



**STUDENT MOTIVATION TO READ IN CAREER TECHNICAL
EDUCATION: USING ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES TO
EXAMINE STUDENT MOTIVATION TO READ, A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors that motivate students to read in career technical education (CTE). This study examines the various purposes students have to read and their previous experience and history with reading. The methodology of this study uses a qualitative case study approach. The data for this study was collected through focus group interviews, as well as one-on-one interviews. The interviews were analyzed using the theoretical framework, which consists of disciplinary literacy, motivational theories, and adolescent psychology theories. The findings of this study consisted of four major themes: purposes to read, writing to escape, previous experiences with reading, and characteristics of text. Purposes for reading include importance to the students' career, personal interest in the topic, reading to apply, relevancy to life, and reading to escape. Writing to escape explores students' use of writing to escape the pressures of everyday life, as well as expressions of creativity. Previous experience with reading examines the literacy culture that each case grew up with, as well as their evolving attitude towards reading. Text characteristics outline the various aspect of text that motivate the student to either read or not read.

This study also applies the theories of Ruthellen Josselson's theory of identity, Robert Kegan's theory of holding environments, Sigmund Freud's theory of mechanisms of defense, and Erik Erikson's eight stages of crisis. By examining each case through the lenses of these different theorists, other contributing factors to the motivation of the two cases to read become evident. This study concludes that there is more to students' motivation to read than is currently being researched and taken into account in classroom teaching practice.

Implications of this study for further research include applying adult learning

theories to literacy implementation practices in classrooms in order to increase student motivation and provide students with a compelling reason to read. This study also questions the approach that current literacy practices use to resolve literacy issues, suggesting a reactive approach versus a proactive approach.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elizabeth van der Mandele was born in Newnan, Georgia to Deede and Lance van der Mandele. She has an older sister named Taylor and a younger brother named Powers. She moved several times growing up, eventually leading her to Hamilton, NY where she attended high school and where her parents still live. She is very close with her family and they are very supportive of her.

In high school, she was very involved in volunteer work and theater. In her free time, she sketched, painted, and practiced music. She competed in dancing competitions and played varsity volleyball and competed in track & field events. She loves to spend time with her friends and family, and loves to travel. She has had the opportunity to backpack around Europe, sail from Tahiti to Hawaii, and has lived in several different cities.

Elizabeth often struggled with reading and comprehension and often found she was unmotivated to read for school; however she loves to read fiction novels in her free time. Her experience with reading has been the driving force behind her interest in literacy and student motivation to read.

Elizabeth attended Cornell University as an undergraduate majoring in general studies with a minor in education. She did not find her passion for literacy until her senior year of college when she started working with Dr. Travis Park.

During her work with Dr. Park, she was able to work on published papers, conduct professional development workshops, and work on a 4-year research grant. Her work with Dr. Park has helped her develop a love and deep interest in literacy.

When she graduates she plans to continue working in the field of literacy and hopes to continue contributing to the field and one day improve literacy in secondary schools.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving family; mom, dad, Taylor and Powers
and my dog, Freckles and kitten, Eloise Walter.

I also would like to dedicate this thesis to Dr. Travis Park, who made all of this
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction to Study

This study was designed to explore the reasons why some students in career and technical education (CTE) lack the motivation to read, either in general or within CTE courses. Using a case study design, two particular cases were explored in-depth to generate reasons for students' lack of motivation, which is rarely addressed in current literature in regard to reading in CTE. The study examined a 9th grade student and an 11th grade student, both enrolled in CTE classes. Investigative interviews were used to explore events in the students' past reading history that may contribute to current struggles with reading, their current attitudes toward and their specific challenges with reading. Through these interviews, the researcher identified possible factors contributing to student motivation to read in CTE and provided other possible areas to research to help educators prevent and/or resolve students' challenges with reading.

Background of Study

Adolescent academic literacy. Recent research shows that the literacy rates of high school students have been decreasing since 1971, despite interventions implemented in school systems (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). Although some improvements have been shown among early childhood education, little has been done to address adolescent literacy among students in secondary education (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy). Furthermore, reading scores of eighth graders in the United States are much lower than those of other developed industrial countries (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy). This becomes an even greater issue for students who continue

on to post-secondary education. Studies show that students are ill-prepared to handle the large amount of reading in their coursework during their freshman year (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy). This lack of preparation in reading not only impacts the students, but the economy as well. It is estimated that private industries have to spend around \$3.1 billion dollars a year to improve the writing skills of their entry-level workers (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy). However, in the last decade, there has been some increase in focus on adolescent literacy to improve literacy scores in schools. Even with the increase of efforts, there still seems to be a minimal return on the application of blanket strategies, where teachers apply one type of intervention to the entire class regardless of their individual needs. Blanket strategies tend to be the most prevalent instructional method used by content area teachers to improve literacy scores.

Teachers are being held accountable for their students' scores, as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act, despite the fact that many teachers are not well-equipped to adequately address the literacy issues of their students. A study found that less than 40% of content area teachers in agricultural sciences, one area of CTE, have completed a content area reading course (Park and Osborne, 2007).

Currently, literacy intervention programs are comprised of a combination of literacy strategies that are applied to large groups of students who seem to struggle with reading and writing, yet the reasons for why these students struggle with reading and writing often vary dramatically from one student to the next. So while these interventions may help some students, many other students are not benefitting from the blanket approach to reading interventions, or the underlying issues causing their personal struggle with literacy are not being identified, addressed, and/or resolved. In the study conducted by Park, Santamaria, van der Mandele, Keene, & Taylor (2010), the blanket approach applied to over 1,500 CTE students in CTE schools across New

York State showed minimal results in improving students' vocabulary and comprehension skills. Currently, teachers tend to approach struggling readers in their class using reactive blanket approaches that do not always meet the students' needs by figuring out *why* their students lack motivation to read or *why* they have a negative attitude towards reading. This problem may be further complicated by and implicated in cycles of student failure: a student struggles with reading and therefore does not read, which hinders their acquisition of reading skills, leading to less motivation to read in the future. It is not just in the academic context that being illiterate can have a detrimental effect on students; it also impacts their future role in society and their ability to succeed.

Empowerment. Literacy is a form of empowerment and can help students make educated decisions and better life choices (Friedman, 2005). Greenleaf and Hinchman (2009) posited that being illiterate is a human rights issue and that, if a society allows illiteracy to persist, it will negatively impact the nation's future participation in the global economy, as well as the country's stability. As more high school students graduate with inadequate literacy skills, this becomes an area of concern; literacy plays a critical and significant role in so many career and life events.

Disciplinary literacy pedagogy can act as a form of socially just/social justice pedagogy (Moje, 2007). In addition to social justice pedagogy, which is teaching with the anticipated outcome of social justice, or the ability for students to be socially and economically successful, socially just pedagogy gives students the opportunity to question, challenge, and reconstruct knowledge (Moje, 2007). This co-construction and reconstruction of knowledge is especially important for a dynamic field, such as CTE. Many of the students in CTE courses are planning on pursuing careers in CTE related fields, so it is imperative that they have the literacy skills necessary to succeed. Literacy greatly contributes to adolescents' socioeconomic mobility, access

to higher education and civic participation (Greenleaf et al., 2001). While being literate may help CTE students perform better in their future career, reading is also a crucial part of their identity formation, which is such a large part of adolescence.

Identity formation. Knoester (2009) found that many students do not necessarily read based on their ability but for many reasons regarding their self-identity and interest. Not attending to concerns of identity can have dire consequence. In another study, reading helps adolescents form their identity and expand their self-awareness (Greenleaf et al., 2001). Many of the students in CTE are in their teen years where identity formation is important. Literacy can also act as a form of self-expression for students. Many students use journaling as a way to express their feelings and reflect upon their thoughts and feelings. Students also use reading as a way to escape the storms and stresses of lives. They read books that they can relate to, which can help them better resolve personal issues (Davis, 2010; Park et al., 2010).

Career success. Many students in CTE understand that reading is necessary to succeed in their future career. CTE involves reading that is technical and specific to a discipline. Therefore, it is critical that students have the necessary literacy skills in order to succeed, not only in a CTE course, but also in their future career. Many of these students choose CTE as an elective to avoid the large amounts of reading found in other high school courses and many of the students opt to enroll in them because of their hands-on focus and lack of assigned reading. While they are able to escape reading, students often lack the skills and motivation they need in order to successfully perform career-related tasks.

Motivation is a leading factor in preventing resistant readers from developing their literacy skills and actually reading for pleasure, learning, and/or self-improvement. In order for these students to be able to apply their skills and knowledge in the workforce, it is crucial that educators find means to motivate them so that they

learn the skills necessary to be a productive employee and contribute as a citizen in our democratic process.

Specific context looks at CTE as a confluence of all these factors. Not only will increasing students' motivation to read raise students' test scores, increased motivation will help prepare students to make better decisions in life, as well as be an active participant in society and succeed in their chosen career field.

The following two case studies, while exhibiting findings that align with previous knowledge, have many lessons that may shed light on other factors contributing to their motivation to read, as well as provide some basis for new approaches to addressing issues of adolescent literacy.

Problem statement

Reading in CTE tends to involve text that is very technical and discipline specific. Students recognize that reading is critical for success in their CTE courses and for gaining knowledge in their chosen CTE field. Even with this recognition, however, many students still lack the motivation to read or struggle to comprehend the text in that class. One of the ways that teachers currently attempt to address the challenges with these students is to implement literacy strategies in their curriculum, using a blanket approach. However, the blanket approach still does not seem to work for many students, leaving them to continue to struggle with reading and jeopardizing their future success in their field.

- What are the other factors that are contributing to the students' engagement with reading?
- What are some other possible solutions to improve the literacy skills and motivation of students who are reluctant readers?
- How can educators and researchers address these factors in future research and interventions?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore factors outside of instructional practices that may be affecting the engagement level of students who lack motivation to read. Through this study, findings evolved that identify other possible contributing factors that are not part of instructional practice, such as pedagogy and the classroom structure, that affect students' motivation to read and should be researched further to help educators and researchers continue to prevent and to resolve students' challenges with reading and improve their literacy skills.

Objectives of this Study

The following research questions were designed to address the objectives of this study:

1. Why are students in CTE not motivated to read?
2. What are the reasons/purposes that students in CTE read?
3. How do students in CTE view reading differently in their CTE class compared to their other content area classes?
4. Do students in CTE think reading is important for their future career?
5. When did students in CTE first begin to struggle with reading?
6. When students in CTE struggle with reading, how does it affect their self esteem?
7. What are students' previous experiences with reading?

Operational Definitions

CTE. Career and technical education is an educational system where academic subject matters are taught with relevance to the real world. In these classes, students are taught employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics. In addition to job preparation for students who plan to go straight into the workforce after high school, the CTE curriculum provides career pathways that link secondary and

postsecondary education for those students who wish to continue on to college (ACTE, 2010).

Struggling readers. Struggling readers in this study were defined as readers who are disengaged with the text because they struggle with literacy skills (Lenters, 2006). Because of their struggles or other contributing factors, they also lack the motivation to read. These students scored at least two grade levels below their current chronologic grade level on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT) (MacGinitie MacGinitie, Maria, Dreyer, & Hughes, 2006) and low on the Motivation to Read Questionnaire (MRQ) (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, 2004) survey.

Resistant readers. Resistant readers in this study were defined as students who have the skills to read and comprehend and understand the text, but who choose not to (Lenters, 2006). These students scored at or above grade level on the GMRT test, but low on the MRQ survey.

Motivation. Motivation is defined by the students desire to read inside or outside of school. The factors effecting their motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. For this study, factors affecting their intrinsic motivation to read were of greater focus.

Disciplinary literacy. Disciplinary literacy was defined in this study as the students' ability to comprehend and understand the text that is specific to their CTE field. Disciplinary literacy is often technical reading that is specific to a career field and is vocabulary-dense with terms and concepts also specific to that field.

Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ). Motivation to read was assessed with the Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, 2004). The MRQ was developed by John Guthrie, an expert in reading motivation, and adapted through previous studies (Park & Osborne, 2007) to reflect language more appropriate for high school students.

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT). The student's reading

comprehension was assessed using the GMRT (MacGinitie et al., 2006) for Grades 7-9. The GMRT is a norm-referenced test that measures comprehension and vocabulary; using the student's combined vocabulary and comprehension scores, the student was identified as either a struggling or resistant reader.

Critical incidences. Critical incidences were defined as key events in the student's life that have impacted their developmental growth and/or their attitude toward reading. These events were specific events that occurred anytime in the student's life before the current date.

Career centers. In this study, career centers were defined as educational schools whose curricula consisted almost exclusively of CTE classes. Students can choose to enroll in these classes and attend the center for a large part of the school day.

BOCES. BOCES is the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, which are career centers in New York State. Students from several high schools are zoned for each center and can choose to take CTE courses at these schools. Many centers offer other content area classes if the students are unable to take them at their home school, but the focus is on CTE classes.

“Doing the reading”. In this study, “doing the reading” is defined as a student completing the task because they have to. In this case, the student views reading as a grueling and daunting task, not as a pleasurable experience.

Reading. In this study, reading refers to students engaged in the reading because it is a pleasurable experience and they are completing the reading because they want to.

Assessment of Limitations of this Study

There are several limitations to this study. The knowledge produced from this study is not generalizable, due to the small sample size arising out of the case study nature of the research. There was also no way to check that the participants gave honest answers, though the students were provided an incentive of \$20 to give honest answers and there were no foreseen reasons that students would not answer the questions asked during the interviews. The researcher was also not able to use direct observations due to time limitations. The geographical span of this study was just in New York State. Only girls were used in this study (Krathwohl, 2009).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of current methods used to address literacy in the classroom, as well as the current state of literacy in this country. It also provided several reasons why this issue is important and worth studying. The definitions of terms pertinent to this study were identified and defined. The purpose of the study as well as the objectives were explained and outlined. This chapter has provided an introduction to student's motivation to read and sufficient reasons for why this study is important.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors impact students' motivation to read in CTE courses. This study was a case study; therefore two cases in particular were examined to provide other possible factors that impact student motivation to read. The study was focused on the student's motivation to read in their CTE class compared to reading in their other classes, as well as their motivation to read for pleasure versus their motivation to read in school. In addition to examining the student's current motivation to read, this study also looked at the student's previous experiences with reading and other significant events in the student's life, which may have impacted their current motivation to read.

This chapter is a review of the literature that addresses disciplinary literacy, motivation to read, and social justice and empowerment through literacy. Current literature related to a student's motivation to read does not often apply adolescent theories or developmental stages to the student's history with reading to understand why the student is motivated or unmotivated to read. Therefore, this chapter also examines several developmental theories addressing the stages of adolescence, identity formation, and critical incidences that may help provide alternative ways to address students' motivation to read.

The following chapter is divided into two major sections: the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework. The theoretical framework is divided into three sections: disciplinary literacy theories, motivation theories, and adolescent psychology theories. The conceptual framework will examine studies that explore

current practices in adolescent literacy, motivation, and social justice and empowerment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is comprised of three major areas: disciplinary literacy, motivation, and adolescent developmental theories. These three areas will be the driving theories behind this study and the analysis of the data.

Disciplinary literacy. Although disciplinary literacy is often defined differently among different disciplines, there is little variation among these definitions. Moje (2007) defines disciplinary literacy as the literacy embedded with content areas that is specific to a discipline. Within each discipline, there is not only content knowledge that students need to understand but also specific ways that students need to read in that discipline. The reading they do involves unique ways of processing the information, decoding the text, and understanding the structure of the text (Moje, 2007). Furthermore, proficient adolescent literacy skills can be defined as the ability for the student to not only read, but to critically analyze the text, as well as intelligently discuss the text in that discipline (Moje, 2008).

Similar to Moje, Lee (2010) defines disciplinary literacy as the type of complex literacy that students encounter in the content area classes. Lee discusses the transition students go through from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” This transition typically takes place around the sixth grade when there is often little to no literacy support for students. Lee also argues that students need more specific literacy support during this time, especially in the content areas.

Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) define disciplinary literacy as being the advanced skills that are unique to content area classrooms in secondary education. They argue that advanced literacy instruction should be embedded in content area classes. The skills needed for disciplinary literacy are beyond the basic literacy skills

that students are taught in early childhood education. Many students lack these skills and therefore struggle in the disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan). Although these definitions may vary, they all conclude that disciplinary literacy takes place in the content area classrooms and require students to have advanced literacy skills.

Theories of motivation. Motivation is mainly determined by students' personal beliefs and goals. In CTE, this may give implication to better pedagogical practices since so many of the students enrolled in CTE classes have a personal and career-oriented interests in the class.

Wigfield (1994) defines motivation through his *expectancy value theory of achievement motivation*. This theory claims that a person's expectancies for success and the value they have for succeeding are important determining factors for their motivation to perform various achievement tasks (Wigfield). While this may imply that motivation is an individual characteristic since not all students' beliefs and goals are the same, classroom experiences can have a large impact on students' motivation to be engaged in text (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Recent studies show that students' levels of motivation with reading begin to decrease starting in the 4th grade. The two types of motivation for students to read are based on intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Wigfield, 1994). Swan (2004) defines intrinsic motivation as motivation to read in order to learn, because a student is curious about a specific topic or because the student is personally interested in the content. The transition to extrinsic motivation to read occurs during high school, when students are more motivated by grades, competition, and teacher control (Swan). The difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation is doing something for one's self and curiosity versus doing something for a reward. Both types of motivation can predict children's reading amount and frequency. Furthermore, students' intrinsic motivation declines starting in the elementary school years. (Guthrie at al., 1997)

Lenters (2006) emphasizes the fact that not all students solely lack motivation when it comes to reading; many of the “struggling readers” also lack the necessary skills to read. For students who simply struggle with reading, in the future they may become resistant readers. The opposite situation is true as well: students who resist due to low motivation may become struggling readers due to their lack of practice with reading. Lenters calls for change, which suggests teachers and researchers listen to the student, provide support and encouragement throughout their schooling, and create space for independent reading (Lenters). Through this study and possibly future studies, researchers will understand what motivates students to read and find ways to help them develop the literacy skills they need in order to succeed.

Adolescent developmental theories. Adolescent psychology theories are rarely applied in research conducted on student motivation to read. The following theorists’ theories and concepts that occur throughout the development of adolescence may have major implications on students’ motivation to read: Erikson’s eight stages of crisis, Josselson’s theory of identity formation for girls, Kegan’s theory of meaning making and identity creation, Freud’s theory of mechanisms of defense, and Blos’s theory of the four character challenges of adolescence.

Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development

In Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, he identifies eight stages of crisis, each with two opposing outcomes (Kroger, 2009). The eight stages are trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy and solidarity versus isolation, generative versus self-absorption, and integrity versus despair. In order to progress on to the next stage, a person must positively resolve the lower stage. For this study, the stage industry versus inferiority was applied. During this stage, children learn tasks and discover what they can and cannot do. For some children they will continue

learning new tasks and feel a sense of accomplishment; for others, they feel failure and develop low self-esteem. This may occur for students who struggle with reading. They either determine that they are good at reading and feel confident when reading or they may struggle with reading and feel like a failure, resulting in a negative attitude towards reading.

Stemming from Freud's mechanisms of defense, Erikson also believes that when children are emerging from childhood, around the age of 5, they are experiencing what is known as *identification*. They begin to create an identity for themselves, but in relation to those with whom they are close. They do not yet see themselves as a distinct individual from others. Erikson also believes that children can experience *negative identity* when children avoid their past and try to restart their life instead of adhering to their previous experiences (Kroger, 2009).

Ruth Josselson's theory of identity formation for girls

Various developmental theories can influence the way students cope with crisis. Drawing from the systems theories used in psychology and sociology, Ruthellen Josselson examined how people "create" one another through unconscious psychological activity. Josselson believes that individuals create roles for one another to play in the individual's life depending on what he or she needs and wants at that time. People create their own identity and themselves in relation to each other and through interactions with each other. Friendships are crucial to the identity development of girls and women, and friendships can also serve a variety of emotional and developmental needs (Apter & Josselson, 1999). Friendships can help girls transition through various developmental stages and can help girls cope with events that happen in their lives.

Josselson also believes that people can sometimes create illusions, based on what they need and want at that time, and these illusions seem like reality but can be

shattered by an event. Illusions are present when people invest physical objects or people with qualities derived from their own personal world (Josselson, 2007). For example, a person may create an imaginary friend who they can relate with and talk to, yet this person does not really exist; they are an illusion of what that person wants or needs. While friendships may help many girls transition through different developmental stages and cope with crisis in their lives, some girls do not have friendships to help them and need different types of support to help create their identities.

Robert Kegan's theory of meaning making

Another way that students may cope with identity crises can be explored through the work of Robert Kegan, who proposed a theory about meaning, making of the self, and identity construction, which draws from both Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kolberg's notions of cognitive-developmental work (Kroger, 2004). Kegan suggests that there are five stages of meaning making when constructing identity: the incorporative self, the impulsive self, the imperial self, the interpersonal self, and the institutional self. For this particular study, Kegan's theory of holding environments during the imperial and interpersonal stages was applied.

Kegan suggests that holding environments are present in every stage and contribute to the evolution of the self and identity creation. Kegan defines holding environments as being surrounded by peers who share similar interests and who provide a support group that helps to build and solidify one's own identity (Kegan, 1982). Kegan further argues that individuals need this supportive environment to help them transition through the different developmental stages and become an individual. The use of holding environments in this study was defined in the CTE classroom as a classroom environment during the interpersonal stage and also can act as a career setting, due to the career-oriented nature of CTE, in institutional stage in the CTE

class, which each girl was enrolled. However, if students do not have these holding environments then they may employ less constructive ways of coping with crisis.

Freud's theory of mechanisms of defense

Freud presents the various outcomes that an individual may have when experiencing a crisis. In this study, Freud's mechanisms of defense theory was applied. Freud suggests there are several defense mechanisms that the ego uses in order to cope with stress, anxiety, or unacceptable impulses. The mechanisms Freud identifies are repression, displacement, identification, rationalization, reaction formation, and, although debated, sublimation. For this study, two of the mechanisms were applied: displacement and sublimation.

The defense mechanism of displacement is characterized by the displacement of emotion from one object to another. Instead of a person dealing with the crisis they are experiencing, they may take those feelings and apply them to another object. In this case, a person who connects reading with a crisis may quit reading because they are channeling their anger from the crisis to reading instead of dealing with the actual crisis.

Sublimation is debated as being considered a defense mechanism because it represents a constructive way for the ego to deal with emotions. However, some also argue that it is a form of displacement because, during sublimation, the ego is channeling energy into another object (Muus, 1996). A person may start writing to channel their emotions and stress from a crisis, which allows them to constructively cope with the crisis. People may use these defense mechanisms if they lack the encouragement of friends and support groups where they feel safe and can deal with the crisis at hand.

Blos's theory of the four character challenges of adolescence

Another way to examine what stages students have developed in their adolescence is through Peter Blos's theory of the four character challenges of adolescence (Kroger, 2009). The first challenge is the second individuation process. This challenge represents the child developing a separate identity from the one they had with their parents through childhood. The second challenge is reworking childhood trauma. During this stage the adolescent must revisit any childhood traumas or emotional injury and address those events so they do not develop defense mechanisms to cope with them. The third challenge is ego continuity, which is when the adolescent comes to terms with early childhood traumas and accepts that history as being part of themselves and who they are today. The last character challenge is sexual identity. Here, the adolescent establishes their sexual identity and creates a sense of masculinity or femininity (Kroger, 2009).

Disciplinary literacy theories and motivation theories are frequently addressed in current research literature when discussing adolescent literacy. However, very little literature uses adolescent psychology theories to examine the motivation of students and reading. Applying the theories of Erikson, Josselson, Kegan, Freud, and Blos to the history that students have with reading may provide other ways to research student motivation to read based on their developmental stages and life experiences. The theories of disciplinary literacy and motivation guided the literature review of other studies included in the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Current practices in adolescent literacy. Current literature and studies often examine the practices of literacy implementation in classrooms and suggest solutions to the issues regarding literacy in the classroom. However, very little research has been conducted in CTE classrooms, and the solutions that are offered tend to apply

one approach to a large number of students, yielding minimal results.

Although data shows that 23 to 30 percent of students have reading and writing levels that are considered proficient, only three to six percent of students have literacy skills at the advanced level (Moje, 2007). In order to succeed in a content area discipline, students need to develop the advanced literacy skills necessary to read the text in that discipline in order to gain knowledge, critique the text, and participate in knowledgeable discourse about the content.

In order for students to develop these advanced literacy skills, there needs to be more support in the classroom. However, most content area teachers lack the skills necessary to help their students with their literacy needs. More focus needs to be directed to the secondary content area classrooms where reading becomes more complex and specific to the various disciplines (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). This holds true in CTE classrooms as well. Again, CTE involves texts that require advanced literacy skills.

The No Child Left Behind Act has placed an increased awareness on literacy intervention. Unfortunately, a large portion of those efforts have been focused on early childhood literacy interventions. Although there have been literacy gains in early childhood literacy, data shows that those gains are lost once students reach adolescence (Carnegie Council for Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). This only reinforces the importance of literacy intervention in the middle and high school years.

Some schools have implemented literacy interventions at the high school level. Students who have completed an academic literacy course have found a new relationship with reading. By using the literacy strategies, they make more sense of the reading and learn what they like to read. Furthermore, the students who took a specific course based on the Reading Apprenticeship instructional framework dramatically increased their literacy skills (Greenleaf & Schoebach, 2001).

Greenleaf and Schoebach (2001) argue that, while young readers need instruction with phonics and word-level instruction – essentially learning to read – in the middle and high school years, students need help reading to learn, or understanding complex, vocabulary-dense text. The jump they are forced to make between the two often leaves many students struggling because they are ill-equipped to tackle the more complex text. The two researchers present a reform option where students receive literacy instruction to help them make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn (Greenleaf & Schoebach, 2001). In CTE classrooms, many of the different disciplines use text that is technical, vocabulary-dense, and unique to the discipline. In order for students to understand and succeed in their chosen career, it is essential that they have the necessary literacy skills.

In a study conducted by Gay Ivey (2004), popular interventions for older youth who struggle with reading are examined. He first examines the “fix-it” model, where one identifies what one believes to be the source of the difficulty and then fix it. This model only examines a specific problem and does not look at the bigger picture. Ivey then critiques the Reading-Problem-of-the-Month model. This model illustrates a model where the teacher picks a common problem with reading and focuses on that problem with all struggling students, but, like the fix-it model, this model can miss the big picture or misdiagnose the problem. The last model examined is the compliance model, where schools implement literacy intervention based on policy and funding, but those programs may not be helpful or the proper solution (Ivey).

Ivey proposes that the key to helping students with literacy is to change instruction dramatically. The assumption is that older students have the same problems as younger students, which is not the case. The four aspects of intervention should be personalized and ongoing assessments, substantial opportunities to read and write, extensive and varied collection of reading materials, and expert teachers as instructors.

This tends to be the solution to most literacy problems in the classroom; however, it rarely results in significant improvement among the students and sometimes no improvement at all (Ivey, 2004).

Lenters (2006) looked at the difficulties with literacy that young adolescents face. She refers to the fact that there is a decreasing focus on the needs of older students and their literacy needs. She cites Bintz's proposed term of "resistant reader" to help in the understanding of reading difficulties among adolescent (Lenters). Another term described is the "reluctant reader," the reader who can read but chooses not to. Studies concluded that reading itself was not the reason for their resistance, and many of these students claimed that they were strong readers in elementary school (Lenters).

Some of the reasons students gave for resisting were the lack of interest in the text, text being contradictive to their self-identity, and the inability to choose their own text. Many students do not find school reading personally meaningful. Many of the teachers in Bintz's study did not feel knowledgeable or feel that they have the time to teach reading. Lenters calls for more literacy instruction and support in middle and high school classrooms (Lenters, 2006). Lenters suggests that teachers and researchers need to take into account students' desire for text that is interesting and meaningful and for the ability to have a choice of text. Unfortunately, in CTE many teachers have little training in teaching literacy and there tends to be a greater focus on the hands-on aspect of learning. While this does help students understand concepts better, many of the students in CTE often struggle with reading.

Underwood and Pearson (2004) found that many adolescent readers struggle when it comes to comprehending the text they are assigned for school as higher levels of literacy skills are required. Furthermore, more complex literacy skills are becoming more necessary to function in the workplace and life (Underwood & Pearson). Many

CTE students will go straight into the workforce after high school. It is important that these students are well-equipped to function and succeed in their career.

Shanahan and Shanahan found that despite current practices, content area teachers in secondary classrooms should embed text and literacy frameworks in their curriculum in order to help students become more proficient readers. In recent years, advancing technology calls for advanced literacy skills in the workplace that many high school graduates lack. Studies show that students in high school are poorer readers than they were in previous years (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Furthermore, studies show that early literacy gains are often lost by the time students are in the eighth grade despite interventions (Shanahan & Shanahan). This is crucial for secondary students enrolled or not enrolled in CTE for it implies that, regardless of the interventions they have been through, after eighth grade teachers still need to provide literacy support for students in all classes, not just English.

Social injustice and empowerment. Many researchers, especially those related to disciplinary literacy, argue that the crisis of literacy in this country is not only an academic issue, but also a social injustice to the students. Some further argue that literacy is a form of empowerment and that, if this problem is not resolved, it not only jeopardizes the rights of the students, but the future of the country as well.

Greenleaf and Hinchman (2009) explored the current literacy crisis in the education system. They claim that reading is a human rights issue, and, without proficient literacy skills, the nation's economy and future participation in the global economy is disrupted (Greenleaf & Hinchman). Furthermore, in another study conducted by Greenleaf and Schoenbach (2001), they argue that students' reading habits greatly impact their socioeconomic mobility, access to higher education, and civic participation. This can have dire consequences on students enrolled in CTE and their success in their future careers in the workforce, as well as their ability to continue

on to higher education.

Moje argued that teachers need to teach their students in a way that not only give their students access to the content that is deemed valuable in that field but also in a way that results in their students valuing that knowledge themselves. Moje states that the call for socially just pedagogy is a call to make certain that all students have an equal opportunity to learn. She explains that these opportunities are not just giving access to learn the information but to critically question and challenge the knowledge. Moje also argues that students should further learn the knowledge they already value and not just be required to learn the “mainstream” knowledge (Moje, 2007). In CTE, this is crucial because many of the students are enrolled in the classes since they have a serious interest in the content area and intend to pursue a career in that field.

Moje further concludes that it would be most productive to build disciplinary literacy instructional programs instead of simply encouraging content area teachers to use more literacy in their classrooms. She argues that students have beliefs and ideas about what type of literacy they use in their disciplines and, as a result, it constrains the teachers’ practices and structures of the secondary school. She also suggests that teachers are not doing their part in using literacy in their content area classrooms due to their knowledge and beliefs (Moje, 2007). Many of the students in CTE enroll in the career centers because they prefer the hands-on work and want to avoid the reading they encounter in their other classes. However, all of these students are aware that they need to be able to read in order to succeed in their future careers and understand the content of the class (van der Mandele et al., 2008).

Motivation. Motivation of students to read is arguably one of the major contributing factors to the literacy issue in the classroom. Students are not engaged in the reading because they either lack the skills to comprehend the reading or simply are uninterested and unmotivated to read. Several studies examine what factors motivate

students to read or not to read. Some also suggest ways that teachers can increase the motivation of their students. The following studies represent the current research conducted with regards to motivation.

Not all students avoid literacy completely. With the advancement of technology, students are exposed to and highly engaged in different types of literacy via social media and instant messaging every day. Reed, Schallert, Beth, Woodruff (2004) explored how to transfer that same level of engagement to the class and identifies three main areas: self-determination, self-regulation, and involvement. Reed defines self-determination as the students' ability to control their own learning and have a sense of agency in reading. Self-regulation refers to how students transfer skills in strategies to other parts of their life to tackle complex reading. Involvement is described as the combination of cognitive, emotional, and motivating aspects of reading. These three concepts are interconnected when applied to motivation and literacy, and finding a way to incorporate them in the classroom may help CTE teachers better engage their students with reading and help them develop more complex literacy skills. However, Reed found that these three concepts fail to address other factors that have a large impact on literacy and motivation such as self-efficacy and goal setting.

A case study was conducted on a lower socioeconomic status Hispanic girl in middle school named Erika. Erika attends a large public school in southwestern America that is about half white and half Hispanic. She scored very low in literacy skills, was often quiet in the classroom, and lacked motivation to read. She did enjoy reading teen novels and magazines outside of the classroom. Through multiple interviews, Ma'ayan (2010) concluded that in order to help students like Erika, teachers need to use culturally relevant text, age-appropriate text, and open discussion in their classrooms in order to help the students who struggle with reading and who

lack motivation.

van Schooten and De Glopper (2004) discussed the Model of Planned Behavior to measure attitude towards reading. They present the idea that students are reading less than previous generations, that they are instead partaking in leisure activities that do not involve text, and that students in high school are becoming less interested in reading as they get older. This is common in most high school classrooms now with sports and other extracurricular activities in which students participate. They discussed one study by M. Verboord (2003) and reported that students with parents who foster a positive reading environment have a better attitude towards reading, as well as students from a more sophisticated home environment. Verboord continued to find that taking a more “student-centered” approach towards reading results in a more positive reading attitude later on in life. While CTE classrooms often foster the “student-centered” approach because of the amount of hands-on work that students do, the students still seem to struggle. Furthermore, if these students were not frequently exposed to literacy as children, there is nothing that can be done to change their early experience once they reach high school and are enrolled in CTE classes.

Similarly, Katie Greene (2010) conducted a qualitative, action-based research study in a ninth grade honors class. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of implementing controlled choice reading and writing assignments, giving the students more agencies in their learning to hopefully increase their motivation. Students chose an assignment from a list of activities pertaining to the readings they were doing in that class. They were asked to draft a statement of purpose letter discussing their choice and their plan to complete the project. They also had to create a list of learning goals to achieve by the end of the project. Students had to submit reflection letters after their project was complete in order to be held accountable for their learning. The study found that through this method of teaching, the students

mastered the academic standards and learning goals identified at the beginning of the project. Through interviews, discussions and surveys, Greene concluded that students prefer to write about what interests them, but all felt they benefited from using strict guidelines outlined in a rubric. Greene discussed that, if educators give more agency to their students while providing guidelines, their students will master the academic standards while taking control of their own learning. By giving students the sense of agency, educators will also increase their students' motivation to read and engagement in class (Greene, 2010). Student-centered learning, which has appeared in studies before, may provide a new way for teachers to implement literacy in the classroom and increase student interest. While this study did take place in an honors class, it still reinforces the effects of student agency.

Student agency as a contributing factor to motivation is reinforced in yet another study conducted at four different mid-Atlantic city schools in fourth grade classrooms. The study involved 205 students over a three-month period. The purpose of the study was to determine the predictive power of intrinsic motivation, background knowledge, and cognitive strategy use on the outcome of reading comprehension. The study assessed students through activating background knowledge, questioning the students, multiple text reading comprehensions, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT), and internal motivation. The study concluded that motivational and cognitive processes independently predict reading comprehension by implementing student choice, involvement, and interest (Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, & Guthrie, 2009).

Matthew Knoester (2009), a former middle school teacher, explored the complex reasons why students in the middle school years chose to read or not to read, and why a large amount of reading decreases in the middle school years. After examining ten case studies of students in an urban setting, he found that reading is a

social practice in significant ways and that students do not necessarily read based on their ability or parental support but for many reasons regarding their identity and interest in the development of peer and adult relationships (Knoester). Again, this is crucial in CTE because many of these students in these classes are enrolled since they have a serious interest in the class. This also suggests that teachers in secondary school can still have an impact on their students' motivation level regardless of the students' home environment.

Similar to the findings of Knoester, Moje argues that the reasons students read are because they are part of a social group or are creating their identity by looking for role models and information. Some adolescents use writing for self expression to deal with the stresses of their everyday lives (Moje, 2008).

In another study, it was found that older students struggle with reading because they have not received proper instruction to tackle more complex text that they encounter in their high school curriculum. When these students struggle with reading, it affects their motivation. They suggest that teachers and researchers need to move beyond “cookie-cutter” instruction to help students. Teachers need to change the environment of the classroom so that their students are not leaving schools feeling like failures (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). In CTE, many of the students who struggle with reading still find a sense of accomplishment in the hands-on projects that they complete. However, many of the students still need to read in order to successfully complete their projects, and they find the consequences of not understanding the reading to complete a project much more severe in their CTE classes compared to their other classes (Park et al., 2010).

Similarly, in another study O'Brien and Dillon (2008) concluded that motivation in engaged reading can play a large role in adolescent literacy learning and practice and that specific motivation constructs can help both normally achieving and

struggling students. They divided students into two groups: typically progressing, competent readers and so-called “struggling readers.” They mentioned that some students exhibited a learned helplessness towards reading, meaning they have failed in the past and believe they will never succeed so resist reading in order to preserve self-esteem. They stated that students who used to view reading as an adventure or social experience now view reading as just a set of tedious tasks, and not as interesting or the reading of their choice. They recommended that in order to motivate students, teachers must provide a more compelling reason for them to read the texts and give the students feedback. Teachers should provide more instruction in important strategies in addition to more complex reading. They should provide a larger range of texts for students to read and help students to set a purpose for the reading, and make reading a more engaging activity. For struggling readers who may have a negative perception towards reading and feel like failures, teachers need to reverse these feelings by support and encouragement (O’Brien and Dillon). Again, interviewing students in CTE may help teachers find better ways to implement literacy into their classrooms.

In a study conducted by Guthrie (2004), the idea that intrinsic motivation can be increased through the implementation of reading instruction was explored. Guthrie distinguished between intrinsic motivation, or doing something for the self and curiosity, versus extrinsic motivation, or doing something for a reward. Guthrie claimed that both predict children's reading amount and frequency. He also claimed that students’ intrinsic motivation declines during the elementary school years. Guthrie and others conducted an intervention to increase students’ intrinsic motivation. The intervention included characteristics designed to emphasize autonomy support, competence support, collaboration, learning goals, and real-world interaction. They found that using an instructional intervention with these characteristics did increase student motivation (Guthrie et al., 2009). While this may help students in CTE, the

text they use is often authentic to their discipline and class time is often limited. However, teachers can modify literacy strategies and find a way to implement them with the text that they use.

Conclusion

Despite the large amount of research conducted on adolescent literacy, little has been conducted in CTE classrooms, and none were found that take into account the developmental theories of adolescence. Although research has been conducted in content area classrooms, those classrooms environments are different from CTE classroom because these students in CTE have chosen to enroll in those classes and often intend on pursuing a career in those fields, yet many of the students still lack the motivation to read. CTE classrooms involve reading that is very dense and discipline-specific, and students in those classrooms are aware that they need the disciplinary skills in order to succeed in their future careers.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Design

Qualitative methods have had a long history in social science research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative methodology stemmed from the days of European imperialism and colonization. Qualitative research methods were used to try and understand the “other,” meaning the indigenous peoples of the land being colonized. Patton (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) both divided the evolution of qualitative research into various stages of history: traditional, modernist, blurred genres, crisis of represent, postmodern, and postexperimental.

From 1900-1950, research was defined as “traditional.” It was a period of colonial research. Patton states, “Ethnographers, influenced by positivism, strove for objectivity in their fieldwork and reports” (2002, p 79). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) added that it was associated with the positivist foundational paradigm. Social scientists believed that there was a link between situations that were general to all situations and people (Krathwohl, p. 242).

The modernist phase, from 1950 to 1970, was a time in which qualitative researchers sought acceptance within social science by emphasizing the formality of procedures and rigorous methodology as qualitative researchers reacted against post-positivism’s emergent emphasis on interpretation.

During the “blurred genres” phase from 1970 to about 1986, a large number of alternative approaches to traditional qualitative research methodology emerged, creating competition and confusion. This resulted in numerous labels for the qualitative perspectives. The humanities became a central resource for critical and interpretive theory. The researcher learned how to borrow from different disciplines other than the social sciences.

These new methodologies led to the “crisis of representation” from 1986 through 1990. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggested that a methodological diaspora took place. Humanists moved towards the social sciences, looking for new social theory, and social scientists turned to the humanities, hoping to learn how to do complex readings of social texts.

During the “postmodern and postexperimental” stage from 1990 through today, Patton described this stage with regard to research methodology as a “triple crisis of representation, legitimization, and praxis.”(Patton, 2002, p 79) Researchers continued to move away from foundational and quasi-foundational criteria. They expanded the realm of qualitative research to include creative nonfiction, autobiographical ethnography, poetic representations, and multimedia presentations.

Qualitative research is a useful method for a study when the goal is to attain a wealth of data about a small number of cases (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is comprised of mainly three types of data collection: (a) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (b) direct observations; and (c) written documents (Patton, 2002). For this study, the data collection came from interviews and written field notes taken during the interviews of the selected student cases. The researcher did not use direct observations due to time limitations. In this particular study, the researcher conducted focus groups of all participants in the study and then conducted one-on-one interviews with 5 participants.

For the purpose of this study, case study methodology was used. Case studies are used to investigate a phenomenon in greater detail within a real-life context (Yin, 2009). This study was an exploratory study to look in greater detail at two different girls’ experiences with reading. This particular study used a multiple-case design. In this study, two similar cases were explored in depth and compared and contrasted to each other using the same theoretical framework, in order ultimately to explore factors

that may contribute to students' lack of motivation to read. Through the case study, findings could identify areas for further research.

Case study design needs to include four conditions: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability (Yin, 2009). The five components of case studies include the study's questions, its propositions, the units of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009). Based on thorough review of the literature, these questions were derived. Construct validity was also checked with another researcher in the field. Through data collection, the researcher was able to create internal validity and reliability. Through the data analysis process, the internal validity was achieved.

Population

Students who are enrolled in secondary CTE courses possess an array of academic and reading abilities, ranging from students with learning disabilities to college preparatory students. Because many CTE courses are offered as electives at schools that are not in the same location as their high schools, students may enroll in these courses in order to escape the required reading of academic courses. Many CTE students are considered "struggling readers" or may be students who find reading in other disciplines relatively easy but have difficulty with the highly technical CTE reading. The population used for the research were all secondary students enrolled in CTE courses who fit the criteria for either struggling or resistant readers.

Student assent and parental consent (See Appendix C) was secured for all students involved in the study for allowances of data collection, focus group interviews, long interviews, and audio-recording. The specific sample for this study included students who were enrolled in CTE courses in the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) system in New York State.

Sampling

The researcher used purposeful sampling for this study to select five students. Purposeful sampling is a method that involves a small sample number in order to explore fewer cases in greater detail (Patton, 2002). Two of the cases were examined in greater detail because they provided factors that contribute to the students' lack of motivation that may not be resolved using the blanket approach of literacy strategy implementation. Three of the original five students were selected from a ninth grade computer class at Immaculata Academy in Hamburg, New York, and the other two students were selected from an eleventh grade equine science class at Madison-Oneida BOCES in Utica, New York. The five students who were selected were in classrooms that were participating in the control group of a larger experimental study and were not part of any reading or literacy treatment, thus a "pure" sample. These classrooms were representative of a typical CTE BOCES classroom because they have had no literacy intervention. This study was part of a larger study, so the selection of participants was generated from quantitative data that were collected in fall of 2009 for the larger study.

Five students were selected because of their test scores on the GMRT (Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test) and MRQ (Motivational Reading Questionnaire) from the fall of 2009, which identified them as either a struggling reader or resistant reader. For this study, the interviews with two girls, one ninth grader and one 11th grader who qualified as struggling readers, were selected to be explored in greater detail. In this study, struggling readers were defined as readers who are both resistant to reading because they lack the skills necessary to read proficiently and have low motivation to read. In this study, struggling readers were quantified by having low GMRT scores, placing two or more grades below their current chronologic grade level. These students both had low MRQ scores, scoring 98 or less out of a possible 196.

Resistant readers were defined as students who have the skills necessary to read text but lack the motivation. These students were quantified by having a high GMRT score, placing at or above the reading level of their current grade, but having a low MRQ score, scoring at 98 or less out of 196. Three girls in the study were identified as being resistant readers. Through the interviews, no significant findings became evident. Therefore, their cases were not examined further.

Students' reading comprehension was assessed using the GMRT (MacGinitie et al., 2006) for Grades 7-9 and content reading inventories. The GMRT is a norm-referenced test that measures comprehension and vocabulary. This research used form S of the GMRT. It consists of 45 multiple-choice items assessing students' vocabulary and 48 multiple-choice items assessing students' comprehension on several short passages. Reliability ranges from .88 to .92. The researcher opted for the Grades 7-9 GMRT to accommodate students in CTE who may be weaker readers.

Motivation to read was assessed with the MRQ (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, 2004). The MRQ was developed by John Guthrie, an expert in reading motivation, and adapted through previous studies (Park & Osborne, 2007) to reflect language more appropriate for high school students. The MRQ consists of different questions to which students respond on a seven-point, summated-rating scale, ranging from (1) *not at all true for me*, to (7) *very true for me*. An overall motivation to read score was calculated by summing the individual item responses for the 28 items. Validity was established with a panel of experts at the National Reading Research Center, with reliability ranging from .56 to .74.

Name	Grade Level	GMRT Vocabulary Grade Level	GMRT Comprehension Grade Level	GMRT Total Grade Level	MRQ Score
Taylor	11 th	8.1	5.1	6.3	80
Emily	9 th	4.8	4.9	4.8	85

MRQ score: 3.5 or lower on 28 questions: $3.5 \times 28 = 98$ or less

GMRT score: Vocabulary score (grade level), Comprehension score (grade level) and Combined score (grade level); adjusted for grade level

Questions

Individual interviews may result in different responses from the same questions asked in a group setting, depending on the nature and sensitivity of the questions and participants (Patton, 2002, p.389). The questions that were used in the focus groups were relatively less invasive than the one-on-one interview. The same questions prepared for the focus group interview were again asked during the first one-on-one interview with the participant as well as additional questions to explore their individual cases further. This was done to check for repetition in the participants' responses, as well as allow for the opportunity to elaborate on their previous responses to produce validity (See Appendix D).

The questions (Appendix A) were adapted using the same content as questions used in a study conducted by Knoester (2009). Some of the questions were developed to obtain data that was more specific to this study. There were six basic categories of questions to ask, the content of which are the experience or behavior of the participant, the opinions and/or beliefs of the participant the feelings the participants have toward a topic, the knowledge the participant has about a topic, what senses the participant experiences about the topic, and the background or demographics of the participant (Krathwohl). In this study, students' life experiences in general were explored, as well as their experiences with reading.

Focus Group

The purpose of the first set of questions in the interview was to assess the participant's general attitude toward reading. Another purpose was to determine who would participate in the study. Although only two girls' cases were examined, there were five original students who participated in the focus groups. The responses produced information about the participant's opinions and beliefs towards reading, as well as their overall feelings. Focus group questions included:

1. What do you think about reading? What is your general attitude towards reading?
2. Do you like to read in your CTE course and why? Do you like to read in your other classes and why? What's the difference between the two?
3. What do you like to read outside of class? What do you not like to read?
4. What are some of the reasons you read? For school? For pleasure?
5. Do you enjoy reading in your CTE class more than your other classes? Why or why not?

The purpose of the second set of questions was to identify characteristics of reading that motivate the reader as well as characteristics of text that deter the reader. Interview questions included the following, in addition to repeating the previous questions:

1. What makes reading fun?
2. What makes reading boring?
3. What makes you decide to read, or not to read for your class? Outside of class?

The last questions addressed the knowledge that reader has about the importance of reading. Responses generated from this question illustrated the perceptions and beliefs that the reader had about the importance of literacy and the role of literacy in their future career:

1. What do you want to do when you are older?
2. Do you think it is important to be able to read in your future career? Why or why not?
3. How much do you really feel like you need to read for your career?

Second Interview

The researcher asked the same questions that were asked in the focus groups, to check for validity and repetition of their previous answers. The researcher then asked an additional set of questions that were relatively more personal than the questions prepared for the focus group interviews.

The purpose of the first additional set of questions was to identify the participant's perception of themselves as readers. The responses generated from these questions provided the researcher with information about the participant's use of text but also any challenges they may have interacting with text:

1. What type of reader do you consider yourself? Why?
2. What challenges, if any, do you face with reading?
3. What feature of text makes reading easier to read or understand?
4. When you feel challenged by a reading, how do you respond?
5. How do you view reading for pleasure different than reading for school?
6. How would you change reading assignments to make them more enjoyable?

The second set of additional questions were used to gain background information about the participant's history with reading. The responses provided information about the experiences that the participant had with reading.

7. Was there ever a time in your life when you read more than you do now? If so, how has that changed or not changed?
8. If you used to read more, what did you read?
9. How has that changed? Why has that changed?

10. Does your family read? If so, what?

11. Do your friends read? If so, what?

The last set of questions again identified how the reader perceives academic text versus text for pleasure. It also identified what aspects of reading make the process more enjoyable.

12. How do you view reading for pleasure differently than reading for academic purposes?

13. How would you change reading assignments to make them more enjoyable?

Third Interview

The questions for the third one-on-one interview were developed after the focus group and first interview transcriptions had been read and analyzed. The questions were based around the themes that emerged from the previous interviews and called for further detail and elaboration. Some of the questions were based on responses made by the participants in the previous interviews.

In addition to gathering more detailed responses, the second one-on-one interview acted as a third check in the repetition and validity of the participant's response. It also allowed another opportunity for the participant to add any additional comments or thoughts.

The following questions were asked to each of the students:

1. Was there ever a time when you were assigned reading and you just couldn't understand it or you struggled with it?
 - a. When was that?
 - b. How did it make you feel about yourself?
 - c. Did it change the way you felt about the class?
 - d. Did it change the way you felt about reading?
2. When you read fictional books, you use your imagination and create the

characters in your head.

- a. Can you go through that process? What do you see when you read those books?
 - b. What do you see when you read textbooks?
 - c. Do you read the words aloud in your head?
 - d. How do you make sense of the words and meaning of your academic text? How do you understand what you read?
3. When you read in this class, how is the reading different from your other classes?
- a. Do you learn better by applying the information or just reading it?
 - b. What is the best way for you to learn something?
4. Have you read something in this class and then directly applied it?
- a. If you were given a set of instructions and then a bunch of pieces that you had to put together, how would you go about doing it?
5. What mediums of reading do you like best? Do you read online, magazines, newspaper etc.?
6. When you are given something to read, how do you confront the reading? What do you do?
- a. Do you use any strategies?
7. What about text can make it intimidating or harder to use?
8. What are some of the purposes to read?
9. Do you ever write outside of school? Why?

Interviews

Focus Groups. Focus groups are group interviews that are comprised of around three to ten participants. They are usually comprised of participants with homogenous backgrounds (Patton, 2002). In this study, all the participants in the

interview were CTE secondary students who have low motivation to read. Such focus groups are often conducted in order to obtain a variety of responses and perspectives, while increasing confidence in patterns that may emerge (Patton).

Focus groups were developed in the 1950's for market-based research due to the acknowledgment that many decisions were made in social context (Patton, 2002). Reading can be a social act. Often, adolescents read to help construct their personal identity and to identify with something they can relate to (Lenters, 2006). It was not until the 1980's that focus groups were used for social science research.

After students were selected as either "struggling" or "resistant" readers, a focus group interview was conducted to allow students to get comfortable with the interview process and build rapport with the students. Focus groups are often more enjoyable due to human tendencies to be social (Patton, 2002), and interviewing a group may lead to thoughts and ideas evoked during discussions that may not have been asked about or that may not have been expressed during individual interviews (Krathwohl, 2009).

The questions that were used during the focus group were also adapted and taken from the questions used in the larger study. They were more basic, less personal questions in order to get general feedback about students and their motivation to read.

Interviews. The researcher chose to do the majority of the data collection through the use of interviews. Interviews are appropriate for case studies because they allow the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge about the case. Interviews provide direct quotations from the students about their experiences and feelings. In this study, the students' emotions and feelings were the basis for their responses and history with motivation and reading. Interviews can produce information that cannot be observed by sitting in on a class (Patton, 2002). In this study, the students may have internal struggles with reading that were not noticeable to an observer, and using interviews

can give data about those struggles and feelings. Patton states, “The purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (p. 341).

Patton (2002) describes three basic types of interviews. First, there is the informal conversational interview. This is an interview that is unstructured. It allows for more flexibility to pursue information in various ways, but can increase the amount of excess data collected and take more time.

The second type of interview is the interview guide. This is a more structured interview with a set list of questions that are answered. It guides the interview in a more structured way and assures that all questions have been answered.

The third type of interview is the standardized open-ended interview. This approach requires very carefully worded and detailed questions so that the interview asks the same question in the same way.

The researcher used a combined approach for the case study design because it allowed the researcher to explore the case as much as possible. The researcher used the conversational strategy of the informal conversational interview with the more structured feature of the interview guide. There were set of questions that were asked, but the researcher allowed participants to elaborate on specific questions and ask probing questions depending on their responses.

Analysis. The data collection tools used for this study were the questions, field notes, and digital audio recorder used to record the focus groups and interviews. Once the interviews were recorded, they were completely transcribed by the online dictation service, <http://medikin.com/>. The researcher read the transcriptions while listening to recordings of the interviews and focus groups to check for accuracy of the transcriptions and to hear the emotion in participants’ voices.

Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher shared the transcriptions via email with a colleague for conducting inductive analysis as outlined by Hatch

(2002). The inductive analysis followed other models of inductive analysis (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Spradley, 1979) and included a search for “patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made” (Hatch, 2002, p. 161). The researcher implemented the following steps:

1. Read data and identify frames of analysis,
2. Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis,
3. Identify salient domains and assign them a code,
4. Refine salient domains and keep record of emerging relationships,
5. Decide if domains are supported by data,
6. Complete analysis within domains,
7. Search for themes across domains,
8. Outline relationships within and among domains, and
9. Select data excerpts to support the relationships (Hatch, 2002, p. 162).

The researcher used an open coding system, checked with interrater reliability (See Appendix B). This open coding identified general comments and concepts that were then further analyzed through axial coding and grouping the evidence into topical categories that were more specific, descriptive, and useful for subsequent intervention development (e.g., evidence of effective implementation of the intervention).

Emergent themes were checked among the two readers for validation and decisions on implementation in consecutive phases of the study. Again, these interviews, combined with student focus group sessions and GMRT and MRQ surveys, served to triangulate formative evaluations of the intervention with what were in essence summative evaluations in the form of quantitative data and analyses of student performance of reading comprehension and motivation to read.

The audit trail for this research consisted of the audio recordings, interview transcripts, interview guides, list of interviewees, and themes generated from the transcripts. After the interviews were transcribed, the two readers read the transcriptions to identify themes running throughout the interviews (Creswell, 1998). Pertinent themes were assigned a code and the data was to identify specific examples to support the themes. The researcher wrote summaries of the interviewees' constructed realities from the final themes.

Researcher's role. In this study, the researcher's role was to act as a facilitator, asking the questions that were prepared and probing on responses as necessary. It was non-participatory. The researcher only entered the students' environment when conducting interviews. The researcher had no intended bias when listening to the students' responses.

Procedures

The student GMRT and MRQ scores were calculated for each student in classrooms of the control group of the larger study. The students who scored below a 96 on the MRQ were then categorized as a "struggling" reader, a "resistant" reader, or neither. After then identifying the students who qualified as a "struggling" or "resistant" reader, the students' teachers were contacted. Five female students were selected; this was not the intention of the researcher, but the outcome of willing participants from the sample. The students were then asked to participate in one focus group interview and two one-on-one interviews, on a voluntary basis and sign an IRB consent form. The interviews were then scheduled throughout February and March with the five girls.

Once the interviews were scheduled, the researcher conducted these interviews in their school classrooms during the school day. The researcher asked the questions prepared for the focus groups and interviews and digitally audio-recorded each of the

interviews.

During the first one-on-one interview, the researcher asked the same set of questions that were asked in the focus group, as well as an addition set of questions. Once these interviews were conducted, they were completely transcribed.

Once the researcher received the transcripts, the researcher read and identified any recurring themes or responses. The researcher then generated a list of the identified themes as well as formed questions around those themes in order to gain more detail and information in the second one-on-one interview. The researcher also extracted quotes that were interesting and worth further investigation from the participant.

In the second one-on-one interview, participants were asked to elaborate on the themes that emerged from the first round of interviews, as well as any other thoughts or stories they may have wanted to share or elaborate on. During this interview the researcher also referred back to direct quotations from the previous interview for further analysis. After these interviews took place, the interviews were completely transcribed, read, and analyzed. From the total of 12 interviews conducted, the researcher chose to explore the cases of two of the students, who were identified as struggling readers.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability assesses the degree to which others can confirm the findings. In this study, confirmability was achieved with an audit trail. The audit trail for this study included audio-recordings of the interviews, complete transcripts for each of the interviews, field notes taken during the interviews, and the original GMRT tests and MRQ questionnaires that participants completed. The list of

themes generated from the interviews and the list of participants is also available.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability assesses to what extent the knowledge produced is generalizable. The data collected from this study is not transferable to all students who lack motivation to read but may provide information that could be explored further. The sample was taken from a small population of students who were in a unique educational system, the BOCES/career center educational system. The researcher has provided a sufficient description of the students in the study so that this data could be generalizable for similar cases.

Dependability

In qualitative research, dependability determines whether another researcher would obtain the same results, if they repeated the study. In this study, in the same context, the researcher may obtain the same results to a varying extent. Since the sample size was a small number of case studies, reproducibility of results may vary.

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility refers to whether the results are believable from the perspective of the participant. In this study, the results were emailed to the participants to check for credibility. Furthermore, since the students had no incentive to falsify their answers, there was no reason to believe that the responses to the questions were not honest. Multiple interviews were conducted so that the repetition of responses could be checked for the validity of their answers. Since group interviews as well as individual interviews were conducted, the participants had an opportunity to change and/or add on to any responses that they may have censored in front of their peers. This section outlines the methodological approach that the researcher took to conduct this study. The researcher chose to use a qualitative case study to gain an in-depth look at two cases of students who were struggling readers and have low

motivation. Although the methodology of this study changed over time, the researcher felt that this was the best method to address the research questions posed. The following chapter will examine the findings of the study, which were illustrated through the major themes which arose from the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This chapter explores the two cases examined in this study. The following chapter is divided into two main sections: Taylor and Emily (names were changed). Each case is divided into three sections: a deep description of each girl and her literacy history, an examination of the research questions in reference to each girl, and the themes that arose out of the interviews. It is important to distinguish between “doing the reading” and “reading.” For the two cases, sometimes reading is viewed as a grueling task where “doing the reading” may not be a pleasurable and interesting experience but is done because the reading is simply a task they need to complete, whereas “reading” is an experience they participate in because there is a set purpose and a motivating reason for them to be engaged. The research questions that are addressed in the second section of each case are the following:

1. Why are students not motivated to read?
2. What are the reasons/purposes that students read?
3. How do students view reading differently in their CTE class compared to their other content area classes?
4. Do students think reading is important for their future career?
5. When did students first begin to struggle with reading?
6. When students struggle with reading, how does it affect their self-esteem?
7. What are students’ previous experiences with reading?

Taylor

Broad Picture/Portrait

Taylor was an 11th grade student enrolled in a CTE center located in upstate New York. She was enrolled in an equine science class, where she was learning about all aspects of horses through traditional lessons, as well as hands-on experience. She was very enthusiastic to talk about this class because she was so interested in learning about equine science and working with the horses.

These students were in a unique environment where the text used in the classroom is very specific to their discipline and authentic to the text they will encounter in their future career. For Taylor, who wants to work with horses, every piece of reading she did in the class helped her become an expert on equine science, and she was in an environment where her peers had the same interests and goals that she did. The social relations she had not only helped her create her identity as part of the equine science field, but also they helped her create her identity as being distinct within that field. It was obvious that she had a love for horses and was motivated to engage in the reading for this class, even if she struggled, but the interviews started to reveal *why* she was so interested in this field and *why* she was motivated to do the reading for this class and not for others. What became evident through the interviews, which is rarely addressed in current literature, was the importance of specific events that had occurred in her life which have affected her psychological development related to literacy.

Research Questions Overall

Taylor read for the purpose of escaping her everyday life and to gain more knowledge in her interests and future career area. Although Taylor struggled with

reading in general, she was motivated to complete the reading in this particular class, and sometimes to read extra if the text was interesting to her. However, this was not the way she felt about her other classes. She admitted that sometimes she did not read because “most of [the readings] are just kind of really boring.” In her CTE class though, she recognized that she needed to read because she will “need to know it when [she] goes off to college” and that if she did not read, she would “probably wind up not doing what [she] wants to do when [she] gets older.” It was evident that she had developed a future career goal and would do the reading, even though it may have been difficult for her.

Taylor first began to struggle with reading when she stopped reading after her parents’ divorce. She stopped reading from the age of seven to around the age of twelve. Taylor’s first memory of struggling with reading occurred in the fourth grade, when students were assigned a play to read for class. She had difficulty understanding what the play was about and what the discussion around the play meant.

As she struggled with reading, and thus in her academic classes, she felt “Annoyed. Mad. I wanted to throw the book...I dreaded going to that class everyday...it was like, Oh, you can’t do this.” The way that struggling with reading made her feel began to affect her confidence in her intelligence, as well as her confidence in herself.

Taylor had a long history with reading. She started reading at an early age with her parents and older siblings. She loved to read, and it was an activity the family all did together. She recalls, “By the time I was in kindergarten, I was reading to everybody in the class instead of my teacher.” That all abruptly changed when her parents divorced when she was seven years old. She said, “I didn’t like reading anymore because it just brought back memories.” Taylor stopped reading for several years and then began to read again in the seventh grade when she had to read a book

and enjoyed it. During this time, she also began to journal in order to sort out her emotions and feelings.

Themes

Many themes arose during the interviews that address Taylor's motivation with literacy. The themes that arose were her purposes to read, which included importance to her future career, interest in the text, reading to apply, and reading to escape. The themes also included writing to escape, history with reading, and characteristics of text which motivated or intimidated Taylor to read.

Purposes to read. When Taylor was asked what why she read, several themes arose. Taylor read because she knew that reading in her CTE class was important to her career, and that in order to succeed in that career, she was going to need to know certain information and be able to read. She also read text that she found related to her personal interests, which were horses and paranormal investigating. She preferred to read text that she could either relate to her own personal life or relate to in the field. She also read text that she knew she would need to apply to a hands-on activity such as working with the horses in the barn. In addition to reading text that was important to her success in her career, she also enjoyed reading text to escape the pressures and drama of her life.

Importance to future career. During the interviews, it became evident that one of the major purposes Taylor read was because she was aware that reading is necessary and important to succeeding in her future career of working with handicap children and horses. This theme may be more unique to CTE because many of the students enrolled in a CTE class are enrolled because they intend to pursue a career in that field, and so therefore they have already begun to set career goals.

When Taylor was asked why she read, she explained that she read in order to gain more knowledge about horses and special needs children, and that it was

information she was going to need to know when she went to college, “[I read] to learn, because it’s what I want to get into when I do graduate and go off to college... I think the knowledge is more important than the grade...because it’s my career choice.” Taylor had made plans to attend a local college when she graduated and was aware of the reading she would need to complete in college. She also found the information to be valuable and more than just an assignment to complete in order to receive a grade.

When asked why she read in this class and not in her other classes, Taylor said, “I do the reading in this class because it’s [something] I’m going to need to know for when I go off to college.” Then when asked what would happen if she didn’t do the reading in this class, she explained, “[If I didn’t read] I’d probably wind up not doing what I want to do when I get older.” Again, Taylor found the reading for this class to be valuable information that would help her succeed in the future. It was also evident that neglecting the reading in this class would have a greater impact on her life than just a poor grade for it would jeopardize her ability to pursue the career of her choice.

Interest. Another theme that arose during interviews was that Taylor preferred to read text that was related to her interest or sounded interesting to her. The comments from Taylor reinforced the importance of personal interest for engaging students with their reading. In CTE, this may be all the more important, considering the elective nature of CTE courses in high schools. Thus, students enroll in CTE courses because they are interested in the content.

When asked what made her choose to read text or not for pleasure, she said, “If it’s something I like to read then I’ll actually read it.” This showed that one of the motivating factors for Taylor when she was choosing something to read was her interest level in the subject. For Taylor, if the text did not look interesting, then she would not bother reading it.

However, when asked about completing the reading in her CTE class, she said, “[I read in this class] for more information. Just things I want to learn about...if it interests you.” While all the text Taylor read in this class may not have been the same text she would chose to read for pleasure, it was evident that she had a different purpose for reading in this class. Taylor understood that the reading in this class was related to her interests and that completing the reading in this class would give her more knowledge and understanding of her career interest. When asked what made a reading assignment fun, she replied, “If it interests you.”

Taylor had a particular interest in paranormal investigations and would read nonfiction texts about paranormal investigations in order to learn more about topics related to it. When asked about what she read for pleasure, she said, “Reading for pleasure is kind of like, what interests me.” Taylor felt that reading for pleasure was unique in that she could read whatever appealed to her, and she had choice in what she read as opposed to school where she may have had to read text that she did not want to. When talking about a time when she was not interested in a book, she recalls, “My friend had me [read this book] and I got to the third chapter and I was like I’m not into this. I don’t like it. So it’s like here you can take the book back.” This again illustrated how Taylor’s interest level in the text played a major role in her motivation to read the text despite what her peers may have chosen to read.

Relevancy to life. Another theme that was reinforced through the interviews conducted with Taylor was the idea that she was interested in text and therefore motivated to read text that she could find a personal relation to. The text may have been either related to her career and personal interests or the text may have been one she could relate to her personal life and experiences.

Taylor enjoyed reading texts that she could relate to her own life or that were about real life. When asked if she liked stories about real life, she said, “Yes, they

excited me...you know, this really happened.” Taylor was interested in reading about real-life situations because they told true stories that she could learn from and relate to. This theme became evident again when she was asked what makes a reading interesting. She said, “The fact, you know, they tie into real life things.” This was not only true about text read for school but also for pleasure. Taylor said, “[I read] to either learn about something or to know what they experienced, see if they’re going through the same thing as you.” She talked about reading poems and song lyrics that she could relate to and find emotional expression through. When Taylor could relate to a text, she found a more personal connection to the text and was therefore more motivated to read.

At the end of one interview, Taylor talked about a book she had read: “I like Chicken Soup books and it was about a girl who was going through depression because her father left, which I kind of related to because my dad stopped talking to me...” When asked if it helped her deal with her own situation, she said, “Yes.” This again showed how relating to the text on a personal level could motivate Taylor to read the text.

Read to apply. Like many CTE classes, oftentimes the text that was used in the classroom was directly applied to a project or hands on activity. Taylor expressed how she liked, and was motivated to read in, her CTE class because she knew she would be applying the information to a project, activity, or situation. Taylor said, “I like a lot of the stuff that we read in this class to stuff we do at the barn...because you have to know the parts of the horse in case something is wrong with him.” This also showed how she read text that she knew would be important to her future career and would help her safely learn when she was in the barn with the horses.

Reading to Escape. One theme that was reinforced through the interviews was reading to escape. Many adolescents use reading as a way to get away from life for a

little while and immerse themselves in a different world.

Taylor explained that she liked to read novels on her own time because it provided her with a chance to escape reality or the stresses of everyday life. She said, “I used to read a lot because it was kind of my way to like escape reality...once in a while I can go have like three books that I just read to escape.” Taylor’s history with reading was unique in that, instead of using reading to escape the trauma of her parents’ divorce, she stopped reading because of the memories reading evoked. However, although it was evident that she did use reading to escape occasionally, Taylor seemed to use writing as a way to escape more often than reading, which is explored in the next theme of *writing to escape*.

Writing to escape. *Writing to escape* was a theme that arose in interviews with both of the girls. Whether it was writing in a journal, writing a short story, or writing poems, Taylor turned to writing to escape and to make sense of the pressures of her life.

Taylor first recalled when she started to write in seventh grade. “A lot happened in my life...I couldn’t take it. I had a breakdown...I sat in my sister’s room...for three hours in a corner. Because I was upset and I just like started writing...ever since then, I get upset and write.” While Taylor’s first experience of writing to escape may have been the last solution she could think of to deal with the situation, it had now become the way that she escaped the drama in her life.

When first asked about writing for pleasure, she said, “I have to say I write more than I read [for] expression...I’m writing a story about [grandfather]...and just kind of like my way of expressing what happened and how I pictured him.” When asked why she wrote, she explained, “[I write] to let out what I feel...and then just to write to escape.” She further explained using writing to escape everyday stresses when she said, “If I’m upset I put music on and I write.” Taylor also found that writing to

express her feelings was more personal because “you’re writing what you want to write about. Not reading what somebody else wrote.” This again showed how big of a role writing played in her escape process. Recalling Taylor’s personal history with reading, the next theme of *previous experiences with reading* arose.

Previous experiences with reading. In order to understand why Taylor currently struggles with reading and often lacks motivation to read, it was important to explore her previous experiences with reading. This theme included the frequency that her parents read, her early childhood experiences, and her attitude towards reading, as well as her recent experience with reading. Exploring Taylor’s history, it was evident what caused her attitude to change from enjoying reading to avoiding reading.

Taylor had a long history with reading. When she was younger, she used to read all the time and enjoyed it. When asked if her older siblings used to read to her, she said, “I’d normally read to them.” Taylor was the youngest of thirteen children, and she explains that her favorite book was *Something in the Attic*, which was passed down from all the children in her family. She continued to explain how good she got, saying, “By the time I was in kindergarten I was reading to everybody in the class instead of my teacher.” This confidence and memory was evident of her positive attitude towards reading and how it was a pleasant memory of her childhood.

Unfortunately, it became clear that Taylor’s parents’ divorce and her best friend passing away had a major impact on her attitude towards reading: “My parents got divorced when I was seven...I didn’t like reading anymore because it just brought back memories.” She went on to explain, “It’s just kind of like I mean, you know, maybe this is what ruined it so why should I keep reading.” While she later realized that this was not the case, it did stop her from reading until the last year before this study. When asked what made her start to read again, she said, “I read a book that I liked in school and there was a second book that came along with it and I started

reading that one and then like I just was like oh, hey, you know this is pretty cool.” Taylor was able to eventually change her attitude about reading, but, unfortunately, this did not occur without consequences. Due to the large amount of time that Taylor stopped reading, when she started to read again she struggled with it.

Taylor recalled the first time she struggled with reading, which was in the fourth grade, and it made her feel bad about herself. She explained how they were reading a play in class and she just could not understand it. When asked how it made her feel, she said, “[I felt] lost. It was like, ‘Oh, you can’t do this’ ...that’s when I really started to not like it.” When asked how it made her feel about the class, she said, “I dreaded going to that class everyday just because of that book.” It was evident that the frustration and life changes that Taylor had experienced resulted in her negative attitude toward reading and that even with her attitude change towards reading, she still struggled. However, Taylor did identify several characteristics about reading assignments and text that either motivate or intimidate her to read, which are discussed in the next theme of *reading characteristics*.

Reading characteristics. During the interviews, it became clear that different aspects of text can make the reading easier to understand or more intimidating, affecting the motivation that Taylor had to read the text. There were several characteristics of text that motivated Taylor to complete the reading and made the reading easier to understand. When asked about what would make the reading in school easier, she replied, “Make [reading] a little bit more exciting, like a few more pictures here and there, words that are important highlighted, bold print.” She talked about ways the author makes the reading more interesting, “If the author uses a lot of imagery...then it starts to paint a picture and it’s easier for me to read.” She also talked about how pictures can make reading easier: “Pictures help. Especially if you’re trying to picture something.” It was evident that text presented as a story line, or that

the use of visual aids assisted Taylor in understanding the reading content and made the act of reading more enjoyable. It was also evident that identifying key words in the text in a way that made them stand out was helpful to her. There were also several characteristics of the page layout that made the text more difficult for her to read and deterred Taylor from completing the reading. When asked about what made reading intimidating, she said, "If the chapters are really long I don't really want to read it." Length appeared to be an intimidating factor for Taylor. She recalled a book she had to read recently called *The Glass Menagerie*. She explains, "I am not a big fan of that...it just seems to take forever." Taylor also did not enjoy textbooks. When asked whether she liked reading textbooks, she said, "You know, nothing exciting is going to happen, so why read it."

Through the interviews conducted with Taylor, many themes were reinforced in regards to her motivation to read. Looking at her previous experiences with reading provided some evidence that may have contributed to her changes in attitude towards reading. Taylor enjoyed reading reading text that aligned with her personal and career interests, as well as text that she found relevancy in and knew that she would be applying the text. Taylor also enjoyed reading and writing to escape the stress of her life and expand her creativity. In the second case study, the interviews with Emily paint a similar picture with many of the same themes arising.

Emily

Broad Picture/Portrait

Emily was a ninth grader at Immaculata Academy in Hamburg, NY, which is a comprehensive high school that has both academic and CTE classes. She was very enthusiastic about technology and wanted to be a photographer when she was older. She liked books where she could use imagery and her imagination. Many of her friends were older and went to a different high school, but her parents made her

change to her current school even though she does not enjoy this school as much.

Research Questions Overall

Emily had trouble reading text that she found really boring. She did not like to read text that she did not find relevant to her day to day life, but, if she could see how the text was related to her or how she could use it in real life, she was more motivated to read. Emily also liked the ability to choose the text that she was assigned to read and was more motivated to do the reading if she got a choice of text.

Emily liked to read text where she could expand her imagination and be creative. She also liked to read text that was about something that she was interested in. She enjoyed reading because she liked to share her ideas with her peers and friends, and she also stated she like to read to escape the stresses of high school and everyday life.

Emily viewed reading in her CTE class differently than reading in her other classes. She liked to read in her CTE class because she was able to apply the information to a hands on project, which gave her a sense of accomplishment. She also liked to read in her CTE class because the reading was relevant to topics in which she was interested. She found the reading in her other classes to be boring and irrelevant. She felt that the reading in her other classes contained a lot of facts to remember and she often felt that it was unclear what facts she needed to know and learn.

Emily was interested in photography but was still unclear as to what she wanted to do pursue for her future profession. She did feel that reading was important to succeed in whatever she chose for her future career because reading broadened her vocabulary and provided her with greater knowledge.

Emily could not remember a specific time when she first began to struggle

with reading, but she did recall several times when she struggled in classes with reading because it was boring and she just did not want to do it. She also remembered how it made her dislike going to the class and made her feel like she was not smart enough because she could not understand the reading.

Neither one of Emily's parents read a lot, but they did read with her when she was younger. Emily used to be interested in a series of short stories, but, as the books got longer, she lost interest because they became more intimidating. She also began to feel pressure to get a good grade, and this increased her negative attitude towards reading.

Themes

The researcher identified several themes from analyzing interviews that addressed Emily's motivation with literacy. These themes included: 1.) purposes to read, which included a.) interest in the text, b.) relevancy to her life, c.) reading to apply, and 4.) reading to escape, 2.) writing to escape, 3.) history with reading, and 4.) characteristics of text, which motivate or deter Emily from reading.

Purposes to read. When Emily was asked what and why she read, several themes arose. Emily read text that was related to her personal interests. She preferred to read text that she could personally relate to as well as reading text that she knew she would need to apply to a her hands-on activities. She also enjoyed reading text to escape the pressures and drama of her life.

Interest. A major theme that arose during the interviews in terms of Emily's purposes for reading was that Emily preferred to read text that was related to her personal interests. Emily enjoyed photography and was interested in technology, but had yet to establish a future career goal. Again, the comments from Emily reinforced

the importance of personal interest for engaging students with their reading. While Emily was enrolled in a CTE class, it was not necessarily because she had chosen this field as a career goal; however, because she was interested in technology, this class did seem to be more interesting to her because it often covered topics in that area.

Emily liked to read text that was about a topic or situation that held her interest. She liked the reading in her CTE class because she was interested in technology. When asked about the reading in her CTE class, she said, “I am really into technology so just knowing how everything else works in a computer. It’s really fun to read.” It was evident that the reading she did in this class often aligned with her personal interest in technology, and therefore she was motivated to read in this class. When asked about reading in this class and how it was different from her other classes, Emily said, “It’s all technical and it’s real, so there’s a lot more terms...you have to study the terms to understand them and get what they’re talking about, but it’s still fun, because I’m interested in the computer type of book right now.” It was evident that this class provided reading that was interesting to Emily which motivated her to complete the reading. When asked what motivated her to read a book or not to read a book, she said, “It’s just a lack of interest that motivates me to read or not to read.” This provided evidence that one of the major purposes Emily engaged in reading was her interest level in the material.

Emily also enjoyed reading the fantasies that she read in her English class. When asked what makes that reading enjoyable, she explained, “It’s fun because I can make up the scenes and what the people look like because you can’t do that in movies, but it’s really fun because I can mix things I’ve experienced and things I’ve seen with the book and the imagery it gives you.” Unlike Taylor, Emily had yet to establish a career goal and therefore the theme *importance to career* was not prevalent in her responses about her purposes to read. This also explained how Emily liked stories

where she could use her own experiences in life and relate them to the text, which leads to the next theme of *Relate to it/real life*.

Relevancy to life. Again, another theme that was reinforced through the interviews conducted with Taylor and Emily was the idea that if Emily was interested in the text content, therefore motivated to read it, she could find a some personal relation to it, whether it was her past life experience or her present day personal interest in the subject matter.

Emily liked to read text that she could relate to her real life. Emily said, “If you know you have to understand something and you could actually use it in real life that motivates me to remember it and use it for other purposes when I need it.” This showed how Emily liked to read text that she could personally connect to or find a use for in her life. Emily talked about the reading in her other classes, saying, “There are times where it’s just really boring and that I didn’t read it because you just don’t find any interest or relation to it.” This provided evidence of the relevance that reading in CTE can provide for students because they can use the information they learn from the readings in their everyday lives, making it more relevant and therefore interesting.

Emily went on to talk about her algebra class and said, “It didn’t relate to anything that we’re ever really going to do in like field of interest and stuff. So I would always get into arguments with the teachers and how it wouldn’t relate to real life and how you’re never going to use it. So it’s like useless information.” This illustrated how Emily was not motivated to read and engage in reading that she could not find a purpose in or relation to. This also explained how Emily was more motivated to read text that she knows she could apply to something in real life, which is further explored in the next theme of *read to apply*.

Read to apply. The theme of *read to apply* was again reinforced through the interviews conducted with Emily. Emily found that, if she was going to apply the

information she was reading, it was easier to understand. It was also evident that if she knew she could apply the information to her own life or a project, she was more motivated to engage in the reading.

During the interviews, Emily talked about a project they had recently completed in her CTE class, saying, “Applying [text] to something like we put computers together at one point and we had to apply the text and we had to read directions pretty much and that really helped. It really helped click and now I remember it.” It was clear that when Emily applied the text she read, she not only was motivated to read but she also remembered the concepts better.

When talking about another computer project she did, she explained, “You get a sense of accomplishment. It actually works when you plug it all in...the hands-on work that helps you remember.” When talking about the instructions and notes she used during the project, she said, “They get really confusing at some times but when you get like the hands on things you understand.” This further explained how, although the text may have been confusing and difficult, if it was applied to a project, Emily would not only engage in the text but she would also remember it better through the hands-on aspect of the activity.

While in CTE Emily was more motivated to read because of the application of the text, she also enjoyed reading in her free time to escape the drama of school and pressures of academics, leading to the next theme of *reading to escape*.

Reading to escape. Another theme that was reinforced through the interviews with Emily was *reading to escape*. Not only did Emily enjoy reading text that she could relate to and find interesting in school, but she enjoyed reading to forget about the chaos in school around her.

This first became evident when Emily was asked why she read for pleasure. She explained, “It’s just different because it’s not everyday life.” This provided

evidence that she enjoyed reading text about stories that she did not encounter on a day-to-day basis. When asked if she read outside of school for pleasure, she said, “I read outside of school sometimes because it just takes you to different places instead of me sitting in my room when it’s like somewhere else.” This again provided evidence that Emily enjoyed reading books on her free time that allowed her to “escape” her life for a little while. In another part of the interview, Emily explained, “I [like reading] because it gives me a chance to expand my imagination and be creative with imagery in my head about the book and what’s going on.” This also illustrated how Emily enjoyed reading books that took her to another place where she could be creative and use her imagination. While Emily tended to read books to escape more than Taylor did, she also enjoyed writing to escape and to use her imagination as well, which is presented in the next theme of *writing to escape*.

Writing to escape. Writing to escape was another theme that arose during the interviews. Emily enjoyed writing as a way to express her creativity and use her imagination. While Taylor used writing as an outlet for her emotions, Emily used writing as a way to be creative and sometimes as a supplement to reading. She liked to use her creativity and imagination to write short stories and other types of writing. She said, “I’m kind of a writer so after I read a book I write what I think would happen after that or something related to that, after I change it the way I would like it...getting the chance to get away from whatever else is going on.” This was a unique use of writing. Utilizing her creativity, Emily would change the ending to stories to better meet her needs

Previous experiences with reading. In order to gain a better understanding of why Emily read the way she did and why she felt about reading the way she did, it was important to explore her history with reading and her family’s history with reading.

Neither one of Emily’s parents read often but they read to her when she was

little. She used to really like reading when she was little, saying, “I used to be really interested into like a really long series and...I kept getting book after book and they were little short ones, it was in third grade but my teacher really encouraged us to read.” This provided evidence that there was a time in Emily’s life when she viewed reading as a pleasurable activity. It did become clear that this changed as she got older and the length of the books got longer. Emily explained that as the books got longer, she began to lose interest. Emily said, “The books got bigger and they just looked more intimidating.” However, a lot of Emily’s friends read and she often got recommendations from them: “I got a lot of book recommendations from some of my friends and yeah they read, like they’re all older....but they still give me book recommendations like ‘Zen and the Art of Motorcycling Maintenance,’ I got recommended, that was a really good book. I liked that.” This not only shows that she now enjoyed reading some books but that she often will read books that her peers recommend.

When asked about a time when she struggled with reading, Emily reminisced stating, “I just feel like I failed. Let yourself down knowing that you tried your hardest and you still didn’t get a good grade on it.” This emphasized the way that struggling with the reading in a class impacted the confidence she had in herself as a reader and a student. When asked how it made her feel about her class, she said, “You always dread going to that class because you’d have to read something else...it just makes me feel that my intelligence level isn’t as high as I thought it would be because of my comprehension [of] the stories we’re reading.” This again, not only showed the way struggling with reading damaged her self-esteem, but also how it impacted the way she felt about the class and the reading assignment. Although she struggled with reading at times, Emily identified features of the text that made reading easier to understand and increased her motivation to engage in the text, and also cited features

that deterred her from reading. This leads to the next theme of *reading characteristics*.

Reading characteristics. During the interviews, it became clear that there were certain characteristics of text that motivated Emily to read or deterred her from reading the text. There were several aspects of text that made reading easier for Emily. Emily enjoyed reading text where she could use her imagination and imagery. To explain how this helped, Emily gave an example: “If you’re talking to somebody like in the Twilight books they give really good imagery about the people’s facial expressions and the tone of their voices so you really know what their attitude is towards that conversation and how they’re feeling about it and you can really get the mood and the atmosphere of the whole story.” This example showed how imagery could really help her better understand what was going on in the story.

When asked why she liked reading for pleasure more than for academic reasons, Emily said, “It’s my choice and I like to read.” This also was evidence of the fact that she liked to choose the books she read because she felt a sense of agency. When asked about the difference between reading for pleasure versus reading for school, she explained, “It’s just like there’s more pressure when it’s [academic], like you have to get a grade on it so to me that’s just more stressful but when it’s just like my free time I get to read it’s not as stressful, because you can read whatever you want at your pace.” This provided evidence that text in an academic setting could create pressure for Emily to understand the material and also created pressure for her to finish the text in a limited time.

There were some types of reading that Emily did not enjoy, “assignments about the boring biographies and stuff I don’t really enjoy and I don’t try as hard.” Emily further explained her dislike for biographies because “there are a lot of dates to remember and events.” Emily also thought that the length of a book could influence her desire to read, “The books got bigger and they just look more intimidating.”

There were some other characteristics that help her understand the text, such as bolded words and diagrams: “[bolded words help] it really brings out what you’re supposed to know and then you remember it.” She also said, “I think it would be easier if they had like hands-on diagrams” Again, similar to Taylor, Emily found text easier to read if there was some sort of visual aid, whether it was the use of imagery or pictures and diagrams.

Conclusion

Both girls began their lives enjoying reading. Their parents read to them when they were young. However, some event or “critical incident” changed their views of reading early in their lives. Both girls struggled with reading and were often unmotivated to read different types of text. Throughout the interviews conducted, many of the same themes arose for both of the girls with limited variation occurring. The major difference between the two girls, with regards to their motivation to read, was that Taylor had found a motivation to read through her CTE class in support of her career goals. Emily had yet to find that motivation and therefore could not make the connection between the reading she did for school and how it could impact her future career. The major common themes between the two girls were their purposes for reading and their use of creative writing.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Cross Comparison

Four main themes arose during the interviews and were similar between each of these girls, but there was still some variation between the two within each theme. This can be due to their ages and different levels of development as well as their life experience. Many of the themes that arose in the interviews are reinforced by previous research (van der Mandele & Park, 2008).

The first theme that arose was *purpose to read*. Both girls liked to read for similar reasons for the most part. The first sub section of *purpose to read* was *importance to career*, describing the purpose that one reads because it will be important to their future success in their chosen career. One theme that was different between the two cases was the theme of *importance to their future career*. Wigfield (1994) claims that a student will achieve a task based on their beliefs, values and goals, such as a career goal. Many of Taylor's responses to interview questions discussed what she wanted to do in the future and less about the grade she would receive in the class. She was motivated to read in her CTE class because she found the reading to be valuable. Taylor had determined her future career and was motivated to read knowing it would help her succeed in her chosen career. Emily had yet to choose her future career, which may have affected her motivation to read because she did not have that motivating factor of a career goal and the correlation between reading assignments and that goal.

This may have major implications for the way that schools teach students. The obvious difference between the two girls was that one student had chosen a career and thus found a serious focus and motivating factor to engage in the reading, while the other girl had yet to establish a career goal and thus lacked that motivating factor. This

distinction may be indicative of their age differences, but it does distract from the fact that Taylor was learning as an adult and preparing for a future career, which had drastically changed her level of motivation to read. This concept of adult learning may be more applicable in a CTE classroom than in other content area courses, due to the fact that many of the students are enrolled in these classes because it is in the chosen career field. If teachers were able to find a way to apply adult learning theories to their classrooms, students may find more relevancies in the text or at least utility value for their reading.

The second sub section was *interest*. Swan (2004) defines intrinsic motivation as wanting to read something because of personal interests and curiosity. Both students would read the text if it was interesting to them or related to something they were interested in. Again, a difference between the two girls was that a major part of Taylor's interests was related to her future career of equine science. Emily was interested in technology so her CTE class did align with what could potentially be a future career field, but she was still unsure of exactly what she wanted to do, therefore relating the class to her future career was not as evident as Taylor's. Similar to this theme is the next sub section, *relevancy*. Knoester (2009) argues that students do not just read based on their ability, but they chose to read a text because they feel it is part of their identity creation, culture or beliefs. Both girls were more motivated to read text if they were able to find relevancy to the text or relate it to their life and/or interests. Both of the girls enjoyed reading text that helped them deal with the many issues adolescent face, as well as text that could be applied in the classroom or to their interests. Though both themes may be well established when discussing adolescent literacy, many teachers still do not use text that is applicable to their students' lives. Rarely do teachers stray away from the textbook and assign other forms of text for reading. Yet by using current event articles and non-fiction novels in the classroom

that relate to both career and general interest, teachers may motivate those students who have an embedded dislike towards textbooks, generating more interest in the subject matter and improving understanding of the concepts learned.

The fourth subsection was *reading to apply*. Again, both girls found purpose in reading the text if they knew they would be applying the text to a project or activity, or might utilize the knowledge gained in a situation they might encounter in the near future. Furthermore, they were both motivated to read in their CTE class because most of the text they read in the class would be directly applied. In addition to reading text to apply to a project, both girls felt that reinforcing what they read with a hands-on project not only helped them better understand the content but also helped them remember what they had read.

The last sub section of this theme was *reading to escape*. Both girls used reading to escape from the pressures of their everyday lives. Emily seemed to use reading to escape more often than Taylor did. Taylor used reading to escape, but turned to writing more often to express herself and deal with her emotions. Many adolescents use reading to build identity and escape the pressures of their lives, however some students do not. Because this purpose of reading can provide an outlet for students and a way for students to unwind from the drama of high school, teachers should encourage outside reading where students can chose a book on their own and are relieved of the pressures of classroom deadlines and grades. This theme led to the next major theme, *writing to escape*.

The second major theme that arose in the interviews was *writing to escape*. This theme was not originally anticipated to be a finding in the interviews, but both girls brought it up as a way to escape and foster their creativity. While writing is not often a major focus in literacy, it appeared to be a major interest in both girls' lives and therefore was defined as a theme. While both girls use writing as a coping

mechanism, Taylor seemed to use more forms of writing and use it as a way to escape and deal with many of the events in her life. Both girls enjoyed creative writing with short stories and journaling, but Taylor also liked to write poems and songs. Taylor also found that as she had started writing more frequently her grades in English have improved as well. Free writing can greatly benefit students' reflections on concepts learned or text they have just read. Many students enjoy writing on their own and using their creativity and imagination or simply reflect on a lesson or reading and students should be encouraged to do so.

The third theme that arose was *previous experiences with reading*. Van Schooten and De Gloppe (2004) found that if a student's parents did not read a lot, then the students are less likely to read. While this theme may not have provided a measurable way to improve literacy practices and implementation in the classroom, the girls' previous experiences reinforced their changing and current attitudes towards reading and provided some insight as to why they had their current motivation levels with reading. Neither one of the girls' parents read a lot to them as young children, yet both girls were read to as children. However, there were major differences with their previous experiences in life and with reading that will be explored further in this chapter. It was also important to note that it was evident that regardless of their previous experiences, both girls are similarly motivated by purposes which are illustrated in the first theme.

The last theme that arose was *characteristics of text*. While this theme included various aspects of text that either motivated or intimidated the girls to read, there were specific similarities for each girl. During the interviews it was evident that not only were both girls intimidated by the length of text, but the changing length of text was a contributing factor to both girls starting to dislike reading when the books started getting longer. Although they did not explicitly mention that the density of the text and

the difficulty of the terms also contributed, it could be implied that this is the case since they both preferred bolded terms to help them identify and understand the key terms. Both girls also found text easier to understand if there were pictures and diagrams or some form of a visual aid. Both girls found text easier to understand if it was supplemented with a hands-on activity to reinforce the text.

Both girls also agreed that when imagery is used with text as well as dialogue, and the text is presented with a storyline, it was easier to comprehend the text. This reinforced the idea that using authentic texts and trade books may benefit students who have low motivation to read and/or are struggling readers. Trade books provide a way for students to learn concepts and topics through story form as well as generate interest in a topic.

Other differences between the two girls that were not explicitly expressed in the themes were their developmental stages in life and critical incidences they had experienced. Current literature tends to discuss how teachers and researchers can change pedagogical practices to improve student motivation to read, which often extend beyond the text and the classroom. However, these solutions rarely address why these students lack motivation to read and often offer blanket approach solutions to address the literacy needs of students. By examining the history of the case of Taylor through the lenses of several adolescent theories, other possible reasons for the lack of motivation of some students become evident that are not addressed in current literature.

Adolescent Development

Josselson's theory of identity creation through unconscious psychological activity. Taylor, against what her current motivation level may imply, used to read all the time with her parents and siblings. Recalling her experience with reading when she was younger, she said, "I started reading and then by the time I was in kindergarten I was reading to everybody in my class instead of my teacher." It was an experience that made her happy and was a proud moment in her life. After her parents divorced, Taylor no longer wanted to read, "My parents got divorced when I was seven...I didn't like reading anymore because it just brought back memories." Current literature doesn't often address the role that critical events in a child's early can play in their future motivation to read. "Memories were organized by feelings rather than events... we connect not to the superficial aspects of people but to the deep strata where we experience them to reside emotionally" (Josselson, 2007, p 28.). Josselson suggests that reading can be an emotional event. Adolescents *experience* reading. They feel and relate emotion to this experience, whether it is the plot in a book or the context in which the reading takes place. They link the idea of reading to the feelings that they have with the experience. Taylor seemed to have linked reading to a time when her parents were together and happy. After they divorced, she could not experience reading without experiencing unpleasant memories. This is not to say that it was the only reason she felt the way she does about reading.

Taylor lost her best friend when she was seven years old. Instead of grieving she began to visit his grave with a digital recorder and talk to him and then listened to the recorder believing to hear what she thought were his responses. Unfortunately, this coping mechanism did not facilitate Taylor's interaction with other humans, providing the physical and emotional bond and support that is so necessary for identity formation. This may have resulted in her difficulty maintaining peer relationships: "I

have major mood swings so like one minute I can be like hey, let's work together. And the next minute I'm just like don't touch me...I get annoyed easily." Josselson believes that individuals can create illusions, based on what they need and want at that time, and that they can be perceived as reality but can be shattered by an event that reveals the true nature of the illusion. People use these illusions to fill a role in their lives. In Taylor's case it was someone who she could talk to and attempt to find comfort in. It is unclear what stopped Taylor from visiting her friend's grave, but it does appear that she had created an illusion of him after he died (Josselson, 2007).

The appropriate action that Taylor could have taken after his death would have been for her to connect with existing friends, or to create new friendships. "Within female friendship we satisfy our psychological hunger to explore different thoughts and feelings, to expand our understanding of our social and emotional world" (Apter & Josselson, 1999, p. 1). What would have been more beneficial for Taylor is to have a physical friendship. With a real friendship, she could have found comfort, support and possibly develop an understanding for the events that had happened, as opposed to isolating herself. Josselson and Apter further argue that friends can also serve a variety of emotional and developmental needs (1999). Having a group of close friends could have prevented Taylor from developing all these negative defense mechanisms. It could also be argued that with a close group of friends, Taylor's identity formation may have not been so disrupted and confusing.

Kegan's theory of meaning making of the self and identity construction.

While Taylor struggled with identity and friendships during her middle school years, she had found a passion that she could share with others in her Equine Science class. She had decided what she wanted to do when she finished high school and college, and now wanted to gain knowledge to create that person. For Taylor, the CTE class offered a much greater place than just the classroom where she learned about her

future career. Being surrounded by peers who shared similar interests provided a support group that helped her to build and solidify her own identity; Kegan referred to this as a *holding environment* (Kegan, 1982). Taylor was able to build her identity in an environment that helped her gain more knowledge about horses and provided her with a culture that she could strongly identify with, yet also gave her the support and opportunity to differentiate herself within that environment, forming her own individual identity (Kegan, 1982). Kegan argues that individuals need this supportive environment to help them transition through the different developmental stages and become an individual. This type of environment also helped her create the person who she wants to become.

Freud's theory of mechanisms of defense. Taylor no longer wanted to be a part of anything that reminded her of the person she was or the life she had before she was seven when her parents divorced, such as her love for reading. Freud would explain this behavior using the theory of defense mechanisms. It was easier for her to stop reading and avoid her feelings about her parents' divorce than to deal with them in a productive way (Muus, 1996). These behaviors could also be explained by a defense mechanism referred to as *displacement*. The anger she felt towards her parents and her friend passing away was being transferred into a negative attitude towards reading (Muus, 1996). In other words, instead of addressing her anger and dealing with the emotions, she was taking them out on another object.

Since reading plays such a crucial role in identity formation, the effect of avoiding reading as a defense mechanism can have a detrimental impact on an individual's identity formation, especially during a time when the individual is still understanding itself as an individual being. Furthermore, not only does this affect the identity creation of the individual but it can impact their academic performance as well as their cognitive development. For Taylor, avoiding reading between the ages of 7

and 12 affected her development of critical literacy skills, and may have prolonged her inability to address and resolve her emotions and feelings towards the crisis that happened. Without the option of reading or writing as an outlet for her feelings, she seemed to have turned to a less productive way of dealing with the stress of the situations. This is made evident through her behaviors during the time after her friend passed away.

Had Taylor been literate enough to express her feelings through writing, she may have resolved and sorted out her emotions in a constructive way through journaling, which she now currently does. Or, if she didn't have such a negative attitude towards reading, Taylor may have read books about situations similar to hers that would have provided her with support, or even helped her discover her interests sooner. However, after Taylor's friend passed away, she tried to deal with the pain by visiting his tombstone: "When my friend passed away... I took a digital audio recorder... and went down to his tombstone and I started talking." She would record the conversation, and then listen to the recordings and "hear" his responses, behavior which almost suggests she was in denial about his death. This is a form of coping mechanism that she created in order to deal with the crisis.

Freud believes that the individual develops these mechanisms to try and cope with whatever stress or conflict the ego is going through (Muus, 1996). Even though her friend was not physically there, she believed she was talking to him. Although these sessions helped her discover her interest in paranormal investigations and interacting with the non-living, this form of coping is not entirely healthy.

Taylor's more constructive use of defense mechanisms did not become evident until Taylor started to journal in seventh grade. Taylor explained, "I have to say I write more than I read... [for] expression. Some people like to draw, some people like to sing, some people like to write. I do all three." One day she "just snapped and couldn't

take it anymore” so she “went to the corner of [her] bedroom and just started writing.” This had become very much a part of her life and who she was. When she was younger, she used journaling as a tool to release her feelings and emotions, “If I’m upset, I put music on and I write.” However, now she had transitioned from “rage” journaling (although she still did this sometimes) to writing poetry and song lyrics that expressed her feelings in a more structured way. This is a defense mechanism Freud identifies as *sublimation* (Muus, 1996). Taylor was now constructively channeling her emotions through her writing. She even referred to a piece she was currently working on: “My grandfather passed away...so I am writing a story about that. And just kind of like my way of expressing what happened and how I pictured him.” If Taylor had used this more constructive way of dealing with her feelings earlier in her life, it is possible that her attitude towards reading and writing might have been different. This form of self-expression was yet another way Taylor was creating her identity.

Blos’s theory of the four character challenges of adolescence. Taylor’s struggle can further be examined through Blos’s four character challenges of adolescence (Kroger, 2009). The first challenge is the second individuation process. Taylor had known her parents to play a particular role in her life and identified herself through them; when they divorced she had to redefine those roles that she had created for them during her childhood and how she identified herself in relation to them. Second, Taylor had to revisit that event in her life and relive the way it made her feel and deal with those emotions. The third challenge forced Taylor to view her past as making her the person she was at the time of the interview. This was evident through her decision to help special needs kids; taking a traumatic experience and turning it into a passion in her life. It was unclear whether Taylor has overcome the fourth challenge of finding a romantic relationship, but by overcoming the first three it is possible that she would be able to do so (Kroger, 2009).

Finding a career choice has certainly aided in Taylor's motivation to read, as well as setting a new purpose to read. No longer did she view reading as the activity she did with her parents, but she read to gain more knowledge and information on a topic that interested her. She had reached the stage in adolescence where she had selected a career and was now preparing for that occupation. She was aware of the importance of being able to read to succeed in this occupation. She no longer "read for a grade" but she read because she was aware that the future consequences of not reading would result in more than a poor letter grade; she may mishandle a horse or put a student in danger. She had chosen a career goal and understood that reading is a large component of the goal.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and the eight stages of crisis. Taylor later talked about when she started to read again in seventh grade, only this time it was not the memories that affected her motivation. Taylor stopped reading during a critical time academically. During this period of time, she felt she did not develop the skills necessary to read competently. She now simply struggled with the text vocabulary and comprehension, making it a frustrating and unsatisfying task. Her lack of motivation could be contributed to one of Erikson's 8 stages of crisis: "industry versus inferiority" (Kroger, 2009). During this time Taylor was figuring out what she could and could not do. By failing to master the reading, she began to feel inferior and developed a sense of failure, which could result in identity diffusion. However, through listening to her history, it was evident that her lack of motivation to read occurred before the seventh grade. By examining other critical events that happened even earlier in her life, other explanations for her lack of motivation to read started to appear.

Erikson believes that when children are emerging from childhood, around the age of five, they are experiencing what is known as *identification*. They begin to

create an identity for themselves but in relation to those with whom they are close . They do not yet see themselves as a distinct individual from others. When Taylor was a seven-year-old girl, she lost her best friend and also experienced her parents' divorce. Erikson would suggest that this is developmentally a critical time in a child's life. "The process of identity formation depends on the interplay of what young persons at the end of childhood have come to mean to themselves and what they now appear to mean to those who become significant to them" (Kroger, 2009). Until these events occurred, Taylor had begun to create her identity through her close relationship with her best friend and the close relationship she had with her parents. She viewed her own identity as being connected to them. Had these relationships remained intact, Taylor may have smoothly transitioned from identifying herself in relation to her parents to establishing her individual identity as separate from her parents, with little confusion.

However, during the stage of identification, Taylor abruptly lost all three. The best friend who she was once close with was no longer there, and the dynamics between her parents and her had drastically changed. This sudden change in the relationships she has with these three people resulted in a form of what Erikson calls *negative identity resolution* (Kroger, 2009)

Referring back to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, he identifies 8 stages of crisis, each with two opposing outcomes (Kroger, 2009). Two of the stages can help explain Taylor's behaviors, with the first being "identity versus identity diffusion". Taylor's parents divorced at a time when Taylor was still figuring out who she was. Erikson claims that an unstable family environment can make overcoming this crisis more difficult. This may explain why Taylor partook in self-destructive actions, such as not caring about school and withdrawing herself from everything and everyone. Another crisis that Erikson defines is "Integrity versus Despair". Instead of

viewing the struggles she was going through as events that made her who she was and accepting them, she instead became bitter and resentful towards them, which resulted in her negative attitude towards reading (Kroger, 2009). Although she seemed to have now overcome the negative outcomes of both crises, it is evident that for some time she was experiencing their negative impact. It was also unclear when and how she overcame these events and made the transition. She was lucky that she eventually overcame these struggles and that she was able to discover her true passion for a career choice from her childhood experience.

Currently, Taylor has achieved many of the stages of adolescence, particularly one stage identified by the student developing intellectual skills and the concepts necessary for civic competence (Kroger, 2009). Taylor had identified and chosen a career path for her future. She participated in the reading and was interested in the subject of the class that she was taking because she felt it would contribute to her success in her future occupation. She was motivated to learn the information for two reasons: it was something that was directly related to her interests and she was aware that it was information that she would need to know in order to succeed in her chosen career (Kroger, 2009).

From the current literature, it may seem that the solution to Taylor's lack of motivation was to simply integrate some literacy strategies and provide her with help to get through the reading when she struggles. Yet, as her past experiences and history are explored, it becomes evident that there was so much more that had caused her to view reading this way than can be explained through literacy strategies. By looking at the earlier stages of her life and the events that occurred, the root of the problem was revealed, and by addressing those issues not only could her attitude towards academics change, but the way she handled her emotions and viewed her own identity may benefit. Furthermore, if these issues had been addressed as they occurred, many of her

issues could have possibly been prevented. The CTE class had provided Taylor with the opportunity and experience to help her grow and pursue her career goal as well as provided a culture for her to create her identity. It would be interesting to see why other students who lack motivation to read, or at least examine the critical events in their life in relation to their developmental stages, in order to gain a better understanding of how they evolved to be the person they are today. As Kegan said, “If you want to understand a person in some fundamental way, you must know where the person is in his or her evolution” (Kegan, 1982).

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the themes found in this research, there are several ways that teachers and practitioners, such as literacy coaches, reading coaches, and professional development leaders, can change their classrooms so that students are motivated to engage in reading. These new practices may also help struggling readers have an easier time understanding and learning from what they read. By looking at what helps the two case subjects read, and what deters them from reading, there may be better ways to implement reading in the classroom.

Taylor and Emily both found that when texts were in a story form and they could use their imagination, they enjoyed the reading much more and had an easier time understanding what they were reading. Teachers should use trade books in their classrooms, as this genre of text is often written in a narrative, story format. Trade books not only generate interest because they put the concepts and lessons into context through stories or real life experiences, but they also help students learn and understand the necessary concepts. These books are especially helpful for students who need the imagery and story line to help them understand the concepts and picture what they are learning. Teachers should also choose texts that are relevant to the students and their interests. Emily and Taylor both enjoyed reading more when they

could relate to the text or see how the text was relevant to their life and/or interests, especially those relating to their career in Taylor's case. This can often be achieved by using trade books because they put the concepts and lessons into real life contexts. Aside from the use of trade books, there are other ways that teachers could use text differently in their classrooms.

Similar to the benefits of using trade books to help students use imagery, providing visual images also seems to help students with reading. Emily and Taylor both agreed that when pictures were provided with the text or used in the classroom, it was easier for them to see what the text was talking about, especially for text in textbooks that does not use a story line. Teachers should provide an aid for those students, to help them visualize what they are learning. However, visual aids are not the only aid that helps struggling readers.

The theme *reading to apply* arose because both girls felt that when they applied something from what they read, then they understood the lesson more effectively. Application was also a motivating factor to read because the students knew it was going to be applied to a project. While this concept does seem to be more applicable and prevalent in the CTE classes, all content area teachers should try and find ways to apply the text in their classrooms through hands-on projects. Taylor and Emily expressed their preference for hands-on learning as well, so if teachers found a way to apply the text to hands-on learning, then their students may have an easier time not only understanding the lesson, but may even remembering it for a longer duration. Emily and Taylor both agreed that hands-on learning helped reinforce what they were learning and therefore helped them remember the lessons and concepts. While learning style and the implementation of text are areas in which teachers could change, writing is a component of literacy that should not be left out.

Emily and Taylor both enjoyed writing, creatively and as a form of expression.

Taylor even talked about how her grades in English improved when she started writing more. Writing can serve as a creative outlet for some students and as a way to reflect on class and learning content. Teachers should find ways to incorporate more opportunities for writing in their classrooms. Their students may enjoy it and find a new vehicle of self-expression. Writing also provides a way for students to reflect on what they have learned and also provides another opportunity for them to reinforce what they have learned. Again, this will not only help the students who struggle with the reading but also help the teacher reduce class time spent reviewing concepts.

The changes discussed above provide teachers with possible ways to implement literacy in their classroom based on the two cases of this study. However, this study does provide other possible solutions to solving the literacy problem that go beyond the ways of instruction. The following suggestions are new and to the researcher's knowledge, have not been found in current literature.

Looking at the case of Taylor, two things can be determined. The first is that the events that happened early in her life had profound consequences on a number of developmental factors and attitudes. Relevant to this study, these experiences impacted her attitude towards reading and school. Often, when teachers have struggling readers in the classroom, one intervention is done in the classroom to all the students, even though every student's struggles and needs may have unique individual causalities. But, these interventions are not addressing the underlying reasons a student may be disengaged from reading. Perhaps educators should be more aware of what is going on in the student's home life and more aware of the reasons — beyond cognitive difficulties — of why the student is not motivated to read or struggling to read. Perhaps if teachers and practitioners were able to address the needs of their students on an individual basis, many literacy problems could be avoided or at least you could tailor specific methods in rectifying the problem(s).

For Taylor, if a teacher knew about her parents' divorce and how that was impacting her reading, they could have addressed the problem when she was seven years old, instead of dealing with the consequences of that event when she was in high school. If a teacher had provided another mentor with her to help her read, or counseling to find another way to cope with her problems, she may not have stopped reading for so long and used it as a defense mechanism.

One question for further research arising from this study is how important is it that students are motivated or love to read? In the beginning of the study there were five students. Taylor and Emily were the struggling readers with low motivation and the other three were students with high reading levels and low motivation. Through interviews, it became evident that although these girls did not like to read, they still read and completed their assignments. They did not struggle with comprehension and learning, and thus they did not struggle in their classes. So if the lack of reading motivation does not affect students' opportunities to participate in society and the lack of motivation to read has not impacted their success in their academics, why *should* they love to read? Should motivation for those students be a focus of teachers' classroom attention? Perhaps it is acceptable that some students prefer to watch television or play with their friends instead of reading, as long as it is not impacting their work. Also, perhaps with additional positive experiences with reading and additional growth and maturity, these students will come to find reading as a pleasurable experience. Perhaps educators should focus on the students who struggle with reading and at least find a compelling reason to increase their engagement with reading, and not try so hard to make them love reading.

Looking at Taylor's case, one can see some other areas that could be further explored. Reading to escape and writing to escape both came up as ways that the girls use literacy practices to escape the pressures of their everyday lives and their

experience in school. For Taylor, who had a serious loss when she was younger and also dealt with her parents' divorce, reading could have been a healthy outlet for her emotional stress. Writing could have served as a way for her to express her feelings. Yet, she did not turn to those options until later in life. Research should be conducted to see how literacy programs could be used for grieving adolescents. Maybe there is a way to help adolescents who are experiencing traumatic events find a healthy outlet to cope with their emotions and feelings instead of turning to less constructive ways to grieve. This leads to yet another use of literacy with adolescents.

Josselson implies that reading is an experience that can evoke memories and emotions. She also stresses the importance of friendships for identity creation and development. A question to pose is how could discussion groups or literature circles be used to help girls experience reading together, creating a bond through that experience with other girls? The books would have to be chosen by the group, but it would at least provide an opportunity for some girls who may not have a lot of friendships to not only meet other girls who have common interests, but also to experience something with those girls and talk about it while possibly building new friendships. Not every student will have the chance to experience holding environments like Taylor, but teachers could try and create holding environments within their classrooms through the use of literature circles.

While talking with Emily, although she understood that she struggled, she did not feel she was a bad reader. How do students know if they read well? Perhaps teachers should have students take an assessment test at the beginning of the year so that students are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to literacy. This would not only benefit the student, but it would also help the teacher identify the areas of literacy where the student may struggle and provide a more individual approach to improving the student's literacy skills.

In this particular study, only girls were examined. Perhaps this same study could be conducted using boys to determine whether these same themes hold true for boys and not just girls. While every student is different and their histories are different there still may be some similarities between the two genders or there may be some differences that are important to explore further.

This study is an exploratory case study and is not generalizable evidence. However, examining two girls in depth and seeing how reading plays a role in their lives and their history provides possible suggestions for teachers on how to use text in their classrooms and also possible reasons for why some students may lack motivation to read. This study provides researchers with other possible research questions to be explored further in order to continue helping all students increase their literacy skills and have an equal opportunity to succeed in their field and life.

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Interview Questions:

What do you think about reading? What is your general attitude towards reading?

1. Do you like to read in your CTE course and why? Do you like to read in your other classes and why? What's the difference between the two?
2. What do you like to read outside of class? What do you not like to read?
3. What are some of the reasons you read? For school? For pleasure?
4. Do you enjoy reading in your CTE class more than your other classes? Why or why not?
5. What makes reading fun?
6. What makes reading boring?
7. What makes you decide to read, or not to read for your class? Outside of class?
8. What do you want to do when you are older?
9. Do you think it is important to be able to read in your future career? Why or why not?
10. How much do you really feel like you need to read for your career?

Interview #2

1. What type of reader do you consider yourself? Why?
2. What challenges, if any, do you face with reading?
3. What feature of text makes reading easier to read or understand?
4. When you feel challenged by a reading, how do you respond?

5. How do you view reading for pleasure different than reading for school?
6. How would you change reading assignments to make them more enjoyable?
7. Was there ever a time in your life when you read more than you do now? If so, how has that changed or not changed?
8. If you used to read more, what did you read?
9. How has that changed? Why has that changed?
10. Does your family read? If so, what?
11. Do your friends read? If so, what?
12. How do you view reading for pleasure differently than reading for academic purposes?
13. How would you change reading assignments to make them more enjoyable?

Interview #3

1. Was there ever a time when you were assigned reading and you just couldn't understand it or you struggled with it?
 - a. When was that?
 - b. How did it make you feel about yourself?
 - c. Did it change the way you felt about the class?
 - d. Did it change the way you felt about reading?
2. When you read fictional books, you use your imagination and create the characters in your head.
 - e. Can you go through that process? What do you see when you read

- those books?
- f. What do you see when you read textbooks?
 - g. Do you read the words aloud in your head?
 - h. How do you make sense of the words and meaning of your academic text? How do you understand what you read?
3. When you read in this class, how is the reading different from your other classes?
- i. Do you learn better by applying the information or just reading it?
 - j. What is the best way for you to learn something?
4. Have you read something in this class and then directly applied it?
- k. If you were given a set of instructions and then a bunch of pieces that you had to put together, how would you go about doing it?
5. What mediums of reading do you like best? Do you read online, magazines, newspaper etc.?
6. When you are given something to read, how do you confront the reading? What do you do?
- l. Do you use any strategies?
7. What about text can make it intimidating or harder to use?
8. What are some of the purposes to read?
9. Do you ever write outside of school? Why?

APPENDIX B

Data Analysis:

1.) Read data and identify frames of analysis

- “[I read in this class] because you have to know the parts of the horse in case something is wrong with him its good to know what’s wrong with him and stuff like that”
- “[If I didn’t read] I’d probably wind up not doing what I want to do when I get older”
- “I want to work with handicapped kids and horses and other animals”
- “[I read] to know like about the animals and about different horses and stuff like that”
- “[I read] to learn. Mostly, just the information I think is valuable”
- “I think the knowledge is more important than the grade...because it’s my career choice”
- “[I read] to learn because It’s what I want to get into when I do graduate and go off to college and all that other stuff.”

2.) Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis

- CTE
- Equine science
- Career
- College
- Information is valuable
- Graduate
- Knowledge is more important than the grade

3.) Identify salient domains and assign them a code

- Code: importance to career- purpose to read because it will help the student in their future career

4.) Refine salient domains and keep record of emerging relationships

- Any change to the theme? Redefine it?- no

5.) Decide if the domains are supported by data

- the researcher goes back and rereads transcript to see if the selected quotes match the definition of the theme.

6.) Complete analysis within domains

- the researcher read rest of transcripts and look for theme

7.) Search for themes across domains

- the researcher checked to see if there was much overlap between this theme and others

8.) Outline relationships within and among the domains

- the researcher looked at how the different themes relate to each other

9.) Select data excerpts to support the relationship

- the researcher went back again and selected the quotes that provided the best evidence of the theme.
 - “[I read] to learn because It’s what I want to get into when I do graduate and go off to college and all that other stuff.”
 - “I think the knowledge is more important than the grade...because it’s my career choice”
 - “[If I didn’t read] I’d probably wind up not doing what I want to do when I get older”

APPENDIX C

Consent Form: PARENT

Your child is invited to be in a research study about student motivation to read in career and technical education (CTE). We are asking that your child take part because your child is enrolled in a CTE course. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to take part in this study.

The study: The purpose of this study is to research student motivation to read in CTE. If you agree for your child to be in this study, we will conduct a focus group interview with your child and a few of his/her fellow students. The interview will include questions about how your child approaches the use of texts as learning tools, your child's attitude towards reading, and your child's personal preferences related to reading. The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: I do not anticipate any risks to your child participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to your child.

Compensation: \$20 gift card to your student.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. No data records will include your child's name. It will not be possible to figure out your child's answers. Data will be kept securely for three (3) years after this study ends.

Voluntary Participation: Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may skip any questions he or she doesn't feel comfortable answering. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to take part will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University or with your child's school. If you decide to allow your child to take part, your child is free to not do the survey or to skip any questions. You are free to withdraw your child at any time without affecting your relationship with the University or your child's school.

The researcher conducting this study is Liz van der Mandele. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Liz van der Mandele at esv4@cornell.edu or at 315.750.9089. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at <http://www.irb.cornell.edu>. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Please enter your child's name and sign below if you give consent for your child to participate in this study.

Your child's name: _____

Your signature _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on August 1, 2009.

APPENDIX D

Name	Interview	Number of Minutes	Number of Words
Emily	Focus Group	9:14	1504
	Interview #2	9:08	1519
	Interview #3	23:02	4118
Taylor	Focus Group	7:16	1318
	Interview #2	21:35	3933
	Interview #3	18:46	3303
Total		89:01	15685

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