Motivating readers through policies and classroom practices

Christi Lynn Worthington

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MOTIVATING READERS THROUGH POLICIES AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Reading/Language Arts

by
Christi Lynn Worthington
June 2007
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AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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Approved by:

Dr. Diane Brantley, First Reader

Dr. Alayne Sullivan, Second Reader

4-16-07
ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of motivation on literacy, through a specific method of teaching called Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI). The CORI program is designed to encourage reading motivation and comprehension through thematic teaching strategies designed around science concepts. The kindergarten class involved in this study experienced the CORI program through hands-on learning experiences, student-choice activities, theme-related text choices, and other cross-curricular learning activities.

The results of the pre-assessment and post-assessment questionnaires administered, as well as the researcher's observations, field notes, and interviews showed an overall improvement in reading motivation as a result of the implementation of the CORI program. It was concluded that providing reading instruction through the implementation of the CORI program was an effective way to promote reading engagement and motivation in the kindergarten classroom.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I finish this project, I wish to express my gratitude to several individuals who were instrumental in my reaching this goal.

First, it is with much appreciation that I thank my two advisors who spent many hours reading and providing constructive feedback. Dr. Diane Brantley had a way of always making me believe in myself and my ability to accomplish the task. Dr. Alayne Sullivan was especially helpful in aiding me with the refining touches that the project needed. Both of my advisors were so very helpful and understanding as I completed this project while undergoing cancer treatment, as I was diagnosed with cancer just three days after starting the program. Without their understanding and compassion, I would not have been able to accomplish this task.

I wish to acknowledge my friends who encouraged me to pursue this endeavor. Lesley Nelson was always there for me when I needed help. LeeAnn Roberts, Kim Koch, Becky Maze, Robin Rolleg, and Joni Almy were all there to encourage me and cheer me on. Countless other friends believed in me and had faith that I could actually complete this project. I want to acknowledge my very, very good friend, Elaine Golledge. Without her endless help,
caring and compassion during the cancer treatments I would have never been able to continue with the Master’s program. Her tireless encouragement and assistance helped me beyond words. I can say, without a doubt, that without her, I would not have been able to finish the program. We were in it together and together we made it through.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge my family, whose belief in me, caring for me through the cancer, and encouragement to continue, is what gave me the fortitude to complete the task. My mother, Shirley, spent many hours caring for my daughters while I attended class and completed homework. She also spent countless hours caring for me when I was ill from the cancer treatments during the same time. My daughters, Paige and Claire, although still quite young, encouraged me to “do my homework”. They understandingly waved goodbye each time I left for class and they have looked forward to my graduation for many months. They were my inspiration for completing this project. I also wish to acknowledge my extended family for their belief in me and their encouragement to continue toward my goal despite the cancer diagnosis.

Finally, I wish to thank God for preserving my life, healing my body from cancer and giving me the strength to complete the program and receive my Master’s Degree.
DEDICATION

To Paige and Claire, my precious daughters, you are my inspiration for completing this project. I love you both more than life itself!
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is a Motivated Reader?

A motivated reader is excited about reading, is eager to read and engages readily in reading activities; he or she is an aesthetically engaged reader. He or she is an enthusiastic learner who anticipates reading, whether in school or for pleasure, with excitement and eagerness. He or she realizes that learning can be a pleasure through reading and realizes that he or she can engage themselves in self-motivated learning activities through reading as well. A motivated reader reads for pleasure and for information, as well as for the love of reading. He or she finds many different kinds of reading material interesting and worthwhile.

An unmotivated reader, on the other hand, reads only when required to do so and often resents the very act of reading. An unmotivated reader may not even engage fully in reading what is required for a school activity, therefore he or she may not glean all that is required from the text for the activity. He or she does not engage in reading for pleasure, nor does he or she find reading to be a worthwhile activity. Non-engaged readers do not
enjoy reading and will not look to reading as an activity of choice. Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencecvich (2004) explain motivational differences in this way:

Walk into any elementary classroom during a reading lesson and the difference in student reading engagement are obvious. Some students are actively engaged in reading. They eagerly turn to their books when it is time to begin the lesson, and concentrate fully on them. They enjoy talking about what they are reading to their classmates and teachers. They use different reading strategies they are learning to discover the meaning in the text. When the lesson is over, they reluctantly put their books away, eager to return to them at the first opportunity. When they have free time at other times during the school day they reach for a book and spend time reading.

(p. 249)

Published work on motivation and reading reveals patterns of emphasis; some focus on classroom contexts (Almasi, 1995; Gambrell & Marniak, 1997; McCombs & Whistler, 1997; Turner, 1995; Wigfield, 1997), some on student dimensions (Athey, 1985; Cordova & Lepper, 1996; Wigfield, Eccles, Yoon, Harold, Arbreton, Freedman-Doan, & Blumenfeld, 1997), and others on policies and
administrative practices that positively influence
motivation (Afferbach, 1996; Gee & Green, 1998, Mosenthal,
1999, Wigfield & Asher, 1984). One may ask themselves why
motivation is an important factor in learning. Research
indicates that teachers report that a lack of motivation
seems to be at the very base of many problems faced by
them as they attempt to teach (O’Flahavan, Gambrell,
Guthrie, Stahl, & Alvermann, 1992). Research also suggests
that motivation is an essential part of learning (Deci &
Ryan, 1985). So then, if a student is not motivated to
learn to read, it has the potential to negatively impact
his or her ability to learn in many subject areas. A lack
of motivation makes it difficult for teachers to guide
their students in learning experiences. It has been
reported that motivation can make the difference between
learning that will be easily forgotten and learning that
is permanent (Oldfather, 1993). Teachers of reading must
contemplate and examine how best to engage their students
in order to motivate them in literacy.

A review of literature on motivation and reading
generally reveals three basic patterns of work, for
example many writers study student variables; this work
looks at student attitude, interest and affective
elements. It is clear that we need to have a solid
understanding of the variables that define motivated readers as work is continued in this field. Further to this, studies of the dimensions of classroom context that positively effect motivation in reading for students are also critical. Finally, out of all of this work on reading and motivation, research is able to generate policies through which administrative structures can evolve.

In researching the topic of motivation in literacy, one must ask themselves several important questions: What is motivation? What are the critical variables of classroom contexts that encourage motivated readers? In what ways are some students more motivated to read than others? It is tempting to ask if one’s schema can effect motivation to read; however, the data are inconclusive in this study. The data do not lend themselves to making a definitive answer for this question. Thus, the question appears throughout this study as one that guides the research, yet cannot be explicitly addressed given the scope of this particular study. These will be some of the issues related to motivation and literacy discussed herein. What is happening in classrooms that are filled with motivated students? What is taking place to cause some students to eagerly open books and start reading?
What is motivation? Rogers, Ludington, and Graham (1992) define motivation in the following way:
Whenever we feel a desire or need for something, we are in a state of motivation. Motivation is an internal feeling—it’s the drive that someone has to do something. It is what makes teaching some students a joy and working with others so difficult. (p. 2) Motivation, then is the drive to do something, or achieve something.

Classroom Contexts
What are the critical variables of classroom contexts that seem to encourage motivated readers? Guthrie (2000) offers a profile of engaged reading when he says, “Engaged reading is a merger of motivation and thoughtfulness. Engaged readers seek to understand; they enjoy learning and they believe in their reading abilities. They are mastery oriented, intrinsically motivated, and have self-efficacy” (p. 1). So, from this short statement, one could begin to think that motivation is an integral part of being an engaged reader who reads for meaning. Teachers must ask themselves if they can influence their students’ motivation, or if it is all only intrinsic motivation that drives them. Research supports the notion that teachers’
can promote engaged reading through creating contexts by which students can relate to the texts they are reading. Such engagement occurs when teachers provide real-world connections to the reading, provide meaningful text choices, provide instruction in when and how to read, as well as provide interesting texts that are familiar and relevant to the students.

In one school, discussed by Copland and Knapp (2006), many changes were made in the way in which curriculum was delivered. Teachers in that school moved from a mode of teaching through basic instruction techniques, to delivering instruction that was more flexible and that focused on the needs, capabilities, and interests of the students. Over time, this school noticed improvement in the achievement levels of the students, thus, then, improving the self-efficacy of the students involved. Teachers can further foster interest and engagement through teaching good reading strategies (Guthrie, 2000). In a study involving 431 students in grades 3 to 5, the results showed how the instructional modifications made by the teacher affected students' achievement goals, sense of self-competence, and use of strategies in reading and writing. As these teachers provided greater opportunities for students to work on more challenging, collaborative
and multi-day projects, the students were focused less on performance goals, and even the low-achieving students showed less work avoidance (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Copland and Knapp (2006) found that when teachers are actively and effectively guiding their students in various academic tasks, those students tend to have a greater degree of ownership over their learning and are thus more motivated to continue in that learning experience. It would appear that teachers, then, can have an integral impact on their students’ engagement in reading. So this research would indicate that there is a variable which strongly influences a student’s motivation to learn—that being the teacher variable.

Policies and Practices

In explaining the teacher’s role in motivation and literacy, Gangi (2004) finds that teachers have a responsibility to aid children in reaching their best potential, both personally and professionally, as well as to become responsible, active citizens. He also suggests that children who are excited about reading will have more opportunities in life than those who are not. He goes on to explain that when teachers possess this excitement, it can impact their students to have it as well. Wiggins and
McTighe (2005) contend that schoolwork should not be boring or fractured. They suggest that in order to fully enable students to reach their intellectual potential, educators must strive to motivate their students through worthwhile and realistic activities. So then, the teacher variable can be an important influence in the classroom context. Teachers can influence and promote motivation in their students.

Student Variables

Teachers must understand that there are basically two types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Guthrie (2000), in the area of motivation research, researchers have primarily focused on task-mastery orientation and performance orientation. Individuals who are task-mastery oriented, or are intrinsically motivated, “seek to improve their skills and accept new challenges...They are dedicated to content understanding and learning flexible skills” (Guthrie, 2000, p. 2). Students such as these would be part of the student variable group which is part of the classroom context variable—that being motivated students.

Performance orientation individuals, or extrinsic motivation individuals, focus more on the completed task
rather than trying to enjoy or understand the text. Another factor influencing the student variable is that of one's schema. Research indicates that only when one's cognitive schema is activated, as related to what they are reading, will that individual have understanding and recall of what they have read. Schema activation is crucial in order for reading to have meaning (Weaver, 2002). So then, one's own background and schema are a critical part of their reasons for motivation and their ability to engage and assimilate the text they have read.

In studying early literacy learning and teaching, Barone and Morrow (2003) posed the question, "What roles do factors like a young child's sociocultural and linguistic background, as well as his or her motivation to learn, play in the literacy learning process?" (p. 27). In partially answering this question, they state that "cognitive processes and thinking strategies can truly be understood only by recognizing that they are part and parcel of the contexts in which they develop and occur" (2003, p. 27). They go on to explain that "...one's cognitive processes are intimately linked with one's history as a sociocultural being, as well as with the immediate contextual variables of the situation in which the cognitive processing (such as reading) occurs" (2003,
p. 27). Barone and Morrow (2003) further explain that context is a vital part of thinking rather than simply the vehicle which influences thinking. They state that “Such a conception has profound theoretical implications for the roles of sociocultural and linguistic factors in learning to read” (2003, p. 27). Parkay and Hass (2000), in explaining the position of Experientialists and Critical Reconstructionists, maintain that the starting point for meaningful learning begins with the student’s concerns and interests to which they feel deeply. So then, it would appear from this information, that the processes of learning must take place within the background of one’s own contexts and be based on their interests.

Which type of motivation promotes better learners? Guthrie’s (2000) research seems to indicate that both types of learners can learn, however, he believes that the task-mastery goal will serve to further long-term engagement and learning as opposed to the performance goal which often comes with a fear of failure. An online article states “Reading researchers recognize that in order to create lifelong readers, endowing children with proficient reading skills are not enough. Children also need to have internalized motivation” (RIF Exchange 404, 2006, p. 1). It would appear that intrinsically motivated
learners do, in fact, become good readers, who read for meaning. McCombs (1999) writes that "...motivation to learn is seen as a function of both (a) personal assessment of the meaningfulness of particular learning experiences or activities and (b) the process of self-initiating, determining or choosing and controlling learning goals, processes, and outcomes" (p. 3).
Intrinsically motivated learners have a deep desire to learn and they want to understand all that they can from what they read. Research suggests that motivated students are focused on reading for meaning. They concentrate and avoid distractions and they naturally use good reading strategies, such as self-monitoring and inferencing (Guthrie, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation, or performance orientation, can enable students to learn to become good readers, however, it presents a more challenging prospect. In the article What is Reading Motivation, it suggests that teachers, schools, and parents can have an influence on children and their motivation to learn, it states "...when schools strive to create a classroom culture in which students are free to choose books to read independently, are coached in reading skills, and are encouraged to read for high-level understanding, motivation goes up" (p. 1). On the other
hand, "when the school's emphasis is on testing, grades, and skill proficiency, reading motivation can be negatively impacted" (p. 1). From this research, one can deduce that, although it is more difficult to engage the extrinsically motivated readers, it is possible by giving them the right tools. Wiggins and McTighe indicate that educators must deliver engaging and effective teaching methods in order to energize and enlighten their students. They further explain that a good design plan in teaching "...pulls [the student] deeper into the subject and they have to engage by the nature of the demands, mystery, or challenge into which they are thrown" (2005, p. 195).

Another aspect of extrinsic motivation is "autonomy support". Autonomy support refers to guidance from the teacher in aiding students to make choices among meaningful alternatives in texts and tasks in order to gain knowledge and meet the learning goal set forth (Guthrie, 2000). Studies have shown that the very act of choice is motivating (Guthrie, 2000; Johnston, 1997; Cochran-Smith, 1984). So, although extrinsic motivation might be a more challenging issue for teachers to encounter, it is possible to engage these types of students through extrinsic motivators and good design.
Research, then, would strongly indicate that there are two variables of motivation in the classroom: 1) student variables in the classroom context, and 2) teacher variables. In the area of teacher variables, there is an added piece of classroom context in which classroom experiences are of vital importance in motivation. Gangi (2004) states that "...the most effective classroom practices involve conveying higher order thinking skills and engaging in hands-on learning activities" (p. 7). As evidenced by this research, one can deduce that motivation is influenced by both variables. This text examines numerous scholars in the area of motivation and will address each variable as it relates to each scholar. This text will also examine a specific group of kindergarten students and will relate the ways in which motivation affects students of this developmental level.

In examining the key questions of: What are the critical variables of classroom contexts that encourage motivated readers?, and In what ways are some students more motivated to read than others?, this text examines these questions and seeks to answer them according to the research and data collected. In raising a third question, we must be cognizant of the complexity of schematic background as it interfaces with reading. On the one hand,
it is imperative to realize that background knowledge and experience influence the extent to which a reader will effectively process the concepts of a text. At the same time, one must allow subjective variables when discussing schema. That is, one’s emotional and psychological make-up is a huge ingredient in discussion about schema. As Rosenblatt (1978) would put it, all of the students’ cognitive and emotional history comes to bear during their transactional relationships with texts. With these thoughts in mind, one must ask what the relationship is between a schematic background and motivated reading.

In the following chapters, a method of teaching called Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), will be outlined and described as it relates to motivating readers in the elementary classroom. The next chapter reviews major literature related to motivation and literacy.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews key theory, research and classroom practices on motivation and reading. Three topics are covered in this chapter, they are classroom context, policies and practices and student variables. Interwoven throughout this chapter, as well, are points related to curriculum design. Suggestions are threaded throughout about the importance of designing curricular contexts with an eye to motivating readers. Also parents’ role in their child’s motivation to read is discussed.

Motivation is a broad and rather abstract concept. Defining and understanding its importance in the elementary curriculum entails a broad glance at research and theoretical literature that is closely related to reading and motivation. This chapter will examine literature related to motivation in reading.

How Important is Motivation in Learning to Read?

Research shows that motivation is a key factor in learning to read. When one has the desire to learn a task, such as reading, the task becomes interesting to the learner and he or she will be more readily engaged in the activity. There are several factors influencing one’s
engagement in reading as one examines the importance of motivation in learning to read. There are two basic variables: the teacher/classroom variable, and the student variable. There is also the level of motivation on the part of the student—is he or she motivated intrinsically, or extrinsically? Another influencing factor is the achievement goals set forth by the student—are they high or low? Finally, one’s level of self-efficacy influences his or her perceived abilities in certain areas of academia, such as learning to read, and/or becoming a good reader.

Key Topics of Reading Motivation Research

This chapter presents three key topics about motivation and reading which are classroom context, policies and practices, and student variables. These topics are discussed with consideration for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, variables of motivation, social motivation, self-efficacy as it relates to motivation, and goal orientation. In examining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, issues related to a student’s reasons for motivation are addressed. Within the area of variables of motivation, the student and teacher variables are examined. In the area of social motivation, the issues of
the achievement goals of high and low achievers are discussed. Through examining self-efficacy, research about one’s own assessment of their competency is studied. A theory in the area of goal orientation, in which the reasons students desire to do well and learn, is studied. Later in this text, a method of teaching reading, called the CORI (Concept Oriented Reading Instruction) program is introduced and is the basis for a specific research study with a group of kindergarten students.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Rogers, Ludington, and Graham (1999), three researchers who study motivation and learning, subscribe to the thought that all motivation is intrinsic. They write,

No one can motivate someone else, and yet, for years we’ve tried to motivate students. We’ve tried just about every trick that can be imagined...Over the years we’ve discovered that these extrinsic motivators can be powerful and work for short periods of time. Unfortunately, they soon become either not enough, or demotivators for students, or both. (p. 2)

From this research, it appears that the student’s own level of motivation is the only factor in influencing
learning; however, they go on to explain that there are environmental factors that influence the intrinsic motivation. They explain that the struggle is not in how to motivate students to learn, but rather in the teacher’s responsibility of creating lessons and environments that foster students’ intrinsic motivation levels, which will, in turn, increase the likelihood that students will become actively involved in the learning (Rogers et al., 1999). Some research shows that in order for students to be interested in learning, the educator must realize that each student has a variety of interests and multiple capacities which must be accommodated so that maximum interest in the activity is achieved (Parkay & Hass, 2000).

In directing teachers in how to actively engage students in the type of learning that will activate their intrinsic motivation levels, Rogers et al. (1999) suggest two principles for maximizing student motivation for learning in a classroom. These principles are based on understanding and respect for students’ needs to feel in control and autonomous. They are: “Principle One: Operate from Understanding” which is explained in this way:

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

Regardless of how it is said, the message is clear.
If we are to be successful in increasing the levels of student motivation in our classroom, we must make decisions based on a total understanding of our students' needs. (pp. 3-4)

And, "Principle Two: Manage Context—Not Students" which is explained in this way:

People tend to resent being told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it...This need is greater in some than others, and it is greater for each of us at certain times that it is at others—but it is a need that exists. And yet, there are also times when we as students want direction from others. The challenge we face as teachers is determining when and how we can provide enough meaningful options and, at the same time, the appropriate amount of direction and control (p. 4).

In looking at the research done by these authors, it appears that motivation cannot be imparted on one, but instead the environment and relationship with the teacher can influence one's motivation to learn.

Variables of Reading Motivation

Wigfield and Guthrie are two of the major researchers researching the topic of motivation in literacy. They have
studied the different purposes children have for doing various kinds of activities. In researching the various motivation scholars, one can see that Wigfield and Guthrie see both variables, teacher and student, as vital parts of motivation in learning. Their research indicates that a child’s pertinent constructs include their own valuing of their achievements, motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, and their achievement goals. These constructs are crucial to motivation. If the child does not see the purpose in engaging in a particular activity, even if he or she has the self-efficacy and competency to do it, they may not engage in it (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Parkay and Hass (2000) contend that the most favorable conditions for learning involve personal interest and purpose. In these conditions, the learner faces the learning situation because he has an interest in it. They further explain that the learner becomes more wholeheartedly involved in the learning because of his interest and concern. So, one can begin to think that if a child does not see a real purpose in reading, even though he or she may potentially be a good reader, the child will not engage in the activity of reading. Intrinsic motivation, as discussed earlier, is a key factor in one’s interest level. Intrinsically motivated learners want to read for the sake
of reading. From their research, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that "Many readers experience what [is] described as the flow experience, losing track of time and self-awareness when becoming completely involved in an activity such as reading a book" (p. 421). Their research went on to state that when an individual is intrinsically motivated to read, his or her engagement with the text will be enhanced greatly (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Social Motivation

Social motivation also plays a role in the classroom. Research shows that the achievement goals of high and low achievers differ; high achievers tended to combine both strong social and academic goals, whereas lower achievers tended to focus more heavily on social goals (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Their studies seem to indicate that, students who were more socially responsible and who had better social skills and social goals, tended to do better than those who did not have those social qualities and goals. Social motivation in reading might also be related, then, to extrinsic motivation and performance goals, as it relates to achievement goals.

Weaver (2002) explains the influence of the social aspect of reading in this way:
There are a variety of social and situational factors, a variety of contexts, which affect the activation of one's schemas and the outcomes of the reader-text transaction. That is, a variety of social and situational factors influence how the person reads and what the reader understands (p. 26). Weaver seems to support the teacher variable, or classroom context, influence on motivation.

Self-efficacy in Motivation

As one looks at the topics involved in motivation in literacy, they must also look at a child's self-efficacy for reading. Self-efficacy is one’s own confidence in him or herself and his or her ability to accomplish a task. In an article by Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich (2004), they suggest that one’s own beliefs about self-efficacy and competence refers to their ability to complete and accomplish tasks, tasks such as reading, and doing it successfully. They propose that the biggest influences on a child’s level of self-efficacy stems from his or her success with similar tasks in the past, as well as the feedback and encouragement that he or she receives from other people regarding their ability to perform the task. From this passage, one can deduce that past
experience with reading success plays a major role in the feelings a child has about his or her ability to read. Children who perceive themselves as good readers, may, in fact, become better readers. Wigfield et al. (2004) found that "children with high self-efficacy [do the following]: (a) try more difficult activities, (b) do better on different achievement activities, and (c) persist even if they have trouble completing the activities" (p. 301). Self-efficacy, then, seems to play a vital role in one’s own perception of his/her ability to read. Students’ past experiences with reading success influence their confidence to try more challenging reading activities.

Research found that children who had been trained to promote their self-efficacy in reading and use of strategies were higher achievers in reading (Wigfield et al., 2004). Therefore, self-efficacy, whether it comes from past successful experience, or from good, solid teaching, is extremely important in one’s motivation to read. Wigfield et al. (2004), then, see that both teacher and student variables play an integral part of one’s literacy motivation. A teacher’s role, then, could be considered one of the major keys in developing motivation in literacy within their students. These researchers go on to explain that motivation for reading is heavily
influenced by the types of experiences children have in classrooms. According to their research, some studies seem to indicate that a child's intrinsic motivation can decrease as the school years progress. The reasons for this are complex, but they are mostly related to children's perceptions of their abilities as compared to others. As children receive feedback from teachers and compare their performance to that of their peers, their sense of ability to perform academically may decrease. Further, as children become more aware of the outcomes of evaluative instruments, and compare their results on such with others, it is sometimes difficult for them to maintain a strong sense of competence, which in turn can lower their levels of intrinsic motivation (Wigfield et al., 2004).

An issue that teachers must examine is that of building programs that will increase students' level of motivation. How do teachers create programs that will engage students as motivated readers? Teachers of reading must contemplate and examine how best to engage their students in order to motivate them in literacy. Rogers et al. (1999) state that:

[P]rinciples for increasing motivation in a classroom are the underlying rules we use to plan, teach, and
make classroom decisions in our attempts to increase student motivation for learning...These principles provide direction so that students are most likely to have the feelings which tend to be present when people are in states of intrinsic motivation. (p. 3)

The goal of this type of teaching is to allow students to feel capable, intelligent, valued, happy and autonomous. So then, educators must consider the importance of engaging students in reading when planning and implementing curriculum in order to motivate them intrinsically. In later pages, a group of kindergarten students is studied and their motivation levels are recorded as part of the study, as related to curriculum that is planned using the CORI program as a basis.

Models of Reading Comprehension and Reading Motivation

Wigfield et al. (2004) studied two models of reading comprehension and reading motivation and they based their study, in part, on their own perspective of reading comprehension, which contends that students' reading outcomes are the result of several factors including the joint functioning of cognitive comprehension and motivational processes, conceptual knowledge, and social interaction among students (Wigfield et al. 2004). They
went on to explain that, in order for those elements to develop, effective teaching strategies for reading comprehension should include "...support for all of those cognitive, motivational, conceptual, and social processes within the classroom" (Wigfield et al. 2004, p. 302). Therefore, one can conclude that teachers do hold an important key in promoting motivation, through the instructional approaches they use.

Wigfield, et al. (2004) first looked at an approach that is called Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI). This approach is a critical element of classroom contexts. CORI involves combining science (or another content area) and reading together in order to encourage the development of reading comprehension and promote motivation. Hands-on activities, which align with the content being taught, are offered and used to spark the interest of the students (Wigfield et al. 2004). The next approach they looked at was Strategy Instruction (SI) which uses the concept of teaching the following multiple reading strategies: activating background knowledge, questioning, information searching, summarizing, organizing graphically, and learning story structure (Wigfield et al. 2004).
In the CORI approach, students are provided with a variety of interesting texts relating to the topics being discussed in their classroom. In this study, the kindergarten students who were studied were exposed to the CORI program of teaching. The research done with these students chronicles the effect of the CORI program as it relates to motivation in reading. In the CORI program, the teacher provides students with the opportunities for collaboration and choice. Teachers of the CORI program teach the same six reading strategies that are taught in the SI program (as listed in previous paragraph). These six strategies are identified in the National Reading Panel Report (2000) as being critical in the development of children’s comprehension skills (Wigfield et al., 2004).

In SI the six strategies are taught first one by one for six weeks, and then they are re-taught simultaneously for another six weeks. The SI program concentrates more heavily on the qualities of competence in performing the strategy, as well as on the ability of the student to sustain self-regulation of productive reading (Wigfield et al. 2004). So, one must further examine this study of these two methods in order to see how they relate to
teachers' ability to build programs that will increase their students' level of motivation.

The Concept Oriented Reading Instruction Approach as it Relates to Motivation

The CORI approach to teaching reading, as described earlier, involves linking reading to other subject areas being taught, through providing a wide variety of reading texts within that particular area of study, as well as allowing cooperative work time and allowing students to share their interesting texts and questions with others in the class. One of the concepts behind this approach is that it will foster the readers' engagement in reading. Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencevich (2004) suggest four basic characteristics that each engaged reader possesses. The student variable in these characteristics are apparent, as they encompass qualities possessed by the student. In describing the four characteristics of engaged readers, they write:

These students possess the four main qualities of engaged reading...[first] cognitive competence, referring to comprehension skills and cognitive strategies for learning from texts...A second attribute of the engaged reader is motivation. Engaged readers want to learn; they take satisfaction
in successful reading, and believe in their reading skills...Third, engaged readers are knowledge-driven...Fourth, engaged readers are socially interactive in learning. (p. 3)

How then, does a CORI instructor go about setting up the learning environment in order to promote this type of engagement? One of the ways is through supporting intrinsic motivation. Wigfield et al. (2004) suggest that there are many ways in which teachers can support the intrinsic motivation level for reading in CORI classrooms.

Hands-on Learning in the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction Classroom

One of the first ways they suggest accomplishing this is through the use of hands-on activities that will spark the student’s interest in a variety of topics with a direct connection between these activities and interesting texts (Wigfield et al., 2004). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) suggest that hands-on learning and real-world applications of material are part of what constitutes good design for learning. So then, one way in which the teacher can motivate interest in reading, is to provide real, hands-on experiments that will engage the students’ interests enough so that they will want to learn more, they will
have some intrinsic motivation to seek out extended knowledge in that area.

Connecting Student Interest with Reading Requirements

The concept of hands-on learning brings up the second strategy CORI teachers use to engage students' interest which entails the teacher connecting students' interests and related questions to interesting books (Wigfield et al. 2004). So then, if related texts are available to the students, they will have a reason, or a motivation, to read them. CORI teachers emphasize that the two strategies, both the hands-on experiences as well as the reading of related texts, are approbatory and that both of these elements are critical as the student seeks to gain an understanding of the topic, as well as their motivation to pursue knowledge of that topic (Wigfield et al., 2004).

Student Autonomy in the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction Classroom

Another strategy CORI teachers use to enhance students' intrinsic motivation is to support their students' level of autonomy as learners. Autonomy, in this realm, would refer to one having control over their own learning (Wigfield et al., 2004). When one has some control over what he or she is learning, they will more
likely be interested in it, and will be motivated intrinsically to learn the subject. Students in the CORI classroom are provided with many choices each day. In describing one successful teacher, Copland and Knapp (2006) state that she provided choices within the context of curriculum for her students which allowed them to incorporate their own strengths and interests in a given topic of learning. This type of teaching strategy can, in itself, promote motivation in students because they are involved in choosing their own path of learning. The teacher in Copland and Knapp's text used approaches that allowed for cooperative learning and peer interaction. CORI teachers use four basic teaching practices to promote autonomy. The first strategy that a CORI teacher uses is providing choice. Meaningful choices of diverse texts, within a theme or unit, are made available to the students. The second strategy CORI teachers implement is that of student self-expression. Students do this by communicating their work to others in the class. This allows the students to take ownership of what they are learning.
Student Questioning as Related to Choice in the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction Classroom

Thirdly, CORI teachers use the strategy of student questioning in order to allow the students to pursue their own topics of choice within a given theme. The fourth strategy used by CORI teachers is that of encouraging unique approaches to learning, allowing for individuality in a student’s learning process (Wigfield et al., 2004). The methods used by CORI teachers are ones that encourage autonomy through choice, self-expression, questioning, and collaborative conversation. In writing on the topic of providing meaningful choices, Rogers et al. (1999) suggest that people have a need to feel autonomous and independent. They state that when students begin to feel that this need is not being met, there can be a loss of motivation as a result. They go on to suggest that teachers should, whenever possible, give students the opportunity to make meaningful choices in their learning in order to promote motivation. Student choice is an important aspect of the CORI program. Further research suggests that students perform better when they are learning content which they truly care about, when learning stems from one’s genuine interests and concerns (Parkay and Hass, 2000). It is apparent from this
information that people have a need to feel autonomy in their learning.

Connecting Students’ Lives to Reading Material

Since autonomy plays a critical role in students’ motivation to learn, it is important to tap into a student’s life experiences in order to allow for autonomy to occur. Christensen (2000) writes about several aspects of motivating students. She taught in an inner city school in Northern Oregon. On motivating students to relate their reading and writing to themselves, she suggests that “Sometimes, grounding lessons in students’ lives can take a more critical role, by asking how they have been shaped or manipulated by the media, for example” (p. 19). She goes on to explain that, as critical teachers, it is also important to “connect[ing] students around moments of joy as well” (Christensen, 2000, p. 19). It appears, from this suggestion, that it is vital to relate reading and writing to students’ life experiences. Christensen further explains that celebrating each student’s unique individuality, also promotes motivation. She provides literature for her students that promotes and celebrates other cultures and languages. Christensen writes about the importance of bringing students’ histories into the
classroom, such as their native languages, ancestral heritages, and sayings from their homes in order to validate their culture and affirm that it is a worthy topic to be studied, even if textbooks do not acknowledge it. So then, as the aspect of motivation and literacy is further examined, one must consider the relevance of the subject matter to the reader. It is important that the reader be keenly able to relate to the topics of reading being offered. Motivation, then, must be understood in the realm of one’s own relationship to the subject matter being read. As these aspects are examined further in this text, the CORI program is discussed as it relates to these issues.

Self-efficacy

Another aspect of motivation in reading is that of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy serves as self-perception for one’s ability to learn. If a person has high self-efficacy, he or she will possess more confidence in his or her academic abilities and potential achievements. Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich (2004) suggest that self-efficacy is a crucial part of student success and achievement when they write:
Self-efficacy in reading is necessary for continuing advancement in achievement. Students who have high self-efficacy believe they can tackle difficult texts and are confident that their efforts will be beneficial to them...Low self-efficacy makes it unlikely that a student will frequently choose to read or pursue curiosities through texts (p. 57).

Self-efficacy, or belief in one’s own ability to accomplish a task, then, is one of the factors which promote motivation in reading. It would appear that the idea of self-efficacy in reading is not only one’s perceived ability, but it could also be related to the exposure a student has to interesting texts and experiences related to learning, as it relates to intrinsic motivation. Pajares and Urdan (2002), propose, “Self efficacy is aided when environments are rich in interesting activities that arouse their curiosity and offer reasonable challenges” (p. 34). Pajares and Urdan seem to support the teacher variable/classroom context view of motivation. They go on to explain that there are many different types of home environments, with some containing computers, books and other items that are stimulating for a child. They explain that parents who are very involved in their children’s cognitive development
spend much time with them on learning activities. They state that parents provide self-efficacy for children when they plan for a variety of experiences and are involved with their children in learning through these experiences.

Pajares and Urdan further explain that other homes do not have the items and resources which stimulate the child and the adults in the home may not devote much, if any, time to the education of their children. Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich (2004) state that "By providing students with strategies to help them read, educators give them tools to build not only their reading skills, but also their reading self-efficacy..." (p. 304). They go on to explain that when teachers tell the students about the strategies they are using and learning, it will help them in their reading skills—they will become better readers. In telling them this, their level of self-efficacy will increase. Research suggests that in order for beginning readers to become successful, teachers must provide support in the form of modeling and scaffolding. In so doing, it allows the teachers to meet each student at their particular level, which in turn promotes a feeling of confidence within the student. They go on to explain that teachers of beginning readers need to model their thought processes as they read in order to
learn to read for meaning. They state that many beginning readers continue reading even though they have mispronounced a word and it impairs meaning. Students need to be taught, through modeling, to listen to themselves reading in order to make sure that what they have read makes sense (Barone & Morrow, 2003). Wiggins and McTighe (2005), in describing teaching by good design, state that modeling is one of the important characteristics of such teaching practices. So, not only are interesting activities, texts, and experiences important in developing reading self-efficacy, but also important are the basic reading comprehension strategies taught in both CORI and SI classrooms. As mentioned earlier, these strategies include activating background knowledge, questioning, information searching, summarizing, organizing graphically, and learning story structure (Wigfield et al. 2004).

Collaboration

Collaboration is another aspect of promoting motivation in literacy. As it relates to the CORI classroom, collaboration is used to engage students in conversations about what they are reading and learning. About collaboration, research suggests that during
collaborative literacy experiences, the type of interaction that takes place may play an integral part in aiding the student’s ideas about the purposes of reading and writing (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). Baker et al. go on to explain that:

Collaborative literacy experiences provide opportunities for students to engage in the construction of meaning as they share ideas about text in what Fish (1980) calls an “interpretive community”. As interpretive communities interact, students must reconsider and update their own interpretations of text as new interpretations coalesce from the divergent views that are brought forth by group members...the word ‘text’ is used to describe text that children read as well as text that they produce or write. (2000, p. 119)

Because collaborative literacy experiences have been found to promote motivation, in the CORI classroom, a variety of collaborative activities are used, such as idea and literature centers, as well as a variety of other co-operative learning groups. Another way in which CORI teachers promote literacy through collaboration is to provide time for students to participate in expressive reading in pairs and small groups. The idea of
collaboration seems to be one of interest among many researchers in the area of reading motivation and efficacy. Guthrie, Wigfield, & Perencevich (2004) indicated that when collaboration is used appropriately, it is intrinsically motivating. They stated that it can be rewarding to be immersed socially when reading instruction is taking place. So then, collaboration can be heavily influence intrinsic motivation in students.

The Strategy Instruction Approach as it Relates to Motivation

The SI (Strategy Instruction) approach, as described earlier, focuses on teaching multiple reading strategies. The six main reading comprehension strategies taught, although the same as those taught in the CORI classroom, are delivered in a different manner. As stated earlier, in SI, the strategies are taught one by one for six weeks, then are taught in conjunction with each other for another six weeks, just as in the CORI approach, however, the difference between the two lies in “in the kinds of motivation support provided and explicit links to reading in the content area of science” (Wigfield, et al. 2004, p. 302). The emphasis on the reading strategy itself, with SI, is more evident, whereas the reading of the text for interest and meaning, as it relates to the students’
experiences is more evident with CORI. The SI program focuses more heavily on competence in performing the reading strategy, the ability to know how and when to use each strategy, and self-initiation of the strategy in the act of self-regulation to read effectively (Wigfield et al., 2004). In their study, Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich (2004) cited that both types of instruction, the SI and the CORI, provided for the development of students’ self-efficacy, however, they also cited that it was their conclusion that the students who participated in the CORI program would become more intrinsically motivated to read than the students who participated in the SI program. This brings to mind the differences in the two methods. What is it about the CORI program that causes students’ motivation to rise? As discussed earlier, the CORI program supports intrinsic motivation for reading through the many and varied activities afforded to the students in these classrooms.

Providing Appropriate Texts in the Classroom

Most researchers seem to agree that in order to engage students in reading, they must be motivated to some degree. As discussed in the CORI program explanation, many and varied texts need to be available for students to
access on their own. One method of motivating very young or inexperienced readers is to make certain that plenty of easy and interesting books are available to them at all times. Allington and Cunningham (2002) state “Children who find learning to read difficult are unlikely to find books in their classroom libraries that they can read comfortably” (p. 56). In order to combat this problem, they suggest, that teachers, when compiling a classroom library, should be sure that about half of the books be easy to read and be of engaging topics because they state that fluency and good reading strategies are developed through reading easy material.

Background Knowledge

In cases where the required reading is still difficult, Allington and Cunningham (2002) suggest that working to develop background knowledge enables the reader to connect with the text and eases the demand placed on readers when they are reading. Although a student’s interest level, the skill of the teacher, and the difficulty of the content are all influencing elements, research seems to indicate that one of the major factors in learning new content is what a student already knows about the content because it will strongly influence how
well he or she learns new information relative to it (Marzano, 2004; Wigfield et al., 2004). They further explain that developing background knowledge can foster motivation to read further about a given subject, and because the background information is present, it can serve to reduce the difficulty of understanding the text as well. So, once again, it is apparent that many engaging, readable texts be available for students in order to allow them to participate in reading simply for the enjoyment of reading, as well as for gaining additional knowledge in an area of particular interest to them. When students are afforded the opportunity to engage with texts which interest them, their level of motivation increases and hence the practice of reading is taking place, and knowledge is increasing.

Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Motivation

What is the importance of self-efficacy as it relates to one’s motivation to become an engaged reader? Pajares and Urdan suggest that self-efficacy is directly related to one’s level of motivation and academic success. Self-efficacy, as related to academic success, is explained by Pajares and Urdan (2002) in this way:
Self-efficacy and its resiliency are related directly to the strength of a student's motivation and achievement. Significant and positive correlations have been obtained between students' self-efficacy for learning (assessed prior to instruction) and subsequent motivation during learning. Studies across different domains and with children and adolescents have yielded significant and positive correlations between self-efficacy and academic achievement. (p. 36)

How then, does this relate to one's motivation to read? One must believe that they are capable of learning before engaging in the task of learning. As self-efficacy seems to be related to success, Rogers et al. (1999) suggest that because people like to feel successful, they tend to seek after and repeat the activities with which they have had success. They state that the feelings of success can come not only from mastering something, but also from continual progress with something that is more difficult. For these feelings of self-efficacy to be met, the activity must be a challenge, but also must be attainable for the student. So then, self-efficacy is an integral part of one's motivation to learn, as it is one main source of confidence in one's ability to learn and this
confidence causes one to want to repeat the activities at which he/she has had success. If this success has been realized in the area of reading, the self-efficacy in this area will cause one to desire to engage in the activity of reading more often.

Self-efficacy must be present before one engages in a learning task. In an article the authors suggest that:

A number of current theories suggest that self-perceived competence and task value are major determinants of motivation and task engagement. For example, Eccles (1983) advanced an 'expectancy-value' theory of motivation which stated that motivation is strongly influenced by one's expectation of success or failure at a task as well as the 'value' or relative attractiveness the individual places on the task. The expectancy component of Eccles' theory is supported by a number of research studies which suggest that students who believe they are capable and competent readers are more likely to outperform those who do not hold such beliefs...In addition, there is evidence which suggests that students who perceive reading as valuable and important and who have personally relevant reasons for reading will engage in reading in a more planful [sic] and
effortful manner. (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, p. 1)

Eccles theory (1983) holds the belief that motivation is more heavily influenced by the student variable. So then, as self-efficacy relates to reading motivation, one can see that believing in one's own ability is vital to their success at the task. One must have an attitude and belief that he or she is capable before entering into the task of reading. According to Guthrie (2000) "Students with high intrinsic motivation, a task orientation, and high self-efficacy are relatively active readers and high achievers..." (p. 3). He further explains that when a person is motivated to read intrinsically, and he or she believes that they are capable, they will continue to read and will pursue more difficult texts and will "exert effort to resolve conflicts and integrate text with prior knowledge" (p. 3). So, the student variable in motivation is an important one, as it influences one's success in learning.

Parental Attachment

How then, does one become a self-motivated learner? Researchers suggest that another aspect of one’s ability to become self-motivated is the individual’s attachment to
a parent. The idea of a strong parental attachment has been linked to a student’s intrinsic motivation in such a way that the student values the guidance of their parents and wishes to please their parents in their academic achievements if their relationship is strong. This idea suggests that for one to become a motivated reader, he or she must have the advantage of a strong parental attachment. According to Lyons (2003), educational professionals in the area of psychology, as well as psychiatrists and physicians agree that in order to foster internal motivation, three conditions must be present which are attachment, autonomy, and challenge. The student variable is influenced by idea that a secure attachment with a parent is necessary for intrinsic motivation to occur.

Lyons proposes that if a young child does not feel connected to a significant adult, he or she will not be able to focus their attention on learning through their environment. Further, by the time the child is school age, he or she will be led by what they believe are the opinions of others. She proposes that children who do not have a strong parental attachment will not be able to develop intrinsic motivation. Copland and Knapp (2006), in discussing the impact of parents on learning describe a
troubled school in which the new superintendent implemented a strategic plan to improve the districts learning agenda. This plan involved direct, ongoing contact with the parents and other community members. She met regularly with the parents and community members and allowed them to speak to her about their hopes and concerns for the children. As the parents became more involved in their children's school lives, the student level of achievement increased, thus affecting, then, the students' levels of self-efficacy. So then, one can deduce that strong parental attachment and involvement is crucial in the development of motivation in learning.

Autonomy

Another factor that influences the student variable portion of self-efficacy as it relates to motivation is autonomy. Lyons (2003) states, "Autonomy is a strong sense of self and a feeling of ownership. Children who have chosen a course of action to take are intrinsically motivated. Autonomous people want the pleasure of feeling successful" (p. 82). In writing about how self-efficacy affects one's capabilities and abilities to self-direct, Pintrich and Schunk (2002) write "Self-efficacy affects choice of activities, effort, and persistence. People
holding low self-efficacy for accomplishing a task may avoid it; those who believe they are capable are likely to participate” (p. 161).

Challenge

The third condition that influences the student variable on motivation is challenge. Lyons (2003) points out that psychologists believe that children are motivated to learn when curiosity is stimulated by proper levels of challenge and complexity. She also states that other researchers have found that children who are motivated to try new challenges tend to have more confidence in their ability to “learn and behave in an appropriate way, which is called self-efficacy” (2003, p. 83). Self-efficacy, then, would seem to be one of the vital influences on one’s reading ability, and the belief in one’s own ability is key to motivation. Guthrie et al. (2004) sustain that self-efficacy has two important parts: the belief in oneself that he or she is capable, and the way that that belief connects to the achievement of a given activity.

Gaining Self-efficacy

How does one gain self-efficacy in reading? As Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencevich (2004) studied the research of Bandura (1977, 1997), they discovered that he
found three sources of information that individuals use in forming their self-efficacy beliefs. The first of these sources would be the way an individual previously performed on a given activity. When an individual does well on an activity, such as reading for example, they will desire to repeat that activity and will have a positive sense of their self-efficacy in accomplishing the activity. So then, when a child has positive early experiences with reading, he or she will tend to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy for reading and will want to engage in it further (Guthrie et al., 2004). This idea explains the importance of early success with reading.

Peer Observation and Encouragement from Others

It is important that children have texts relative to their developmental abilities, at appropriate times, in order for them to experience this type of success. The second source of information that Guthrie et al. (2004) discovered through Bandura’s (1977, 1997) work was the importance of observing peers engaging in the activity. When a child observes a peer performing an activity, such as reading, the child thinks that he or she is also capable of doing that same activity. Because of this, an adult reading has less impact on the child’s self-efficacy
than his or her peer (Guthrie et al., 2004). It is important, then, for educators to provide positive peer role-models for their students. Positive peer-role models can have the capability of influencing another child’s level of motivation and self-efficacy in the task of reading. The third source of information influencing a child’s self-efficacy, according to Bandura’s theory (1977), is encouragement from others. His research found that when significant others, such as parents, teachers, and peers, tell the child that he or she can accomplish a given activity, the child’s sense of self-efficacy rises (Guthrie et al., 2004). From this, one can see the importance of giving positive feedback to the young reader, in the area of ability and effort in reading. So then, how does self-efficacy relate to motivation in reading and how does that translate to a child becoming a good reader? Guthrie et al., (2004) answer that question in the following manner:

...it is essential that students develop a strong sense of their efficacy in reading for them to be engaged in reading...we emphasize the development of self-efficacy for reading. We do this primarily through strategy instruction, to provide the students with the tools they need to become good
readers...giving readers strategies to utilize
develops their expertise as readers, which helps them
develop a sense of efficacy for reading. (p. 254)

How do Positive Expectations Relate to
Motivation and Literacy?

Do positive expectations play a role in motivating
children to learn? If a child senses an expectation from
his or her teacher, will they be more motivated to learn,
and to learn to read for meaning? Lambert and McCombs
(1998) suggest that in order to achieve success in
academics, children must be motivated to learn. They go on
to explain that “In order to enhance the motivation of
learners amid an increasing diversity of learners, the
pivotal role of expectancy processes must be addressed in
educational reform efforts” (p. 83). These researchers
seem to support the teacher variable influence on
motivation in learning.

Lyons (2003) proposes that teachers have the power to
convey to their students that learning is fun and
interesting. She further states that motivation will be
increased, and students will be willing to take risks in
their learning when teachers provide them with continual
opportunities to expand their understanding (Lyons, 2003).
It would appear that teachers must consciously have high
expectations of their students, and must communicate these expectancies to their students in such a way as to motivate them to perform to the best of their abilities. One particular school district, researched by Copland and Knapp (2006) found that learning improved and overall student performance increased when they created a policy of high, explicit expectations for both its students and its teachers. Teachers must strive to show high expectations toward all students in their classrooms, as research suggests that children are aware of their teachers' expectations of them. In a study cited by Lambert and McCombs (1998) it was found that children, even as young as first grade, reported noticing a difference in the way teachers treat high and low achievers. These children seemed to be able to observe these differences in treatment even after only observing the teacher briefly. So, do teachers influence motivation in students according to their expectations? Lambert and McCombs (1998) state that, "Importantly, substantial evidence links the perception of 'being capable' with a variety of motivational outcomes, such as intrinsic motivation, task orientation, effort expenditures, preference for challenge, and the valuing of achievement" (p. 88). They conclude these thoughts by saying that
children’s perception of their abilities comes both from differential access to learning (which has a direct impact on achievement) as well as from their awareness of differential treatment by teachers. Both of these factors influence their motivation to learn (Lambert & McCombs, 1998).

Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) found that teachers who expect all children to learn have students who achieve at higher levels. It appears then, that a teacher’s role in communicating high expectations is crucial to a student’s view of their own ability to learn, thus influencing their own efficacy beliefs and self motivation. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) further suggest that teachers must communicate positive beliefs to their students about their abilities. They go on to explain that teachers’ beliefs about their own efficacy to motivate and teach their students transfers to their students beliefs about their own abilities and chances for success.

Educators must realize the importance of their role, in communicating positive expectations, and how that relates to student motivation in learning. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), teachers must also create a safe environment for their students and one in which the students are willing to take risks. It is important for
students to feel accepted and safe as they pursue academic endeavors, including reading.

As teachers assess student learning, it is important that they use authentic assessment strategies in order to assess the knowledge gained through that activities. In writing about rethinking assessment, Smith and Wilhelm (2004) offer the following, "By focusing on disciplinary questions and meaningful making, assessment becomes an evaluation of performance during which knowledge is displayed, shared, and used" (p. 78).

How Does Goal Orientation Relate to Motivation and Literacy?

Goal orientation theories, as they relate to motivation and literacy, help to explain a child's learning and academic performance in school. Pintrich and Schunk (2002) contend that academic goals and goal orientation are perhaps one of the most important aspects of achievement motivation. They further explain the main theory behind "goal orientation" as related to motivation in this way:

[T]he main construct that is involved [for achievement behavior] is goal orientation, which concerns the purposes for engaging in achievement behavior...goal orientation theory is concerned with
why individuals want to get 10 problems correct and how they approach and engage in this task... goal orientation remains focused on the goals and purposes for achievement tasks. (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 213)

Within the area of goal orientation, there are numerous types of goal orientations, but two of these types are most often represented when discussing academic achievement. They are "mastery goals" and "performance goals". As discussed in the introduction section of this writing, these two types of goals influence an individual's motivation in learning and motivation in literacy. The individuals with the mastery goal orientation "focus on learning, mastering the task according to self-set standards or self-improvement, develop new skills, improve or develop competence, try to accomplish something challenging, and try to gain understanding or insight" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 214). On the other hand, children with performance goal orientation:

...focus on demonstrating competence or ability and how ability will be judged relative to others, for example, trying to surpass normative performance standards, attempting to best others, using social
comparative standards, striving to be the best in the
group or class on a task, avoiding judgments of low
ability or appearing dumb, and seeking public
recognition of high performance levels. (Pintrich &
Schunk, 2002, pp. 215-216)
So then, it appears from the studies of Pintrich and
Schunk, that goal oriented learners could fall into either
the category of being influenced more by the student
variable if they were mastery oriented, or they would fall
more into the category of being influenced by the teacher
variable if they were performance-oriented.

Research suggests the following about the two
different types of goal-oriented students: children with
learning (mastery) goals strive to master skills and
increase their abilities and they judge their competence
through their efforts and whether or not they were able to
achieve mastery on a given task or academic goal. Children
with performance goals strive to get positive judgments
from others and they judge their own competence by
comparing their performance to others, as well as by the
opinions others have of their performance. Learning goals
tend to promote achievement more so than performance goals
(Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). So then, it is feasible
to assume that goal orientation is directly related to
motivation, in that the outcome one desires from his or her learning motivates him or her to either learn for mastery, or learn for recognition. Both types of goal orientation, then, can foster motivation, however, the students who are mastery-oriented learners, are more likely to achieve at a higher rate. The research goes on to explain that motivation in students can be enhanced when they participate in setting academic goals. The goal setting should be done within a context of teacher guidance, whereby the teacher provides the student with a wide range of goals from which the student can select (Baker, et al., 2000). In Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) text, they suggest that performance goals which are based on challenging curriculum are one characteristic of a good design for learning.

Why is goal setting so important in motivating learners? In Guthrie and Wigfield’s (1997) text, they state the following about goal setting:

Goals, which can be acquired through modeling, are integral components of academic motivation and learning. Goals motivate students to exert extra effort and persistence, focus on relevant task features, and use strategies that will help them learn...When learners make a commitment to attain a
goal—such as improving the clarity of their writing—they are likely to compare their performance with the goal as they work on the task. Positive self-evaluations of progress increase self-efficacy and sustain motivation. (p. 39)

Parkay and Hass (2000) assert that students become more productive when they have some control over what they learn according to their own personal interests. So then, one can deduce that goal setting is key to motivation in that it involves the learner in his or her own commitment to learn a given task. If that task is reading for meaning, or becoming an efficient reader, then the learner must engage in setting goals to meet that end so that he maintains some control in the learning activity.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Classroom contexts and policies have a tremendous influence on readers' motivation toward the reading process. As discussed, curricular considerations are paramount; the CORI approach has been forwarded as one of the programmatic elements of a solid curricular approach. Parents are a fundamental component of this scenario. Methods through which classroom practices and policies can positively impact motivation and reviewed in the next chapter. Thematic teaching, via the CORI approach, is highlighted. Key elements of this chapter are seen in Table 1.
Table 1. Key Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>CONCEPT ORIENTED READING INSTRUCTION (CORI)</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT DATA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class of twenty middle-class kindergarten students:</td>
<td>Thematic instruction: Cross-curricular thematic focus on weather in science units</td>
<td>Young Reader Motivation Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males: 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Females: 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic make-up:</td>
<td>Hands-on learning instruction:</td>
<td>Field Notes/classroom observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Proficient: 10%</td>
<td>(A) Science experiments, (B) cooperative learning centers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proficient: 55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic: 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below Basic: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far Below Basic: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic make-up:</td>
<td>Student choice of learning activities:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian: 75%</td>
<td>Chose (A) Thematic books, (B) Free-choice of learning centers, (C) Theme-related writing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>African American: 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic: 10%</td>
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In previous chapters, the issues related to motivation and literacy was discussed. As the research has indicated, the level to which one is intrinsically motivated to read seems to have a critical influence on his ability to succeed at the task; however, as some research indicates, one can also be a successful reader when motivated extrinsically. In this chapter, a specific
method of teaching, that serves to increase motivation, will be discussed as it relates to a group of kindergarten students. The CORI approach was implemented as a means to build motivation and self-efficacy. This program was researched and data was collected, as discussed in a later chapter, as to its effect on motivation. The CORI program was taught, as developmentally appropriate for the age level, for two months during the sixth and seventh months of the school year.

The students in this study were taught using a method of teaching called CORI. The CORI reading instruction program is "Concept Oriented Reading Instruction" and it is intended in this study as extrinsic motivation. It is a "program designed to foster reading engagement and comprehension, through the teaching of reading strategies, teaching of scientific concepts and inquiry skills, and its explicit support of the development of student intrinsic motivation" (Guthrie et al., 2004, p. ix). In this study, the research examined student motivation in reading. Reading motivation was assessed through the implementation of the strategies within the CORI program. The research examined the specific ways that the teacher introduced books, provided strategy instruction, and upheld a motivating context. The research was conducted
using a mixed design of both qualitative and quantitative research.

Participants

This study was conducted with 20 kindergarten students in one elementary classroom. The demographics of the class were as follows: 75% of the students were Caucasian, 15% were African American, and 10% were Hispanic. There were 13 females and 7 males. Two students were English language learners. The kindergarten students in the study came from a middle-class neighborhood in Riverside County, California, with approximately just 1% of them being from socio-economically disadvantaged homes. Academically, the make-up of the class was as follows: 10% of the students were advanced, 55% were proficient, 15% were basic, 10% were below basic, and 10% were far below basic.

Curriculum Reform

The needs of the kindergarten population studied revolved around the need for the students to become engaged, motivated and enthusiastic readers, or listeners of reading, as developmentally appropriate. The students studied consisted of a variety of learners with varied learning styles, different schematic backgrounds, and
various levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The study examined the critical variables of classroom contexts—those being the teacher/classroom variable and the student variable. The teacher variable is crucial, as teachers influence and promote motivation in their students through the types of activities and lessons delivered to their students. Teachers help children reach their potential and promote excitement about learning. Copland and Knapp (2006) suggest that students will meet high learning standards when they have had effective instruction and appropriate support from their teachers. The student variable consists of students who are intrinsically motivated. These students are "dedicated to content understanding and learning flexible skills" (Guthrie, 2000, p. 2). This study examined the impact of one's schema on their motivation. It also examined the impact of teachers on motivation as it relates to the classroom context. The California Language Arts content standards were adhered to as the teacher delivered lessons using the CORI program. California Language Arts content standard 2.3 stresses the importance of connecting the life experiences of the students to the texts being read. This particular standard seems to support the idea that
one's background knowledge, or schema, influences their learning, in turn, then, influencing their motivation.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The kindergarten study group was examined and observed to determine which students work from the level of intrinsic motivation and which ones work from the level of extrinsic motivation. Students who work within a level of intrinsic motivation, or task-mastery orientation, were observed in order to determine what has caused this level of self-motivation. Opportunities for reading during free-time activities were given, as well as one-on-one reading time with the teacher. The teacher observed the level of excitement, as well as the level of understanding of the text and questioned the child(ren) on his or her reason for choosing the text, his or her excitement about the text, and his or her background knowledge about the content of the text. These aspects of the students' involvement were observed. Students who worked within a level of extrinsic motivation, or performance orientation, were observed in order to determine what influenced him or her to choose a certain text. The teacher observed the types of extrinsic motivators that cause the student to read certain texts. The teacher also observed the
students' level of understanding the text after reading or
listening to it.

The teacher observed the students participating in
independent reading and sought to determine which students
enjoyed it and chose it as a free-time activity and which
did not. Observations were made as to the factors
influencing these choices, and interview questions were
asked in order to determine the reasons students chose to
read, or not read.

The students' cognitive schemas and background
knowledge was also observed as part of this study and
questioning strategies were used in determining the levels
of each. Observations were made regarding the background
knowledge of students as related to texts of their
choosing, as well as texts of the teacher's choosing.
Questioning strategies were implemented by the teacher in
order to determine the level of background knowledge about
a given subject and/or content of a certain text. In
examining students' background knowledge, the teacher
observed its direct correlation to their motivation to
read certain texts. In doing so, the teacher used direct
approaches to enhance the students' academic background
knowledge in areas that appeared to be lacking. The
teacher observed the areas of greatest need in providing
more background knowledge and strived to provide that. As that was accomplished, the teacher observed the effect that it had on the students' motivation.

The kindergarten study group was observed to determine the role of self-efficacy in motivation. The teacher observed the students to determine which ones were confident in their ability to learn. The students who showed self-efficacy were examined to determine whether they were more likely to become engaged, motivated readers than those who were not as confident in their abilities. The teacher observed the influence of self-efficacy on motivation. The teacher in this research study planned and implemented activities that fostered reading efficacy in the students then observed the outcome to determine whether or not that encouragement promoted self-efficacy and in turn promoted motivation to read.

The teacher in the study provided opportunities to foster motivation and meet student needs. The researcher provided appropriate materials for the students so that they could engage in meaningful, hands-on tasks. In the CORI method of teaching, the teacher provides hands-on experiences because they support a variety of reading activities. Some researchers found that "...a good ratio of hands-on activities to literacy activities is 1 to 10."
That is, one hour of hands-on activity will support at least 10 hours of extended, engaged reading, writing, and text-based discussion" (Guthrie et al., 2004, p. 17). The kindergarten students in this study were provided with a variety of hands-on activities, as related to texts, in order to promote motivation to read further about the subject at hand.

There were three main strategies used in working with the kindergarten study group that sought to answer the following questions: What are the critical variables (teacher/classroom as well as student) that seem to create or encourage motivated readers? And, what causes some students to be more motivated in reading than others? The study group was taught using strategies within the CORI method, as developmentally appropriate for mid-year kindergartners. The strategies that were most heavily addressed in this study are: building background knowledge, modeling, and participating in hands-on activities.

The first strategy, that of building background knowledge, is an important one. Guthrie (2005-2006) defines activating background knowledge in this way, "Recalling what students know about the topic of a text before reading and during reading for the purpose of
learning the content as fully as possible, and linking the new content to prior understanding” (p. 1). It is vital for the teacher to understand the amount and breadth of background knowledge of his or her students. In order to accomplish this, she must use questioning strategies to determine the level of background knowledge a student has about a given subject. She must also determine the child’s level of outside experiences prior to coming to the classroom. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) explain the importance of using diagnostic assessments, such as a K-W-L chart, early in the learning plan in order to determine the prior knowledge, learning styles and areas of particular talent in one’s students. The researcher in this study used K-W-L charts to determine students’ levels of background knowledge before reading some texts. The teacher in this study also used a variety of assessment strategies, observations, and interview questions to determine the level of the students’ language experiences at home, in order to appropriately plan lessons and activities for the students.

In determining the level of background knowledge of incoming kindergarten students, Duncan (2005) suggests the following observations be made by the teacher:
1. Has the child had preschool experiences, listened to stories, participated in whole and small group activities?
2. Can the child listen to others, understand what it means to get in line, wait for a turn, follow directions, or ask for help?
3. Does the child appear confident?
4. How does the child handle frustrations and deal with others?
5. How does the child make decisions?
6. What are the child’s special interests? (p. 33)

These questions were examined by the teacher of the kindergarten class in this study and she determined the relevance of the answers as related to the background knowledge of the students in the study. The answers to these questions aided the teacher in determining the specific learning needs of the students as related to their backgrounds. This data helped determine the amount of time the teacher spent on tapping into, or building from the start, background knowledge.

Another strategy that was used by the teacher with the kindergarten study group is that of modeling. The teacher in this study modeled for the students, the proper
way to read for meaning, checking for sensibility out of what they have read, or have had read to them.

Another aspect of modeling that was addressed and observed in this study is that of reading topics that are familiar to the students in order to teach reading comprehension skills. The teacher started with content that was familiar to the students in order to eliminate the element of students trying to learn new content at the same time they are trying to understand and use a new cognitive strategy. Greater success is achieved when strategies, such as comprehension, are introduced with highly familiar text (Guthrie et al., 2004). In this study, familiar subject matter was used in order to teach content comprehension. The teacher observed the effect that this strategy had on the level of motivation to continue reading for comprehension by the students.

The final strategy that was looked at with this group of kindergarten students is that of hands-on learning as it relates to the CORI program. The basis of the CORI program provides hands-on activities which relate to the concepts being taught. Research suggests that for many students, especially those who are low-achievers, concrete experiences are necessary for reading comprehension to take place. When a student is provided with immediate,
tangible and real-world experiences, related to reading, motivation to read further is aroused (Guthrie et al., 2004). Kindergarten students learn best when they are able to touch, feel, and experiment with new concepts. They are not abstract thinkers, therefore, the more concrete learning experiences mean more to them and create more motivation to continue learning in that vein. Hands-on and authentic learning experiences are crucial for children at an early developmental stage. The teacher in this study provided hands-on experiences in the area of science and other related subjects in order to observe their affect on the motivation levels of the students to read more in those thematic areas. The teacher in this study sought to discover the impact of hands-on activities as they affected students' intrinsic reading motivation levels.

Data Collection and Analysis

The assessments used to determine the level of motivation that is derived from these strategies was varied. The teacher in the study observed many and various types of activities as they related to each of the strategies. In the very early stages of observation assessment, the teacher followed the suggestion of Duncan (2005) as she suggests that teachers should first discover
what children are unable to do, then go on to find out what they can do. These early and simple assessments helped drive the teacher’s instructional goals. As time went on, the teacher recorded conversations with the students and used authentic assessment strategies in order to assess the knowledge gained through the activities. The teacher in the study strived to assess the students through meaningful conversations and observations in relation to their motivation and engagement with the texts in the classroom.

A pre and post-assessment questionnaire, the Young Reader Motivation Questionnaire (YRMQ), was administered before the CORI program was implemented in January, as well as at the conclusion of the two month research period, in late February. The YRMQ measured both the students’ reading self-efficacy, as well as his/her motivation as it related to reading orientation. The results will be discussed in the following chapter. The YRMQ includes nine items, all worded in question format (e.g. “Do you think you read well?”) rather than using a more declarative format (e.g. “I read well”). This type of wording was chosen based on research that has revealed that declarative items, administered orally, to young students can cause confusion (Chapman and Tunmer, 1995).
The full list of question items on the YRMQ can be found in Appendix A (Coddington, 2006).

The YRMQ was administered orally to students by their classroom teacher, the teacher who implemented the CORI program. Students were questioned in a one-on-one setting in an area just outside of the classroom. They were told that the questions had to do with their enjoyment and interest in reading and that their answers would help other teachers understand what kindergartners think of reading. The students were then told the following directions, "Please answer each question about reading by answering 'Yes' or 'No'". The first question was then read to the student, "Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?" The student was given time to answer the question and was asked to answer with either "Yes" or "No". If the student responded with "Yes", then the teacher further prompted by asking, "Can you read hard words by yourself Always or Usually?" If the student responded "No", then the teacher prompted the student by asking, "Can you Not Usually read hard words by yourself or Never?" (Coddington, 2006). Student responses were recorded. The prompting with each question was continued throughout the remainder of the questionnaire. The students responded to each item on a 4-point scale (1=No,
Never; 2=No, Not Usually; 3=Yes, Usually; 4=Yes, Always) (Coddington, 2006). The final score will be determined by a mathematical average of the responses on each rubric. The responses were recorded on two separate rubric scales, the Self-efficacy for Reading scale (Appendix B), and the Reading-Orientation Motivation scale (Appendix C). The students showed growth in their levels of reading motivation and self-efficacy as determined by the rubric scores. The administration of the YRMQ took approximately 5 minutes per student. The questionnaire was administered to each student in January, prior to the implementation of the CORI program in the classroom, and then again in March, after three months of the CORI program being implemented. At the conclusion of the testing, students were given a sticker reward and then returned to the classroom.

The methodological strategies that were addressed in this study were appropriate for mid-year kindergarten students in that they will serve to lay the groundwork for furthering the students' levels of motivation in reading. The strategies of building background knowledge, modeling, and experimenting with hands-on learning, are all integral parts of learning to read with enthusiasm. This study
examined the effects of these strategies on this particular group of kindergarten students.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

As the teacher in this study researched, she discovered that there were many ways in which her influences as an educator, affected the students’ engagement and motivation in reading. This chapter examined the affects of various teaching strategies on reading motivation, as well as the level to which an educator can influence her students’ motivation.

This study analyzed data collected in a kindergarten classroom of twenty students over a two month period, during the sixth and seventh months of the school year. The data collected was a mixed design of consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data. Besides the observations made by the teacher during the research period, pre and post-assessment questionnaires were administered orally to each student in a one-on-one setting in order to determine each student’s attitudes and feelings about reading before and after the implementation of the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) program. The data collected during these assessment questionnaires, as well as teacher observations, student
responses to interview questions, and field notes are discussed in this chapter.

As the teacher in this study examined the key questions of motivation in literacy, those being: What is motivation? What are some critical variables of classroom contexts that seem to create or encourage motivated readers? What causes some students to be motivated to read more than others?, she determined that the CORI program might positively influence reading motivation in her classroom and some of these questions would be answered through her observations of the effect of the program on her students.

As stated in an earlier chapter, motivation can be described as the drive, or desire to do something or achieve something (Rogers et al., 1992). The levels of interest and motivation in reading were examined at the beginning of the research period, prior to the implementation of the CORI program. The students in the study group were questioned about their attitudes and feelings towards reading. As stated in the last chapter, the pre-assessment questionnaire posed four questions relating to one’s self-efficacy for reading and five questions relating to one’s reading-orientation motivation. Each student was to answer “yes” or “no” to
each question and then the researcher prompted each answer with "yes, always or yes, usually", or "no, not usually, or no, never". The results to the pre-assessment questionnaire are available on Figure 1 and Figure 2.

![Bar chart](image)

Rubric Scores

Question 1: Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?
Question 2: Are you good at remembering words?
Question 3: Do you think you read well?
Question 4: Can you read hard words in a story even if there are no pictures?

Rubric Scale Score:

4=High level of self-efficacy
3=Medium level of self-efficacy
2=Low level of self-efficacy
1=No evidence of self-efficacy

Figure 1. Self-efficacy for Reading Pre-assessment: Rubric Scores
Question 1: Is it fun for you to read books?
Question 2: Do you look forward to reading?
Question 3: Do you like reading at home?
Question 4: Do you like to read by yourself?
Question 5: Do you choose to read without being told to read?

Rubric Scale Score:
4 = High level of reading-orientation motivation
3 = Medium level of reading-orientation motivation
2 = Low level of reading-orientation motivation
1 = No evidence of reading-orientation motivation

Figure 2. Reading-orientation Motivation Pre-assessment:

In interpreting the data of the questionnaires, the researcher found the following responses in relation to the questions about self-efficacy for reading. When each of the twenty students was individually asked the question "Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?", the
responses were as follows: one student answered “yes, always”, two students answered “yes, usually”, seven students answered “no, not usually” and 10 students answered “no, never”. These responses were in line with the researcher’s prior observations. The students in the study are sixth and seventh month kindergartners, so difficult words are not part of the standard curriculum, rather simple one syllable and sight words are standard.

In responding to the question “Are you good at remembering words?”, two students answered “yes, always”, 14 students answered “yes, usually”, four students answered “no, not usually” and none answered “no, never”. These responses were unsurprising to the researcher, as she had observed that about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the class was doing well in the area of remembering sight words and reading simple words and another $\frac{1}{4}$ were beginning to show improvement in that area.

When asked the question “Do you think you read well?” five students responded with “yes, always”, 13 answered “yes, usually”, one answered “no, not usually” and one answered “no, never”. These responses showed the researcher that 90% of the students in the study class had a positive view of their reading ability, whether or not they could actually read successfully. These responses
showed a high level of self-efficacy in the area of the students' views of their abilities.

The final question regarding self-efficacy was "Can you read hard words in a story even if there no pictures?". The responses to this question were as follows: none responded with "yes, always", four responded with "yes, usually", three responded with "no, not usually" and 13 responded with "no, never". These responses were very similar to what the researcher expected upon administration of this questionnaire. Being a veteran kindergarten teacher, it was her observation that kindergarten students most often relied heavily on picture clues when reading.

In interpreting the data of the questionnaire regarding reading-orientation motivation, when the question of "Is it fun for you to read books?" was asked, 10 students replied with "yes, always", 10 students replied with "yes, usually", while none replied with a "no" response. The teacher found it interesting that all students in the study remarked that they enjoyed reading books, as her observations would have been that only about 2/3 of the class viewed reading as fun, while the other 1/3 viewed it as a necessary task in school.
When the question of "Do you look forward to reading?" was asked, 11 students replied with "yes, always" and nine students replied with "yes, usually" and once again none replied with a "no" response. Again, these responses were somewhat unexpected, as the teacher's observations were that approximately six of her students seemed to avoid the task of reading when given choices between reading and other activities.

In answering the question of "Do you like reading at home?" eight students replied with "yes, always", nine replied with "yes, usually", two replied with "no, not usually" and one replied with "no, never". Because the researcher was not privy to the child's activities at home, she did not have any observations regarding this particular element of the questionnaire.

When asked, "Do you like to read by yourself?" the students responded with six stating "yes, always", seven stating "yes, usually", seven stating "no, not usually", and none stating "no, never". This breakdown of numbers seemed to coincide with the researchers observations of the way in which her students engaged in reading.

The final question regarding one's reading-orientation motivation was "Do you choose to read books without being told to read?". The student responses
were in line with what the researcher had observed in the classroom during free-choice activity times. They responded to this question with three students stating "yes, always", eight students stating "yes, usually", eight students stating "no, not usually" and one student stating "no, never". The results of this portion of the questionnaire were both revealing and interesting. In the teacher's observations, prior to the administration of the pre-assessment, she had noted in her field notes that it appeared that approximately six students did not view reading as fun, nor did they look forward to reading. However, the results of the questionnaire refuted that observation, although nine out of the twenty students in the study responded that they did not choose to read books without being told to do so.

In examining the critical variables of classroom contexts that encourage motivated readers, the researcher implemented key elements of the CORI program in order to determine their effects on motivation. One of the key elements that the researcher implemented was that of allowing student choice in reading. The teacher made many various texts, related to a given curricular theme, available to students at all times. She informed the students that they may, at any time when they were
involved in creative writing, cooperative learning groups, or had free time, look at any of the books displayed. The teacher often chose books from those displayed to read orally to the class, pointing out various interesting facets of each book. The teacher also pointed out theme-related books in the library for student check-out. It was the researcher’s observation, that over time, the students tended to gravitate toward the books that the teacher had specifically chosen as oral reading material. She noticed that it was those titles that were often the first ones chosen by the students when they had a chance to choose books. She observed that the theme-related books were chosen approximately three times more often than books un-related to the theme of curriculum at the time.

Another element which the teacher implemented during the research period was to allow for many hands-on activities which related to the curriculum theme. This element extended the opportunity for all students to experience the curriculum in a meaningful manner. One such unit of study during the research period was a science unit about weather. The teacher taught weather-related lessons in science, but she also integrated weather across the curriculum. The students were afforded the opportunity to work in cooperative groups with hands-on activities
related to weather. These types of activities spurred spontaneous conversations among the students as they worked together. The researcher heard one student, when working with a precipitation experiment, state “This reminds me of the story teacher read about rain.” As the researcher overheard this, she observed to see if anyone in that cooperative group would, in turn, seek out a theme-related book on display and available for students. After the cooperative group time, four of the seven children in that group did choose books about rain, with one of the books being the one the researcher had read orally to the students and another two children in that group chose a weather-related book, one child in the group chose a book unrelated to the theme.

In examining the question of why some students are more motivated to read than others, the researcher observed various influencing factors. It appeared to the researcher that the students who had strong parental involvement and support were more motivated in their reading. As discussed in an earlier chapter, there is much research supporting the idea of parental influence on motivation. It was the researcher’s observations that the students in the study class who had strong parental attachment and support were more motivated than those who
did not. The students who often shared that they were read
to at home, by their parents, were in turn the students
who often chose to read books over choosing other
activities. It appeared that strong parental attachment
and support was a key factor in causing a child to become
a motivated reader.

As the researcher looked into the ways in which
students' schemas are activated, she found that activating
background knowledge was a vital component in motivating
her students to read. As she directed the class
conversations toward background knowledge, when
introducing texts and topics, students became interested
in learning more. This interest translated into the
students' showing a growing aptitude for seeking out
reading related texts without prompting on the part of the
teacher. The researcher observed that the students were
more interested in theme-related texts when they could
relate to them on a personal level. When interviewing her
students after a lesson about snow in which the students
were able to physically touch real snow that had been
stored in the classroom freezer, and had been given the
opportunity to orally share their experiences with snow,
the researcher asked ten of the students, in a one-on-one
fashion, the following question: "Can you please choose a
book from our classroom for us to read together?” Ten of the ten students chose a book related to snow. There were many weather-related books on display, with about \( \frac{1}{2} \) of those books being about snow, however, there were also many unrelated texts available in the classroom. Through this observation and others, the researcher observed the impact that activating background knowledge can have on her students. Similar situations were observed throughout the research period, and it was noted that in almost every situation, the activation of background knowledge encouraged motivation to read related texts.

As the researcher continued to observe and write field notes, it was observed that the students not only chose to read more often, and read books which were related to the unit theme, the students also chose to write about the theme, often writing about what they had read. During one post-writing interview with a student, the teacher asked the student the following question: “Why did you choose to write about the book entitled Snowballs?” The student responded by saying, “I love books about snow, it is fun to read about snow.” From this and other similar conversations with her students, the researcher determined that, indeed, providing interesting related texts, and integrating curriculum using hands-on
activities did seem to positively impact student motivation to read.

The same assessment that was administered as a pre-assessment, was also administered at the conclusion of the research period as a post-assessment. As stated previously, the assessment questionnaire posed four questions relating to one’s self-efficacy in reading and five questions related to one’s reading-orientation motivation. Once again, each student was to answer “yes” or “no” to each question and then the researcher prompted each answer with “yes, always or yes, usually”, or “no, not usually, or no, never”. The results to the post-assessment questionnaire are available on Figure 3 and Figure 4.
Rubric Scores

Question 1: Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?
Question 2: Are you good at remembering words?
Question 3: Do you think you read well?
Question 4: Can you read hard words in a story even if there are no pictures?

Rubric Scale Score:

4=High level of self-efficacy
3=Medium level of self-efficacy
2=Low level of self-efficacy
1=No evidence of self-efficacy

Figure 3. Self-efficacy for Reading Post-assessment:
Rubric Scores

Question 1: Is it fun for you to read books?
Question 2: Do you look forward to reading?
Question 3: Do you like reading at home?
Question 4: Do you like to read by yourself?
Question 5: Do you choose to read without being told to read?

Rubric Scale Score:

4=High level of reading-orientation motivation
3=Medium level of reading-orientation motivation
2=Low level of reading-orientation motivation
1=No evidence of reading-orientation motivation

Figure 4. Reading-orientation Motivation Post-assessment: Rubric Scores

In interpreting the data of the questionnaires, the researcher found the following responses in relation to the question about self-efficacy for reading. When each of the twenty students were individually asked the question “Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?” the
responses were as follows: two students answered "yes, always", six students answered "yes, usually", eight students answered "no, not usually", and five answered "no, never". The responses this question showed an overall improvement in this area of self-efficacy.

In responding to the question "Are you good at remembering words?" six students answered "yes, always", 13 students answered "yes, usually", only one answered "no, not usually", and none answered "no, never". The class, as a whole, showed improvement in this particular area of self-efficacy as well. During the research period of two months, the researcher did not notice a drastic statistical improvement in her students' ability to remember words, but from the results of this questionnaire, it appears that their levels of self-efficacy for the task increased.

When asked the question "Do you think you read well?" 10 students responded with "yes, always", nine students answered "yes, usually", only one answered "no, not usually", and none answered "no, never". This area of self-efficacy also appeared to have improved.

When the final question relating to self-efficacy, "Can you read hard words in a story in a story even if there are no pictures?", was asked, no students answered
“yes, always”, five students answered “yes, usually”, eight students answered “no, not usually”, and seven answered “no, never”. There was only an increase of one student believing that they could usually accomplish this task. The overall positive responses increased by five students, however, the overwhelming initial response to this question was still “no”. This response was in accordance with the researcher’s thoughts, as it was her opinion and observation that kindergarten students, even those with high reading skills, rely heavily on picture clues.

In interpreting the data of the questionnaire regarding reading-orientation motivation, when the question of “Is it fun for you to read books?” was asked, 13 students replied with “yes, always”, and seven replied with “yes, usually”. None replied with a “no” response. This data is similar to that of the pre-assessment, although the “yes, always” response increased by three students. As stated earlier, it had been the researcher’s observations that only about 2/3 of her students viewed reading as fun, while the other 1/3 viewed it as a necessary task, it was her observation, after the implementation of CORI, that about ¾ of the students enjoyed reading, while ¼ still viewed it as a necessary
task. The results of the post-assessment questionnaire refute this observation, however. It appears that all twenty kindergarten students in the study group view reading as a fun activity.

When asked the question, “Do you look forward to reading?”, 13 students replied with “yes, always”, and seven replied with “yes, usually”. Once again, no one gave a “no” response. These numbers increased slightly over the pre-assessment, although all twenty students gave a “yes” response in the pre-assessment as well.

In answering the question “Do you like reading at home?”, 12 students responded with “yes, always”, six responded with “yes, usually”, two responded with “no, not usually” and none responded “no, never”. These results showed an increase in this particular aspect of motivation by eight students over the pre-assessment results. Once again, because the teacher was not privy to the child’s activities at home, it was difficult to determine the validity of these responses, however, one parent did tell the teacher that her child asked to go to the library to borrow books about weather.

When asked “Do you like to read by yourself?”, the students responded with nine stating “yes, always”, eight stating, “yes, usually”, three stating “no, not usually”,
and none stating, "no, never". This area of reading orientation motivation showed improvement in each of the three answers, with four fewer children giving a "no" response than was given during the pre-assessment.

The final question in the reading-orientation motivation questionnaire was "Do you choose to read without being told to read?". In response to this question, seven students responded by stating "yes, always", eight students responded "yes, usually", five responded "no, not usually", and none responded "no, never". In this area of reading motivation, increases were also noted.

As the researcher continued to observe, interview, and write field notes, she found that students were talking about reading amongst themselves more often than before. It was noted that students seemed to be more interested in sharing what they had read with her and other students. The researcher also noted that several students began bringing books from home to share with the class, most of which were related to the theme unit of study. As the researcher concluded her study, she found that reading motivation, and self-efficacy as it relates to reading motivation, did increase as a result of
implementing the Concept Oriented Reading Instruction program.

As the researcher reviewed the data, observations and experiences of teaching using the CORI approach, she came to some conclusions about its effectiveness, as well as the limitations of the study. The conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher’s own classroom experience led her to a desire to research the topic of reading motivation, as it was her observation, after many years of teaching, that a lack of reading motivation negatively influences a child’s academic success across the curricular areas. It was the researcher’s observations that this lack of motivation, if it continues through the child’s progression of grades, accounts for many difficulties throughout the child’s school career. The researcher, being a kindergarten teacher, was interested in discovering techniques by which she could influence and encourage motivation early in her students’ school careers. Research indicates that a lack of motivation seems to be at the very base of many problems faced by teachers as they attempt to teach (O’Flahavan et al, 1992), and further research indicates that motivation is an essential part of learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is for these reasons that the researcher conducted this study, as it was her desire to positively impact the levels of reading motivation in her students.
In previous chapters, the following questions were examined: What are the critical variables of classroom contexts that encourage motivated readers? In what ways are some students more motivated to read than others? How does one’s schematic background, including knowledge, experiences, emotional and psychological make-up, influence motivation? As research indicates, motivation is the drive that one has to do something or achieve something (Rogers et al., 1992; O’Flahavan et al., 1992; Guthrie, 2000).

In examining the classroom contexts affecting motivation, one classroom context which seems to influence student motivation is that of the role of the teacher. Educators must consider the importance of engaging students in reading when planning in order to motivate them intrinsically. Rogers et al. (1999) found that appropriate planning on the part of the teacher influenced motivation levels in the classroom. As Copland and Knapp (2006) suggest, when they write about interrelated learning agendas in schools and districts, the organizational environments of student learning and professional learning come into play in powerful and equitable education. As an educational leader, the researcher in this study realized that student learning
and system learning must intersect in order for the teacher to be successful in delivering appropriate curriculum which will foster engagement. Powerful and equitable learning opportunities can encourage motivation, as students and the professionals involved in teaching them, come together to "...enable[s] all students to develop what others have called deep subject matter knowledge" (Copland & Knapp, 2006, p. 18).

Another element which seems to influence student motivation levels comes from the student himself; what causes some students to be more motivated than others? According to research (Guthrie, 2000), individuals may exhibit one of two types of motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic. Further research indicates that although both types of motivation can produce positive learning experiences, it is those students who are motivated intrinsically who seem to have a greater degree of long-term learning engagement (Guthrie, 2000; RIF Exchange 404, 2006; McCombs, 1999). In studying the effect of one's schema on their levels of motivation, research indicates that when one's cognitive schema is activated, as related to what they are reading, the individual will have understanding and recall of what they have read. As stated in previous chapters, schema activation is crucial in
order for reading to have meaning. One's own schema and background, then, are a critical part of their reasons for motivation and their ability to engage in texts. Finally, the role of self-efficacy in reading cannot be ignored. Research suggests that children who perceive themselves as good readers, may, in fact, become better readers (Wigfield et al., 2004). Wigfield, et al. (2004) found that children with high levels of self-efficacy are more willing to try more difficult reading activities, do better on achievement activities and show more persistence with difficult tasks. This research further indicated that children who had a higher degree of self-efficacy were higher achievers in reading. Self-efficacy, then, is a very important factor in one's perceived reading ability, thus transferring to their motivation to read. As the results of the previous chapter indicated, the levels of self-efficacy increased as a result of the CORI program implementation. The researcher in this study found that higher levels of self-efficacy did, in fact, positively influence student motivation in reading.

The findings in this study help one understand some of the elements which can influence reading engagement and motivation. In examining the research and through the implementation of the CORI program, the researcher in this
study determined that reading motivation can, indeed, be influenced by the educator through various teaching strategies. These strategies, many of which were part of the CORI program, include: hands-on learning experiences, promotion of student autonomy in learning, schema activation, background knowledge integration, provision of free-choice reading materials, encouragement of self-efficacy, and student choice.

From this study, it appears that specific teaching strategies can motivate reading in young students. It is the researcher's opinion that the CORI program, or similar cross-curricular, thematic teaching programs, positively influences student motivation in reading. It is the observation of the researcher that when students are actively involved in learning, through hands-on activities and they are able to have autonomy and choice in learning activities, their levels of interest in the subject matter increase. With this increase in interest, it was noted that students showed more motivation to seek out related texts to read as a free-choice activity. It was further noted that, after the students read these related texts, they were more prone to engage in related activities, such as writing opportunities, and role-play activities which correlated with what they read.
It is the opinion of the researcher that further studies in the area of reading motivation in young children could be aided by a study period that extended for a longer period of time than was incorporated in this study. It is suggested that further studies be conducted over a period of no less than four months, with seven to nine months being preferable. It is further noted that the types of questions asked within the YRMQ (see appendices A, B, and C) have variable answer possibilities depending on the mood and feelings of the child being questioned at the time. The questions are set up in such a way that the child may or may not give the same answer to the same question within the same day, as the questions are based on the child’s feelings at the time of questioning. It may benefit further researchers to develop a questionnaire which has more concrete answer possibilities. It is the opinion of the researcher that students who are at the developmental stage of most kindergartners, are influenced greatly by factors such as hunger levels, exhaustion levels, degrees of distractions in the classroom, and comfort level with the questioner when participating with a questionnaire. These variables must be taken into consideration when examining the results of the
questionnaire and when considering the best possible time to administer the questionnaire to each student.

As further studies are conducted in the area of reading motivation, it is suggested that the researcher conduct many and various types of oral interviews with students and parents. The researcher in this study did not interview parents, and it may have been beneficial to do so in relation to the YRMQ questions relating to at-home reading. Parental perspective may aid in a better understanding of self-efficacy and reading-orientation motivation. One would recommend that further studies include parental interviews.

In conclusion, it appears, from this study that student reading motivation is at the base of a student’s learning abilities. Students with higher levels of reading motivation seem to be more successful in scholarly endeavors, and students with lower levels of reading motivation seem to struggle with academia. It further appears, as one examines the results of the study, that the teacher variable greatly influences student motivation through the techniques he or she employs in the classroom. The Concept Oriented Reading Instruction program seemed to have positive effects on the levels of self-efficacy, which, as discussed, is a vital part of continued
motivation, as well as on the levels of reading-orientation motivation (see Figures 1-4 in chapter 4). It is the opinion of the researcher that the CORI program, implemented in this kindergarten study group, had a positive influence on the levels of motivation and literacy and that appropriate and powerful instruction can and does influence reading motivation in students.
APPENDIX A

YOUNG READER MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Young Reader Motivation Questionnaire (YRMQ)

Self-efficacy for Reading:

1. Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?
2. Are you good at remembering words?
3. Do you think you read well?
4. Can you read hard words in a story even if there are no pictures?

Reading-Orientation Motivation:

1. Is it fun for you to read books?
2. Do you look forward to reading?
3. Do you like reading at home?
4. Do you like to read by yourself?
5. Do you choose to read without being told to read?

Note. From “Reading motivation in first grade,” by Cassandra S. Coddington, 2006, unpublished manuscript, University of Maryland. Adapted with permission.
APPENDIX B

SELF-EFFICACY FOR READING: RUBRIC SCALE
### Self-efficacy for Reading: Rubric Scale

<table>
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<th>2</th>
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<td>Can you read hard words by yourself when you read?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you good at remembering words?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think you read well?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you read hard words in a story even if there are no pictures?</td>
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**Rubric Scale Score:**

- **4** = High level of self-efficacy
- **3** = Medium level of self-efficacy
- **2** = Low level of self-efficacy
- **1** = No evidence of self-efficacy
APPENDIX C

READING-ORIENTATION MOTIVATION: RUBRIC SCALE
### Reading-Orientation Motivation: Rubric Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Do you look forward to reading?</td>
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<td>Do you choose to read without being told to read?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Rubric Scale Score:**

4 = High level of reading-orientation motivation  
3 = Medium level of reading-orientation motivation  
2 = Low level of reading-orientation motivation  
1 = No evidence of reading-orientation motivation
REFERENCES


