informs the education community about the role of
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attitudes and motivation students have about reading.

This 2004 Ontario Ministry of Education report identifies gender differences with respect to achievement and attitude, further elaborating my discussion of gender differences earlier in the literature review. In terms of attitude, boys take longer to read than girls, they read less, and do not comprehend expository texts as well as girls. When we consider attitude of male and female students, male students have lower estimates of their reading ability, they don’t leisure read as much, and a significant number of male students declare that they are not readers (Ministry of Education, 2004). These gender differences are important for me to consider as I continue with my research and identify strategies that can help improve male students’ reading achievement in elementary and secondary schools.

Furthermore, another report published in 2009 by the Government of Ontario, ‘Me Read? And how!’ responded to the first report that I mentioned. This report also describes the literature on male students’ lack of reading achievement and offers further strategies to help these students. Although there was a previous report, the current one addresses why the focus is still on male students. Within this document, statistics were taken from the ‘State of Learning in Canada’ report in 2008. From 2004 – 2005, more boys (13%) than girls (7.5%) exhibited “delayed development” in communication skills and the number of young males who are dropping out of school and do not pursue college or university education is a source of continuing concern because they are running their economic futures (Ministry of Education, 2009).

**Intrinsic Motivation**

It is also important to consider another aspect of motivation, intrinsic motivation as a factor to describe why male students are not as strong in reading as female students. Students
who are engaged readers are intrinsically motivated, and read regularly and enthusiastically for a variety of their own purposes. Research into engaged and motivated readers has found that these students read more than their less enthusiastic peers and attain higher levels of achievement in reading, perform better on standardized tests of reading and receive higher grades in school (Applegate and Applegate, 2010).

Moreover, these researchers attempted to answer this question in their research: Is motivation systematically related to gender and the inclination to respond thoughtfully to text? Instead of examining direct effects of gender or reading motivation, they examined gender effects through the lens of a mediating variable that is described as thoughtful response to text. A thoughtful response was the ability to link experience with the text to arrive at a logical conclusion, showing the child’s ability to use the text to support their answers on a twenty-item questionnaire. They found that it may be the inclination to approach narratives as thoughtful links between human experience and text that determines whether children of either gender feel impelled to engage in the activity of reading (Applegate and Applegate, 2010). The researchers here were able to find a common ground of motivation for both male and female students. Thus, this is one aspect where minimal gender difference exists.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Context

This research study explored the role of motivation and gender in reading ability amongst elementary school-aged male and female students. The research began with a review of the literature and then interviews were conducted with two teachers who are heavily involved in the literacy curriculum at their respective schools. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the factors behind male students’ lower reading achievement compared to those of female students, at the elementary school level. This qualitative study will explore the experiences of teachers trying to work within the boundaries of their school polices and curriculum to help improve male students’ literacy achievement.

Moreover, this exploratory research will examine the reasons why male students are not as motivated in the language arts as female students. One of the goals of the research is to discover teaching strategies and accommodations that can be used to help these students improve their reading. I also want to look at how teachers can motivate male students to enjoy reading. In addition, school board policies, EQAO results and the Ontario Curriculum for the Language Arts will be examined and analyzed as part of data collection. I will also interview elementary school teachers working for public school boards in Ontario and also private school teachers.

The setting of this research took place in one publicly funded elementary school and one private elementary school. These schools adopted Toronto District School Board procedures, so it is understood that specific teaching strategies, the EQAO test and government-based initiatives have been implemented.
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Participants

The goal of this research project was to help me learn more about teaching students, specifically elementary male students, and how to motivate them to read. I did this by exploring the concerns and practices of literacy teachers who were leads in their respective schools. I wanted to find out about their teaching and classroom practices, their attitudes about curriculum and policy, and how they improve or refine their practices related to delivering a reading program. The two teachers I chose were selected because they were willing to be involved with the study and discuss their teaching experience. They were current teachers, where one is a third year teacher at a private school and another had over ten years of experience teaching and currently employed by the Toronto District School Board. Both have a strong background in teaching Language Arts so I requested their involvement in my research. I identified these teachers from previous employment and practicum schools I was involved with.

The participants were contacted via telephone and email to attain their interest in being involved. The interviews took place in person, at their respective schools. Since this was a qualitative study, I wanted to have teachers who have been teaching for five years or more, because they would have stories to tell about their live experiences and provide insightful information (Cresswell, 2013). I was able to find only one participant with the five years of experience. These teachers were directly involved in improving school policies related to the reading and writing curriculum. Although one participant is a relatively new teacher, he had a strong background in Language Arts, with Additional Qualifications in ESL and Reading.

Procedure

I began my research by reviewing the literature on motivation and reading. I also looked at gender differences in reading motivation and attainment among elementary school students.
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Over the course of timespan of this project, I continued to read new articles and review the current ones I had used to make connections between my findings and the research. I did not find too many gaps in the literature, but I was not convinced that the research provided sufficient answers for teaching strategies and classroom practices to foster the motivation to read. Thus, this stimulated my interest to further delve in my topic.

As I continued my research and conducted the interviews, my research questions had to be slightly adapted, along with a slight change in the title of my MTRP. I started off wanting to look solely at why male students do not enjoy reading as much as female students, or why they are not as motivated. After conducting interviews and reading further literature, I realized that there were factors outside of gender that affected motivation.

After the literature review process, I collected the data by interviewing two elementary school teachers. I used semi-structured interviews to collect my data. I used a notebook or laptop to record the participants’ answers to my questions, their thoughts and feelings, discussed ideas and issues relating to some of the things they have been doing to help male students enjoy reading. I also used my iPhone to record the interview.

The interviews that I conducted consisted of the participants’ background information, teacher practices, and their beliefs relating to student motivation in reading. The questions that I asked reflected the literature available on reading, motivation and gender in the elementary classroom and also reflected further questions I felt were not answered in the literature. The interviews were conducted between October and December of 2014 and both were 30 minutes in length. Both interviews were in-person. An interview guide was used where I listed my interview questions, leaving enough space to write my answers in between each question (Cresswell, 2013, p. 164). Following the interviews, I transcribed the data and coded each transcript. I analyzed the
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transcripts after the coding process. The participants in my study did not ask to read the
transcripts.

Data Analysis

I interviewed the participants and asked questions that related to motivation to read, attitude towards reading and other factors that enhance or hinder reading motivation and reading achievement. I also divided up the written and audio-recorded interviews into relevant themes. Themes are broad units of information that consist of several codes that are collected to form a main idea about the research (Cresswell, 2013, p. 186). I determined the themes as I got answers from the two different participants.

Participant Consent and Ethical Implications

A consent form was provided to the participants, clearly outlining the purpose and objectives of the study and how I will use the data to support my research (Appendix A). A copy of the consent form was given to the participant, and I kept another copy for the records of my research. The researcher informed the participants that any findings will only be used for this study, and their privacy and anonymity is ensured.

I did not anticipate any major ethical issues. However, if there were ethical issues, I anticipated them to be around the extent to which the teachers discuss the academic performance of the students in their class. Thus, I, as the researcher, took the necessary precautions with the types of questions and information that was sought from the participants to ensure confidentiality of students. For example, I practiced good ethics by not asking to see mark books or student grades. I used pseudonyms for the individuals in my study to ensure the information in my data and analysis respects their anonymity and privacy.
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Limitations

The first limitation of this study is that I was only able to interview a small number of participants. It would have been useful if a larger number of educators were part of the sample, and were recruited across multiple school boards in Ontario. However, this would require a rigorous amount of time, funding and resources. This limitation made it difficult to generalize the research findings. Another limitation of the study is that male students themselves were not interviewed. It would be beneficial to get the perspectives from elementary school male students themselves to gain insight about why they do not perform as well as female students in reading and why they appear to be less motivated. Lastly, I wanted to organize a focused group discussion with my two participants, but was unable to because of time and location constraints. This would have allowed me to expand the data collection and elaborate the data analysis.
Chapter 4: Findings

For this study, I interviewed two teachers who are currently teaching in Toronto who have various experiences teaching the Ontario Language curriculum. I have used pseudonyms for the names of the participants to protect their identities. This chapter will provide an overview of the key findings from the interviews about my research topic: gender differences in motivation to read and reading achievement at the elementary school level. This chapter will also connect the themes to the literature review.

Background of Research Participants

Both of the teachers I interviewed had relevant experience teaching the Ontario Language Curriculum at the Primary and Junior levels. My participants were well informed and enthusiastic about teaching Language (Reading and Writing) and were actively involved in being curriculum leads for their respective schools. There were differences between the two participants since one is early in their career and the other is an experienced teacher.

Jack Jones:

Jack Jones is a young teacher who is currently working in his third year of his teaching career, in a private school in Toronto. I first met Jack when I was volunteering as a Teacher Assistant at the same school. I was particularly interested in interviewing him because I knew he had interesting ways of teaching the Language curriculum and was also pursuing his Masters degree in Literacy Education. I thought it would be good to interview someone who has only been teaching a few years. He is currently a Grade 3 homeroom teacher, teaching all core subjects of the Ontario Curriculum.
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Mary Statton

I met Mary Statton at one of the schools where I completed a practicum for my Master of Teaching degree. She has been teaching for over eleven years, two years overseas and is currently in the eighth year at an inner city TDSB School. She is currently teaching Primary and Junior ESL and Health to several classes. Throughout my practicum, I worked closely with Mary’s class because her students would join my homeroom for Language in the afternoon periods. I always questioned how to cater to different students’ learning needs, and I always received extensive help and resources from her. I know that she possessed a strong background with teaching English Language Learners (ELLs), so I felt with her many years of teaching and her literacy background, she would make a suitable research participant.

Key Findings and Connections to Literature

After reading, scanning and reviewing the interview transcripts, I identified certain codes that came up multiples times in my data. As I analyzed the codes I was able to come up with four key themes: teaching strategies, the role of home environment, gender differences or the lack thereof, and external challenges that affect students’ reading abilities/ the love of reading. I have described the themes and findings in the following sections.

Theme #1: Teaching Strategies

A significant component of my research was to find teaching strategies to motivate elementary school students to read. Although there is extensive research on motivation and learning, I felt there needed to be more on motivation and reading. From the data I collected I was able to gather enough information to present teaching strategies as a theme. This is something important for my pedagogy as a person who is about to embark upon a career educating students at the elementary level.
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Both teachers I interviewed, Jack and Mary, speak about the importance of engaging students in the reading process and fostering a sense of enjoyment and reading for pleasure. Jack talks about creating a sense of interest within his students:

In the beginning of the school year what I try to do is choose a book that is a bit above their level for reading out loud and that way it can create interest in terms of explaining a book that they themselves have never accessed. For example right now we’re reading ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’ and they seem to really like it. Especially at this young age when chocolate is such a big factor in their lives, and they really like chocolate. So I started off with “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’. It has a lot of places where I can have the teaching point, such as narratives, characters, plot, beginning, middle and end, different strategies (Jack, October 4, 2014).

Jack talks about finding books relevant to young students, as an initial teaching strategy in the beginning of the school year to motivate his students. He did so by connecting reading to something most kids enjoy – eating chocolate. This need for connecting with student interest was similarly expressed by Mary as she describes how she engages her students to read:

It’s kind of finding that initial tapping into what it is they want to read about, and feeling successful, and kind of celebrating that they’re reading, so that time we set aside for independent reading, for all students, is challenging to remain focused that long for 15 minutes (Mary, December 9, 2014).

Mary spoke about supporting interest during silent reading time. Although it does not relate to motivation, we see the similarity between Mary and Jack’s teaching practice as they try to build on a sense of interest to motivate their students. Mary’s idea of motivating students was a little different from Jack’s because most of her students at her current TDSB School have been ELLs, or as she referred to them as, ESL students. Here is her insight about motivating students to read:

The motivation piece is always…usually trying to do reading interviews or informal conversations to find their interest, in addition to selecting texts that I think they may have connections to based on what we’ve share in conversations. Certainly for my ESL group, I choose themes about identity, fitting in, and dueling identities (Mary December 9, 2014).
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We see from these pieces of data so far, both Mary and Jack’s teaching strategies involve creating interest in what the students read and making a connection to their lives. For Jack, he connected his Grade 3 students to reading by using chocolate as something they identify with. Mary on the other hand, tried to motivate her students to read by finding books or texts that relate to the students’ personal identities and newcomer experience.

Furthermore, Jack stated how he encourages his students to share what they have read in class, and this makes them feel good about what they have read:

A second way motivation comes is through ownership. If it’s something they can present and they can share, whenever they finish a piece of work if they can share it with others it gives them extra incentive and motivation. Or have their work put on the bulletin board or displayed, that’s another reason for them to be proud of their work and feel like their work has been given importance to (Jack, October 4, 2014).

Jack emphasized the importance of the social interaction aspect of reading, which gives the students incentive and makes them feel good about their work. Giving students a sense of ownership of their work, even for a task like reading, gives them confidence and fosters intrinsic motivation. This social interaction aspect is recognized in *Me Read? No Way!* where Myra Barrs suggests, ideas such as small-shared reading in groups, and reading in pairs is important for encouraging boys to read:

Some boys need to talk through their ideas before they understand what they have read and before they can express their ideas to effectively on paper. Failing to provide for this social component, for the opportunity to verbalize ideas before reading, can create a problem for some boys. This problem may be invisible to both the student and the teacher, but it can significantly hamper a boy’s ability to become a successful, fully engaged reader (Ministry of Education, 2004).

I support this strategy to help motivate male students to read, because it is supported by research and Jack used it too in his teaching practice.
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Both Jack and Mary mentioned the importance of creating a sense of interest in their students to motivate them to read. They also spoke about making the reading relevant to the students. The following are some strategies Mary outlined when I asked her to provide me with two teaching strategies to motivate students to read:

Reading conferences are important, especially building confidence in some of the emerging readers in the junior grades. This is a formal strategy. The informal one is through modeling and read alouds to get their interest. Doing prediction questions, introducing texts that make the connection for them. Prompting them in a direction that they can, so they can see if they’re interested in the topic (Mary, December 9, 2014).

The Me Read? No Way! document also draws upon work by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Phinnell, who suggest that teachers can make reading fun and engaging for students. A balanced reading and writing program in primary and junior grades should allow for read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading (Ministry of Education, 2014). These were some of the strategies outlined in this document and it appears that both Jack and Mary have been using research-supported strategies to motivate their students to read.

Accordingly, I was able to identify some strategies I feel that I would like to incorporate into my teaching practice. Both the participants provided strategies and insight I consider to be in line with Ontario initiatives to help male students enjoy reading and become stronger readers.

**Theme #2: Gender differences or the lack thereof**

*Motivation*

One of the main goals of this research was to learn about the gender differences in reading achievement between male and female students. According to Me Read? No Way! male students in Ontario are not doing as well as female students in literacy, at the elementary level. I found evidence from my participants who supported my sub-question regarding gender
differences in reading ability. Particularly, the findings I uncovered from Jack. On the other hand, I found evidence that did not support this research question – the findings I uncovered from Mary.

Having taught for only a few years, Jack felt he was not informed enough to answer questions relating to gender and the motivation to read, but he was willing to provide his insight about what he has experienced so far in his early career. Regarding the motivation to read, there were differences Jack noticed between his male and female students:

Is there a difference between boys and girls? It does seem that girls do prefer language or like to read more than boys. In most cases, but there’s obviously exceptions and girls do seem to participate more often (Jack, October 4, 2014).

Jack’s suggestions spoke about motivation here in terms of female students willing to participate more when it comes to reading in class. He noticed the difference in the level of interest amongst his students, and also recognized there are exceptions to his observations.

Mary spoke about motivating her students to read in terms of how she can engage them:

The boys I find the engagement, I don’t want to speak in stereotypes, but I would say…the non-fiction, they gravitate towards the non-fiction… But the boys, and the girls – I have a lot of reluctant girl readers as well, it’s finding that engagement piece or topic they can connect to (Mary, December 9, 2014).

As I have written in my notes, it was interesting to observe Mary’s reluctance to state that a gender difference exists. She acknowledged that boys lean towards reading non-fiction, but also mentioned that she has a lot of reluctant female readers too. Based on her views about gender differences that I was receiving, I was starting to think that her role as an ESL teacher played a factor in how she perceived gender differences. I say this because a lot of her focus is
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on things not related to motivation and gender, and this is something I will elaborate upon in the discussion of my research project.

Marinak and Gambrell (2010) comment on a motivation for reading questionnaire they were analyzing in their research, where grade four and five female students were reported to have higher motivation to read than their male counterparts. These male students felt that much of the things they like to read, were not recognized and supported by their school or families. Teachers and parents often considered reading narrowly, as “literature only” and failed to honor boys’ preferences for magazines and formulaic novels (Marinak and Gambrell, 2010). This is consistent with Mary and Jack’s points about the engagement aspect of reading. Finding materials for boys to connect with personally is important for motivating them to read.

Furthermore, to foster a sense of intrinsic motivation to read, Jack related the importance of allowing students to feel a sense of ownership:

Intrinsic motivation comes through ownership. If it’s something the students can present and they can share, whenever they finish a piece of work if they can share it with others it gives them extra incentive and motivation. Or have their work put on the bulletin board or displayed, that’s another reason for them to be proud of their work and feel like their work has been given importance to (Jack, October 4, 2014).

Jack recognized the importance of recognizing students and making them feel good about the things they read in class. This goes back to the social interaction piece of reading I mentioned earlier. Mary could not answer this question because she did not really consider motivation and gender as factors contributing to reading achievement.

Reading achievement

Another important aspect of my research circled around the question of gender
differences in reading achievement. Here is Jack’s response when I asked the question if female students have higher reading achievement than male students:

Since reading and writing is based in oral skills, it seems girls like to express their feelings verbally, as opposed to boys which may be more physically...That’s why it seems that some students, such as girls, prefer to read more than boys...You know, I can’t really say there’s a strict or there’s a clear difference between the two genders. But overall, it seems that girls seem to be more into reading books than boys would be. It seems although I don’t have any hard evidence to prove it (Jack, October 4, 2014).

According to this participant, reading and writing is based on oral skills, and since female students at the elementary level seem to express themselves verbally, they enjoy reading more and tend to achieve better results in reading and writing compared to male students. It was interesting to note that Jack described the achievement differences between his male and female students in terms of how they express themselves.

I asked the question about gender differences differently to Mary, because she disregarded gender as a factor. I asked her if she noticed a difference between male and female students in terms of reading achievement, instead of asking if females are stronger readers than males:

I haven’t necessarily looked for patterns. I look for individual students. because the kids are all individuals anyways. I find that my readers in the past, I have had very strong male and female readers. The ones that are strong, gender isn’t a factor as much. Overall I would say if I want to talk about reluctant readers, I would say boys are more reluctant and challenging to engage. But in terms of ability and attainment, no, the strengths are individual strengths (Mary, December 9, 2014).

This was an interesting piece of information I uncovered because Mary views her students as individuals, and not in terms of gender. Interestingly, she did mention that male students are more reluctant to read than female students. This provides a decent argument that
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although we can look the elementary students individually, gender does have some influence in the motivation to read and attitude towards reading.

Theme #3: Home environment

One important finding was the gap between male and female students in reading achievement was not solely due to gender differences and what their preferences are. Other factors such as home environment and parental involvement play a role. Jack and Mary were both able to speak to this issue:

I haven’t necessarily looked for patterns. I look for individual students, because the kids are all individuals anyways. For me the variable isn’t gender as much it’s home environment, and parental involvement. I would say parents have sacrificed a lot and value education on the most part. Despite being motivated and ready to learn, the students could be hungry and tired. (Mary, December 9, 2014).

Mary said that she focuses on what happens in terms of reading at home. Since many of her students were in fact ELLs, and their families were newcomers to Canada, this presented different challenges. The parents were not strong in their English literacy skills themselves, so they could not help their children read at home. Living in poverty played a factor too because some of her students came to class tired and hungry. This finding was one of my more surprising findings. I did not consider that factors related to home environment and parents’ attitudes could play a role in the reading performance of elementary school students. I learned from these findings that there are less visible factors to consider when it comes to reading and learning.

After analyzing this part of the interview with Mary, I went back to my transcript with Jack and noticed he also spoke of home environment and parental factors. I started to see the relevance of it because Jack works in a private school where parents are more involved, the
families are more affluent and there are high expectations for academic success. Jack discusses how the attitude of his school around academic success affected his students reading abilities:

There is a lot of importance placed on their education, homework, a lot of importance placed on the family’s academic achievement. Parents expect homework. (Jack, October 4, 2014).

As I mentioned earlier, Mary works in an Inner City school with the TDSB, and Jack works in a private school. I personally noticed the differences in the attitude of both parents and students at each school. My participants emphasized the home environment and parental factors influence the level of academic success of their children and I strongly agree with this. These factors further extended to the reading achievement of students at these schools, where the students in Jack’s schools had parents with high expectations, and parents are Mary’s school were struggling to navigate the school system.

**Theme #4: Challenges in delivering Literacy Education**

There were both internal and external factors that came up as I analyzed the interviews. Particularly, I found that many students who struggle with their reading try to hide this fact. Mary expressed her concern about this:

My greatest challenge, are the readers who are struggling and have been hiding they have been struggling. Especially in the junior grades I’ve seen as a homeroom teacher. What happens is, as you’re starting to read with them individually, you realize the child is struggling to read and they are hiding this fact, because they’re reluctant to be seen as someone who has difficulties reading. Those are the hardest students for me to work with because they’ve developed some sophisticated coping mechanisms and they’re more anxious…so there’s an emotional component as well (Mary, December 9, 2014).

This less visible challenge was something that Mary was facing with her students. To her, it is difficult to motivate students to read when she does not know some of the challenges they
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face – such as being reluctant readers and hiding their struggle to read. She also mentioned an emotional aspect to reading as well – these students who struggle are anxious and do not want to show their vulnerability, so they develop coping mechanisms to hide their feelings.

The last major finding I want to discuss are the challenges placed on teachers from school administration and government policy. Both participants indirectly suggest that this affects student learning. Interestingly, their responses came from the questions I asked about possible reading initiatives that were taking place at their respective schools. Jack talks about some of the problems in his school that affect the literacy education and in turn, the motivation of his students:

I feel motivation is affected by two things: Number one, it’s too easy or too difficult, and two they show no interest. If it’s too difficult because the literacy program at this school doesn’t give the students the necessary skills to move forward. Nor do we have the necessary support outside of the school such as remedial classes, or extra staff, reading recovery or ESL. And these are the ones that end up having the hardest time being motivated. If the work is too easy, we don’t have a specialized program to give them more challenging work so they can be intellectually stimulated (Jack, October 4, 2014).

Jack further spoke about the problems with school administration and teacher turnover as factors affecting the education of the students at the school. I found it interesting that an affluent school such as this one was having these sorts of problems, despite the high academic expectations and parental involvement. One of the things I learned was that many factors go into developing motivation to read, and this includes the practices that occur at school.

Mary had different ideas regarding factors that affect a students’ motivation to read:

With the recent influx of a variety of initiatives based on quantitative data, (EQAO) results. we’ve moved away from a holistic experience of literacy. It’s all been quantified, and I find with targeted instruction, for me, it’s all about, are you moving your students,
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are you assessing your students? I find it hard to instill the love of reading as a teacher when we’ve kind of taken out of the pleasure of reading (Mary, December 9, 2014).

The problems Mary had with the way the Language curriculum is evolving, she felt that students were not receiving an education that instills the love of reading. I got a sense from the interview, that she is a passionate reader herself, and is passionate about getting her students engaged in the reading process. However, curriculum policies and standardized testing constrained her ability to motivate her students to experience the joys of reading.

Summary of Findings

Conducting the interviews and analyzing the transcripts led to findings and insights I did not consider in the earlier stages of my research. Some of the most important things I found were that gender differences do exist, but other challenges such as home environment, individual differences and education policies also affect motivation and reading. It also seems that male and female students in elementary school grades both enjoy reading. The difference is that male students appear to be more reluctant readers and are not being engaged with reading material at school that suits their interests. The challenges that were of concern to Mary and Jack provide valuable information of the processes and factors involved in providing an effective and comprehensive reading experience to students at the Primary and Junior school level.
Chapter 5: Discussion

After going through the transcripts from these two interviews, looking for the common themes, and contemplating these four key findings, I am left with the final question of “how can teachers use the findings to help their students become better readers?” I feel this question can be answered in a variety of ways. For this reason, I would like to explain what these key findings mean and provide recommendations for classroom teachers to help encourage their students to read, especially the male students in elementary school. I will also discuss how the findings can be used to improve their teaching practice and what they can do to help their students enjoy reading.

Implications/Recommendations

While reflecting on the key findings from the research, I have learned several things that can impact the way teachers encourage their students to read, ways teachers can motivate their students to read, and teaching practices to help improve the reading experience of elementary school students. Based on my research, one of the things I feel the educational community can reflect upon is the effect of government and school board policy on individual subject areas. For example, the standardized testing in Ontario, the EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) test, and quantification of student learning is something Mary felt was taking away from the experience of reading for pleasure. This is something she believed had a negative effect on the reading experience of her ESL students.

Further, it is important for schools to be organized and have a consistent teaching staff every year. This is something that might be more of a problem in private schools according to Jack. The constant changing of staff and not having direct initiatives for literacy education is something that negatively impacted the reading experience for Jack’s students. Thus, I would...
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recommend that private schools have a strong literacy program in place to ensure that students receive a solid Language education.

In terms of teaching practice, I strongly recommend teachers and educators provide male students with texts they enjoy reading. In other words, male students need to be able to relate to the texts they are reading and make a personal connection to books, texts and other reading materials they have at school. Both Jack and Mary emphasized the importance of engaging and connecting students to reading on a personal level. Going back to the literature, consider Merisuo-Storm’s research that indicates that school reading should include textbooks and novels boys are interested in. For example, boys would prefer reading that involves media, video, television, music lyrics, Internet sites, and popular culture magazines.

On the other hand, it was surprising to see the difference in Jack and Mary’s responses to the interview questions. Jack had more of a focus on gender in relation to reading motivation, whereas Mary focused on the home environment and individual differences. This is important to me as researcher and educator because I was able to see the range of factors that go into fostering motivation to read and delivering a meaningful reading curriculum to Primary and Junior school students. Within the literature and even through my interviews, I found that female students enjoyed reading and had better attitudes towards reading than male students. However, I strongly recommend educators consider the role of home environment factors, such as parents not reading to their children and students not being prepared to learn, as things that contribute to both male and female students not being motivated to read.

Overall, I feel that it takes a collaborative effort to foster the love of reading in children. I recognize the importance of standardized testing and using curriculum expectations. Nonetheless, there needs to be flexibility in the curriculum for teachers to teach literacy in such a
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way that allows students to read for pleasure. Independent reading time, providing books and materials that appeal to all genders, and the social interaction aspect are all important factors for improving motivation to read and in turn achievement levels of both male and female students in the elementary grades.

Reflections/Limitations

The concepts of reading and motivation, as discussed in the literature review, have similarities and differences as evidenced by the ways the teachers in this research study have come to understand them. Both teachers acknowledged gender differences in reading motivation; however, Jack found this more of a factor than Mary. I would have to say, Jack’s views matched my research questions and literature. The information Mary provided me fitted the idea that male students are more reluctant than female readers, but there was a more of a focus on external factors such as home environment and readiness to learn. I felt this was a part of the limitations of this study. Perhaps I could have added to the literature review research related to factors outside of motivation affecting a student’s reading ability.

As I reflect on the research process of the MTRP, I believe I had strong research questions but could have expanded my literature review. I feel this way because my second participant surprised me with how much she differed from my ideas and the research on how gender and motivation affect reading achievement. I also think my research would have benefited from having more participants, or at least one more, because one interesting thing I have learned as a qualitative researcher is that every teacher is different and brings a different perspective to pedagogy and learning. Constraints such as timing and location played a role in being able to interview more participants. In the future I can organize my time better and try using online tools like Skype to conduct interview with more participants.
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Moving along, I would like to highlight the key things I have learned that will help me as a teacher. First, I now understand the importance of choosing relevant books and materials for my students to read, paying attention to the engagement piece is necessary to motivate students to read. Second, although gender differences in reading do exist, there are many other factors that explain motivation and reading achievement between male and female students. Next, from Mary, some teaching strategies I can use to understand my students’ reading needs is through conferencing to build confidence and doing read-alouds to stimulate interest. Lastly, an important teaching strategy is to get students involved in the reading process with their peers – a sense of ownership and social interaction play a big part to encourage and motivate young students to read.

I have also learned important lessons as a researcher. Firstly, I have learned to conduct interviews on time and give due diligence to writing solid research and interview questions, because this directly connects to the researcher’s data. I have also learned that each participant is different, especially teachers, and they come with their distinct academic and professional backgrounds. I was expecting Mary to give similar answers as Jack, but Mary’s responses challenged me to look at other factors that affect an elementary school students’ ability to read. Overall, I was able to see the uses and importance of conducting and using qualitative research.

Further study

Although my research study provided me with further insight to my research topic, there are still some questions I have regarding motivation and reading achievement. One question I have is related to read-alouds. Although research from the *Me Read? No Way!* document tells us this is a good reading strategy to use in a literacy classroom, would this social interactive strategy be effective for students who are shy? I think further research has to consider individual
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differences and teaching strategies at the individual level. The second question I have is, even if academic achievement in reading was equivalent, or near equivalent between male and female students, does this mean that elementary school male students are enjoying reading more? Future studies should continue to focus on the process (fostering a sense of intrinsic motivation and the love reading), rather than the product (read achievement or reading scores).
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References


Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ________________

Dear ___________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying _The role of Motivation in Literacy education at the Primary division for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My research supervisor is Dr. Clare Kosnik. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 40 minute interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: Jawad Junaid

Email: jjawad21@gmail.com

Research Supervisor’s Name: Clare Kosnik
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Email: clare.kosnik@utoronto.ca

Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by ______________________ (name of researcher) and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): ______________________________________

Date: ______________________
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Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. What do you teach?
2. How many years have you worked as a teacher? How many years have you been teaching at this school?
3. So I can get a better picture of your students, what are they generally like? (What is their life like outside of the classroom? What is their level of interest in the literacy program?)
4. Can you describe your the experiences you have teaching the reading curriculum?
5. How do you motivate kids to read, and do you notice a diff between boys and girls?
6. Do you notice female students performing better in reading and writing than male students? If so, what may be some explanations for this?
7. From your experiences as classroom teacher, have you noticed a difference in reading achievement between male and female elementary school students?
8. Do female students enjoy reading at school more than male students? Do you notice a difference in interest between male and female. Are there commonalities for them?
9. Which teaching practices can educators use to nurture intrinsic motivation for reading and writing to help male students improve their literacy skills? Can you describe one or tow teaching strategies to successfully motivate student. Can you describe them and why do you think they work well?
10. Have you implemented any school-wide level education policies that are focused on improving the reading skills of male students?
11. In your school do you and your colleagues focus on gender in reading? Does the librarian have resources that engage the boys? What are they? Do you find that boys/males tend to like reading on the computer more than in books? Do you notice this, and are they given to read for interest on the computer? How much choice are the students’ given to read what they want?
12. How much opportunity to read non-fiction that is not the textbook? How much do they get to read non-fiction? (Boys generally like non-fiction). Do you have time set aside for silent reading, and can the kids bring in what they want to read?
13. Why do you think there are differences? And how do you go about motivating them?
14. Have you faced any obstacles or challenges when teaching your students how to read? E.g., a story, novel, one-on-one.
15. What advice would you give to a beginning teacher looking to include teaching reading at the elementary school level?