INVESTIGATING STUDENT MOTIVATION 
THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR 

by 

Jonathan Lee 
B.Ed., University of Victoria, 2011 

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF 

MASTER OF ARTS 
in 
THE COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (Educational Leadership and Policy) 

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Okanagan) 

December 2016 

© Jonathan Lee, 2016
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the College of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Investigating Student Motivation Throughout the School Year

Submitted by Jonathan Lee in partial fulfillment of the requirements of

The degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Dr. Catherine Broom – Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan
Supervisor, Professor (please print name and faculty/school above the line)

Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta – Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan
Supervisory Committee Member, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

Dr. John-Tyler Binfet – Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan
Supervisory Committee Member, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

Dr. Heather Gainforth – Faculty of Health and Social Development, UBC Okanagan
University Examiner, Professor (please print name and faculty/school in the line above)

December 3, 2016
(Date submitted to Grad Studies)
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the interrelationship between internal, external, and temporal influences of student academic motivation, and to identify strategies that teachers and curriculum developers can implement to improve student motivation. In this study, motivation was conceptualized using a Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework in addition to components of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory. These theories recommend the use of a holistic approach to examine motivation, and to take into account both the internal and external influences of a youth’s development. PYD also emphasizes the need to surround youth with supportive external influences to promote positive development during adolescence.

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with eight Grade 11 students at three different phases (October, January, and May) during the 2015-2016 school year. Several key internal, external, and temporal themes emerged from the participant interviews: i) Teachers greatly influenced student interest and enjoyment of a subject; ii) Participant motivation and academic goals were influenced by the attitudes and values of their peers and family; iii) As the year progressed, participant motivation generally decreased; iv) Excluding January, participants often had low motivation during winter months; v) An extended break was linked to increases in participant motivation; vi) Tests and assessments may increase student motivation. Findings illustrated the interconnected and dynamic relationship between the environment and internal aspects of student motivation, and also suggested that various educational strategies and teacher behaviours may improve student motivation.
Preface

Jonathan Lee (Student Researcher) designed and conducted this study, in accordance with discussions with Dr. Catherine Broom (Principal Investigator), Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta (member of the Study Team), and Dr. John-Tyler Binfet (member of the Study Team). The interview tool was designed by the Student Researcher with guidance and feedback from the Principal Investigator and members of the Study Team. Jonathan Lee conducted the interviews, recorded, and analyzed participant responses. Research approval was obtained from the UBC Behavioural Ethical Review Board under the following research title: Investigating Student Motivation Throughout the School Year, Certification Number H15-01649.
Table of Contents

Thesis Committee Recommendation ................................................................. ii
Abstract................................................................................................................ iii
Preface.................................................................................................................. iv
Table of Contents ................................................................................................ v
List of Tables ......................................................................................................... xi
List of Figures ....................................................................................................... xiii
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................. xiii
Dedication .............................................................................................................. xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION............................................................................... 1

1.1 Context ........................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Rationale......................................................................................................... 3
1.3 The New British Columbia Curriculum ............................................................. 4
1.4 Study Objective and Research Questions ......................................................... 5
1.5 A Gap in the Literature ................................................................................... 6
1.6 Organization of Thesis Chapters ...................................................................... 7

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ......................................................... 8

2.1 Overview of Chapter 2 .................................................................................... 8
2.2 Defining Motivation ....................................................................................... 8
2.3 Differentiating Between Internal and External Influences ................................. 9
2.4 Theorizing Motivation ................................................................................... 9
2.4.1 Human Development .............................................................................. 9
2.4.2 The Ecological Systems Theory, Positive Youth Development, and Strengths-Based Education .......................................................... 11

2.5 Internal Factors Affecting Motivation ........................................... 17
  2.5.1 Personality ................................................................................. 17
  2.5.2 Values and Attitudes ................................................................. 17
  2.5.3 Interest and Enjoyment ............................................................. 17
  2.5.4 Goals ......................................................................................... 18
  2.5.5 Self-Determination and Self-Efficacy ........................................ 18

2.6 External Factors Affecting Motivation .......................................... 18
  2.6.1 Family ....................................................................................... 18
  2.6.2 School Culture .......................................................................... 19
  2.6.3 Teachers .................................................................................... 19
  2.6.4 Peer Group ................................................................................ 19
  2.6.5 Extracurricular Activities, Work, and Volunteering ................. 19

2.7 Previous Research on Student Motivation ...................................... 20
  2.7.1 Yearlong Temporal Studies on Adolescent Motivation ............ 20
  2.7.2 The Interaction Between Internal and External Factors ............. 22

2.8 Synthesizing and Extending on the Literature ............................... 27
  2.8.1 Implications of this Motivational Theory .................................. 28

2.9 Summary of Chapter 2 .................................................................. 28

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................. 30

3.1 Overview of Chapter 3 .................................................................... 30

3.2 Aim of the Study .......................................................................... 30
### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Research Approach</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Theoretical Perspectives</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Rationale for Chosen Methodology</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Qualitative Interviews</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 Exploratory Narrative Case Study</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Participants</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Sampling</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Ensuring Participant Confidentiality and Privacy</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Obtaining Participant and Guardian Permission</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Interview Tool</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 Data Collection</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.1 Phase 1: Early-Year</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.2 Phase II: Mid-Year</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.3 Phase III: End-of-Year</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11 Dissemination of Results</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12 Data Analysis</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.1 Grounded Theory for Qualitative Analysis</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.2 Data Coding Method</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.3 Coding Rationale</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13 Research Authenticity</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14 Beliefs, Perspectives, and Reliability</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15 Summary of Chapter 3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

---

---
4.1 Overview of Chapter 4 ........................................................................................................ 45
4.2 Temporal Considerations .................................................................................................. 45
4.3 Participant Motivation ...................................................................................................... 45
  4.3.1 Participant A – Dakota ............................................................................................... 45
  4.3.2 Participant B – Casey ............................................................................................... 46
  4.3.3 Participant C – Tatum ............................................................................................. 47
  4.3.4 Participant D – Jamie .............................................................................................. 47
  4.3.5 Participant E – Corey ............................................................................................... 48
  4.3.6 Participant F – Quinn .............................................................................................. 48
  4.3.7 Participant G – Jordan ........................................................................................... 49
  4.3.8 Participant H – Morgan .......................................................................................... 50
4.4 Themes of Student Motivation ......................................................................................... 50
  4.4.1 Most Common Themes Versus Most Influential Themes .......................................... 51
  4.4.2 Internal Influences .................................................................................................. 51
  4.4.3 External Influences ................................................................................................ 52
4.5 Student Motivation during each Phase ........................................................................... 53
  4.5.1 Phase I: Early-Year ................................................................................................. 53
  4.5.2 Phase II: Mid-Year .................................................................................................. 53
  4.5.3 Phase III: End-of-Year ........................................................................................... 54
  4.5.4 Individual Participant Motivation in Phase I, II, and III .......................................... 54
4.6 Interpreting Graphs ........................................................................................................... 54
4.7 The Influence of Temporal Factors on Internal and External Themes ......................... 57
  4.7.1 Internal and External Factors ................................................................................ 57
Appendix B – Parent or Guardian Consent Form ......................................................... 110
Appendix C – Student Academic Interview Form ......................................................... 115


List of Tables

Table 1.1 Theories of Student Motivation................................................................. 3
Table 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory ........................................ 11
Table 2.2 External and Internal Influences of Motivation....................................... 15
List of Figures

*Figure 2.1.* Theorizing student motivation. ................................................................. 16

*Figure 4.1.* Mean participant motivation during each phase. ........................................ 55

*Figure 4.2.* Participant motivation during each phase. .................................................. 56

*Figure 4.3.* Fluctuation of each participant motivation in each phase. .......................... 56

*Figure 4.4.* Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase I. ..................................... 58

*Figure 4.5.* Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase II. ..................................... 58

*Figure 4.6.* Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase III. .................................... 59

*Figure 4.7.* Four most commonly mentioned themes compared across phases............. 59

*Figure 4.8.* Four most commonly mentioned themes of each phase. ........................... 60

*Figure 5.1.* The interrelationship between teachers, students, and curriculum on student motivation. ......................................................................................................................... 72
Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to have worked with so many amazing professors and fellow students during my time at UBCO. I would first like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Catherine Broom, for her guidance, encouragement, and motivation throughout my graduate programme. She made me a better writer, a more inquisitive student and teacher, and I am truly indebted for all of her time and effort. To Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta and Dr. John-Tyler Binfet, thank you for being on my committee, and for your valuable constructive comments, suggestions, and feedback.

I would also like to thank the students who participated in this study, as their willingness to discuss personal information about their motivation greatly contributed to this research.

A sincere thank you to my wife, Abbey, for her unwavering love and support. Her encouragement, positivity, and patience endured me during the writing of this thesis. Thank you to my parents, Rona Posen and Christopher Lee, for their continual support from childhood to adulthood. I would also like to thank my aunts, Sheryn Posen and Maxine Miska, for their suggestions and feedback during the writing of this thesis.
To all of the past, present, and future educators, who motivate their students, and inspire them to reach their potential.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The complex human phenomenon of motivation has garnered keen interest across various disciplines, including the field of education (Bolkan, 2015; Hotaman, 2010; Lee & Reeve, 2012; Martin, 2008). Guided by educational literature, curriculum developers and teachers have implemented new strategies, interventions, and reform projects to improve the quality of learning within educational institutions (Pintrich, 2003). Educators are aware that effective learning is congruent with student motivation, but have been unable to develop a guaranteed formula of teaching strategies and behaviours to ensure strong pupil motivation (Biesta, 2007). Thus, understanding student motivation remains at the forefront of educational research (Buijs & Admiraal, 2013; Peetsma & Van der Veen, 2013; Spinath, Eckert, & Steinmayr, 2014).

Educators are invested in improving their understanding of why students experience varying levels of academic success (Pintrich, 2003). Although there are numerous factors, behaviours, and student attributes that contribute to an individual’s academic success, one of the common themes that has been identified is the role of motivation. The literature has shown that effective instruction can motivate students and increase their “interest in and enjoyment of school and study” (Martin, 2008, p. 240). This is important because motivation acts as a mediating factor of appropriate learning behaviours and positive academic emotions (Bolkan, 2015; Lee & Reeve, 2012; Ntoumanis & Blaymires, 2003; Wylie & Hodgen, 2012). Additionally, motivated students are more engaged in class, as there is an inverse relationship between boredom and motivation (Macklem, 2015). Thus, strong student motivation influences academic achievement and general knowledge
acquisition, as highly motivated students are more likely to be attentive, ask questions, and develop the necessary skills required to improve their understanding of a subject (Reeve, 2012).

The literature has identified and discussed the most effective teaching strategies and behaviours to improve student motivation (Aiming & Aimin, 2006; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Reeve & Lee, 2013). However, because student motivation is an internal subjective experience, it is difficult for educators to truly understand the relationship between student motivation and student behaviour (Lee & Reeve, 2012). Motivation is context dependent; thus, people may display inconsistent behaviours in different social and physical environments (Turner & Patrick, 2008). This is often the case within the field of education, as shifting variables such as assignment type, seating plans, or daily changing schedules produce an inconsistent environment (Turner & Patrick, 2008). Therefore, external factors may affect student motivation, and subsequently their behaviour and the quality of learning within a classroom (Parks & Guay, 2009).

Experts have used various perspectives when investigating motivation within the field of education, including the following theories outlined below.
Table 1.1

*Theories of Student Motivation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expectancy-Value Theory</td>
<td>People’s motivation stems from how well they believe they will perform on a given activity, and to what extent they value that activity (Summers, 2008; Wigfield &amp; Eccles, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Determination Theory</td>
<td>People’s motivation is a product of their innate psychological needs including competency, autonomy, and relatedness (Bandura, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Achievement Goal Theory</td>
<td>Goals play a significant role in an individual’s motivation during task involvement (Nicholls, 1984).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These theories were considered during the literature review for this study.

However, the Positive Youth Development (PYD) model was chosen because it allows for a more holistic examination of the dynamic nature of motivation. PYD theorists postulate that supportive social and physical environments are essential in a youth’s maturation, as these can lead to the development of positive academic, social, and emotional behaviours (Gomez & Ang, 2007). Surrounding youth with supportive people and environments may allow them to develop positive goal-orientations, value their education and learning opportunities, and help them fulfill their competency, autonomy, and relatedness needs.

### 1.2 Rationale

My interest in student motivation originated during my first year as a full-time teacher in 2013. I taught at an independent school in British Columbia, and was assigned to teach the following courses: Grade 6 Homeroom, Language Arts 6, two blocks of Social Studies 6, Social Studies 10, and Physical Education 6, 8, and 9-12. Throughout the year, I noticed that my students’ motivation, in all classes, fluctuated. Some days, my
students were eager to learn, engaged in my lessons, and on task during all class activities. Other days, however, students were disinterested during lessons and unmotivated to engage in the assigned tasks. Additionally, sometimes when teaching the same lesson to my two Social Studies 6 classes, one class thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, while the other class was disengaged. I also noticed that student motivation decreased as the school year progressed, despite temporary improvements during the exam periods.

These experiences were corroborated by my coworkers. We also discussed how routines, teaching strategies, family and peer influence, and even diet could affect student motivation and engagement in class. These conversations increased my interest regarding the complex interaction of internal, external, and temporal factors of student motivation, and into the teaching strategies that may contribute to an effective learning environment.

### 1.3 The New British Columbia Curriculum

British Columbia’s Ministry of Education recently designed a new curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 9, which began in September 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2015). Teachers in Grades 10 to 12 began testing a trial curriculum in the Fall of 2016, in preparation for its implementation in the 2017-2018 school year. The new curriculum has been designed and refined so that students can “succeed in the 21st Century,” and improve their collaboration, critical thinking, and communications skills (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Individualization and flexible learning environments are integral components of the new curriculum. These components emphasize the need for schools and teachers to “adapt to students’ needs and interests” and allow students to approach their learning with more choice and creativity (Ministry of Education, 2015). The new learning standards
(termed Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content) are also less precise, which gives teachers more freedom in lesson delivery. For example, one of the Content outcomes for Social Studies 9 (History/Geography from 1750-1919) is for students to learn about “discriminatory policies, attitudes, and historical wrongs” (Ministry of Education, 2015). The curriculum guidelines do provide “key questions” that students should be able to answer and also sample topics. However, teachers – and therefore students – now have greater flexibility in choosing a topic that interests them, which may increase student motivation.

The new curriculum model – for which the learning standards are based upon – consists of the following three sections: Know – subject specific knowledge; Do – Core Competencies or skills, strategies, and processes; and Understand – ideas that are built upon each year (Ministry of Education, 2015). One of the Core Competencies is personal and social competence, which relates to individual student traits, and their ability to care about and understand themselves and other people (Ministry of Education, 2015). This accords with the Positive Youth Development model, as British Columbia’s education system now has a greater emphasis on student well-being, as opposed to primarily knowledge acquisition.

1.4 Study Objective and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to answer the following questions:

• What factors influence student motivation throughout a school year?

• What do students suggest or identify that teachers and curriculum developers might do to improve student motivation?
1.5 A Gap in the Literature

Previous research examining student motivation suggests that it is a primary educational concern (De Feyter, Caers, Vigna, & Berings, 2012; Elliot & Tudge, 2012; Gorard & See, 2011; Leroy & Bressoux, 2016; Montalvo, Mansfield, & Miller, 2007; Opdenakker, Maulana, & den Brok, 2012; Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001; Smith, 2004; Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013). However, further work in this field is still required to improve our understanding of student motivation, as well as the educational experience of the student population. The framework used in this study adds to and supplements previous literature as it: i) Views motivation through a lens that has not been extensively explored; ii) emphasizes the need for supportive environments to promote positive adolescent development; and iii) builds a model to examine the internal, external, and temporal influences of student motivation. Furthermore, answering this study’s research questions will benefit the educational community in the following ways:

i. Educators’ theoretical understanding of student motivation will improve; thereby, more appropriately serving the needs of the student body.

ii. It could guide curriculum reform and other positive changes throughout the British Columbia education system.

iii. My own pedagogy will improve, allowing me to become a more effective teacher.

iv. It could promote student awareness of their own motivation, help them understand why their motivation might fluctuate, and suggest strategies that may improve their motivation.
v. Parents may gain insight regarding which factors contribute to their child’s motivation, allowing them to adjust their parenting styles accordingly.

1.6 Organization of Thesis Chapters

Chapter 2 explains the working definition and the theoretical framework used in this study, reviews the relevant literature, and discusses how this research is addressing a literature gap. Chapter 3 consists of an in-depth look at the methodology used in this study, including site of research, participant selection, and data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 reports the data and the key findings, while Chapter 5 analyzes the main findings, provides recommendations for future research, and offers suggestions for teachers to consider in their practice.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Overview of Chapter 2

Reviewing relevant literature examining student motivation is the focus of Chapter 2. This chapter begins with a review of definitions of motivation previously used in other studies, as well as its definition in this study. From a human development and ecological systems perspective, the Positive Youth Development (PYD) model is used to expand upon existing theories and research in adolescent motivation. The internal and external influences examined in this study are discussed, as are the findings of previous studies on student motivation. This chapter concludes with a discussion highlighting the importance of this study.

2.2 Defining Motivation

Motivation is a complex aspect of human psychology and behaviour and, as such, various definitions and theories have been used to describe this concept (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). The term motivation is derived from the Latin word move, meaning “to move,” and drives people “to initiate, to continue, or to complete tasks” (Criss, 2011, p. 61). Parks and Guay (2009) define motivation as “an energizing force that induces action” (p. 679). They explain that motivation involves conscious and unconscious decisions, and that it is “what [people] choose to pursue…and how [they] pursue it” (Parks & Guay, 2009, p. 679). Martin (2008) also suggests that energy and drive are essential to one’s motivation and, subsequently, their behaviour. Similarly, Reeve and Lee’s (2012) definition of motivation contains key terms such as “energise” [sic], “sustain”, “initiate”, and “persist” (p. 728).
The concept of motivation encompasses a variety of elements including “intrinsic and extrinsic motivation...need for achievement, expectancy of good results...and level of goals set for oneself in relation to difficulty” (Aiming and Aimin, 2006, p. 59). Intrinsic motivation is defined as behaviours that are “engaged in for their own sake – for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from their performance” and extrinsic motivation is defined as behaviours that are “performed not out of interest but because they are believed to be instrumental to some separable consequence” (Deci et al., 1991, p. 328).

For the purpose of this research, motivation is defined as ‘internal and external driving forces that provide individuals with an incentive and motive to initiate and engage in some form of behaviour.’

2.3 Differentiating Between Internal and External Influences

People have different innate biological motivational systems, which can help to explain why some people are highly motivated whereas other people are less so (Larsen, 2006). These internal influences affect people’s behaviour, perceptions, goals, and, consequently, their motivation. While internal attributes may predispose a person to behave a certain way, the physical and social environment also influences an individual’s behaviour. External influences refer to factors that originate from outside of an individual.

2.4 Theorizing Motivation

2.4.1 Human Development

Recent literature in the field of human development postulates that developmental change across an individual’s lifespan is possible due to mutually influential relationships between one’s biology, physical ecology, culture, and history (Overton, 2010). These
factors and their influence on one’s development cannot be viewed in isolation, as it is
the interaction between these factors that influences a person during maturation. This
holistic approach emphasizes the need to understand how the parts of a system – in this
case, the different aspect of a person’s life – contribute to the individual as a whole, and
how these parts are interconnected (Overton, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to view the
process of human development through a multidisciplinary lens and to evaluate the
relationship between each factor that influences an individual’s growth (Lerner et al.,
2012).

The complex relationships present in an individual’s biology, ecology, culture, and
history, are fluid, dynamic, and constantly affecting one another. As such, these
interactions can be considered living systems – open, self-organizing, and self-regulating
– in which individuals use both internal and external feedback to guide their social,
emotional, and cognitive development (Overton, 2010). Furthermore, this relationship
between person and environment is dynamic, as people can also influence or change their
environments. Brandtstädter (1998) termed this concept – adaptation based on one’s
argued that optimal social, emotional and cognitive development involves mutually
beneficial individual ↔ context relationships. For example, a student who reluctantly
volunteers in a school leadership program may improve the school’s social environment.
This may foster a sense of pride within this student, encouraging him or her to continue to
be involved in the school community. Such relationships highlight the plasticity of human
development and illustrate the potential for individuals to make positive adaptations and
changes throughout their lives (Lerner et al., 2012).
2.4.2 The Ecological Systems Theory, Positive Youth Development, and Strengths-Based Education

The plasticity of human development relates to both the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory and Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) Ecological Systems Theory. The Ecological Systems Theory argues that the immediate environment and larger social contexts continuously influence human development, highlighting the influence of the environment on an individual. Within his Ecological Systems theory, Bronfenbrenner (1977) postulated that there are four topological environments (which he later expanded to five) that contribute to a person’s development:

Table 2.1

*Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Microsystem</td>
<td>The relationship between the “developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person,” such as one’s home (family) or school (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mesosystem</td>
<td>The relationship between the individual, his or her immediate settings, and the interaction between these settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exosystem</td>
<td>The indirect effects that larger social structures have on an individual’s immediate settings. These social structures may include one’s neighbourhood, local government, or recreation facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Macrosystem</td>
<td>The overarching institutional patterns found in one’s culture, such as the economic or legal systems that are in place within a broader context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chronosystem</td>
<td>Events that occur during the socio-historical period in which a person lives, as well as individual life events or transitions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between the five ecological systems is fluid, interconnected, and mutually influential, suggesting that all five systems may contribute to a student’s
academic motivation. Within a school environment, there is a symbiotic relationship between a student’s peers, teachers, and the school community (microsystem and mesosystem). As a result, the interactions between these variables will affect student motivation. Local policies and issues (exosystem) – for example, the new British Columbia education curriculum – as well as general social and cultural influences, such as international students coming to study in Canada (macrosystem), will also have an effect on students. Examples of the influence of the chronosystem include: wars or natural disasters (socio-historical), and an illness to a family member or transferring schools (life events/transitions).

Since originating in the early 1990s, Positive Youth Development continues to be a prominent developmental theory in the twenty-first century (R. Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas & J. Lerner, 2005). Desired outcomes of the PYD model include adolescent ownership of their personal growth, “competence, personal confidence, social connections, [and] personal character” (Gomez & Ang, 2007, p. 97), as this will facilitate student “well-being and constructive participation in society” (Larsen, 2006, p. 682). Aligning with the Ecological Systems Theory, PYD theorists posit that youth develop not only as a result of their biological makeup, but also as a result of their environments (Larsen, 2006).

During maturation, each factor contributing to a person’s development – for example, their genetics, values, and families – can be viewed as a resource that one’s developmental system uses to grow (Overton, 2010). These factors can positively or negatively affect individuals’ social and emotional well-being, and influence a variety of areas of their life. The relationship between these internal and external factors becomes
increasingly complicated over time as additional influences, such as schooling or occupation, begin to contribute to a person’s development. As a result of this expanding sphere of influences, a person develops new characteristics that affect their systemic development and changes ‘who they are’ (Overton, 2010).

Motivation is a situational trait that is a product of both internal and external factors, and is context dependent (Parks & Guay, 2009). When viewing motivation through a systemic development and PYD framework, an individual’s motivation can be seen as a living, fluid, and dynamic trait, with the ability to change. Not only can a person’s motivation change on a daily basis, but it can also fluctuate throughout one’s development and lifespan due to external variables such as one’s family, peer group, and teachers. Adolescence is a time for growth and discovery and in order for this growth to be positive, youth should have supportive role models, mentors, and peer networks, amongst other external factors.

In accordance with the Positive Youth Development theory, recent literature – and the new British Columbia curriculum – has highlighted the benefits of using a strengths-based education model (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012; Lopez & Louis, 2009; Singh, 2014). Strengths-based education is a philosophical educational approach (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012), and argues that educators should focus on “the positive aspects of student effort and achievement, as well as human strengths” (Lopez & Louis, 2009, p. 2). This approach “allows one to see opportunities…and solutions rather than just problems and hopelessness” (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012, p. 2), and suggests that “capitalizing on one’s best qualities is likely to lead to greater success” (Lopez & Louis, 2009, p. 2). Additionally, a strengths-based model argues that educators should assist students in
recognizing their strengths and help them utilize those strengths to achieve greater academic, social, and personal success (Lopez & Louis, 2009). These elements of strengths-based education align with PYD models because the “PYD perspective sees all adolescents as having strengths…[and] suggests that increases in well-being and thriving are possible for all youth through aligning the strengths…with the developmental assets present in their social and physical ecology” (Lerner, 2005, p. 32). Therefore, helping youth understand and develop their strengths through supportive social and physical environments may facilitate positive behavioural change.

A comprehensive theoretical framework for this study was created using Bronfenbrenner’s model, in conjunction with PYD. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory shows the various spheres of interaction, while PYD posits that children need a positive environment to learn and thrive (by extension in these various spheres). Internal and external factors are the mechanisms that drive positive or negative development within the different ecological systems. Investigating all external factors that affect student motivation at each ecological systems level would be too extensive. Thus, five external and five internal influences of motivation (as well as temporal influences) were chosen to be examined in this study. These variables were chosen in accordance with previous literature, which has demonstrated that these factors may significantly impact student motivation.
Table 2.2

*External and Internal Influences of Motivation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Influences</th>
<th>External Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Personality</td>
<td>1. Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitudes and Values</td>
<td>2. School Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interest and Enjoyment</td>
<td>3. Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-Determination and Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>5. Extracurricular Activities, Work, and Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 shows the five internal and external influences examined in this study.

The following figure, *Figure 2.1*, illustrates the interaction between internal, external, and temporal influences of student motivation.
Figure 2.1 illustrates the theoretical framework used in this study. Using the Ecological Systems Theory as a basis, it shows the interconnectedness between external influences and internal influences of a student’s motivation. It demonstrates that every external influence has the ability to affect every internal influence. Double-headed arrows (↔) illustrate the reciprocal and dynamic manner in which internal and external influences interact. The single-headed arrow (→) shows how the time of year affects internal motivational influences, yet internal influences do not affect the time of year. All
eleven influences in this diagram have the ability to positively or negatively affect student academic motivation. Therefore, these elements of student motivation should be examined holistically.

2.5 Internal Factors Affecting Motivation

2.5.1 Personality

Personality can be defined as “enduring dispositions that cause characteristic patterns of interaction with one’s environment” (Parks & Guay, 2009, p. 675), and contributes to how an individual behaves, thinks, and feels (McGeown et al., 2014). Examples of personality traits include conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience.

2.5.2 Values and Attitudes

Values are “guiding principles regarding how individuals ought to behave,” and develop through social interactions beginning at a young age (Parks & Guay, 2009, p. 576). While values are an internal attribute, they can be altered through interactions with other people, or through new experiences. Once ingrained in someone, values transcend different scenarios, as they reflect people’s beliefs and principles.

Attitudes share some commonalities with values, as they both refer to a person’s beliefs. However, attitudes tend to vary in different contexts (for example, from one class to another), whereas values remain stable (Parks & Guay, 2009).

2.5.3 Interest and Enjoyment

Interest and enjoyment of a subject are elements of student motivation, as interest can produce feelings of “arousal, alertness, attention, and concentration” (Macklem, 2015, p. 39). Enjoyment can be defined as “an affective state of pleasure” which may
range from feelings of excitement or enthusiasm, to feelings of pleasantness or relaxation (Lumby, 2011, p. 248).

2.5.4 Goals

Goals are objectives or aims that individuals choose to pursue (Parks & Guay, 2009). Because goals are often personal, they will vary from person to person and are a product of an individual’s values or what a person deems to be important. Two types of goals most relevant to this study are mastery goals (mastering a task, gaining knowledge) and performance goals (achievement results, coined as ‘ego-goals’) (Covington, 2000).

2.5.5 Self-Determination and Self-Efficacy

Self-determination is rooted within the role of self-influence on one’s behaviour (Bandura, 1991), and refers to “people’s inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). Examples of growth tendencies and psychological needs include competence (ability), relatedness (social acceptance), and autonomy (control) (Lam, Wong, Yang, & Liu, 2012; Wooley, 2011). Self-efficacy refers to “the judgments individuals make about their ability to perform a specific task in comparison to a specific standard” (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006, p. 338). It is influenced by past successes and failures, available social comparison information, and verbal persuasion (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

2.6 External Factors Affecting Motivation

2.6.1 Family

From a young age, children spend significant time with their parents (or guardians) and other family members. Adolescents’ development is affected by their family
dynamics, as their upbringing influences behavioural, social, and emotional traits (Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

2.6.2 School Culture

The school environment may play an integral role in a youth’s development, and can directly affect students’ engagement and motivation in their studies (Aiming & Aimin, 2006). Because schools play a significant role in shaping students’ social and academic development, it is necessary for schools to promote positive student attributes (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

2.6.3 Teachers

A teacher’s role in the classroom is more complex than simply transferring knowledge to their students, as teachers can empower youth, help them develop positive social behaviours, and motivate them to achieve their goals. Excellent teachers tend to be affectionate, tolerant, encouraging, possess extensive knowledge of a subject area, and have engaging teaching skills and strategies (Hotaman, 2010).

2.6.4 Peer Group

Student peer groups consist of one’s friends and those within his or her school-grade cohort (Halliday & Kwak, 2011). Peer groups influence students’ values, beliefs, and interests, especially as they mature from children into teenagers (Nelson & DeBacker, 2008).

2.6.5 Extracurricular Activities, Work, and Volunteering

Extracurricular activities are activities that youth participate in outside of the formal curriculum, but within a school context (De Meester, Aelterman, Cardon, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Haerens, 2014). These activities may include sports, music, and the
arts, and may improve students' social skills, confidence, in addition to fostering positive relationships with both peers and adults (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012). Work refers to paid employment, while volunteering refers to performing a task (work) or helping other people without monetary gain.

2.7 Previous Research on Student Motivation

2.7.1 Yearlong Temporal Studies on Adolescent Motivation

To date, there is limited research focusing on the yearlong temporal trajectory of student motivation. Existing literature suggests that student motivation decreases throughout the school year for the following reasons: i) Changes in teacher-student interpersonal relationships; ii) changes in student beliefs surrounding the value of a subject; iii) decreases in positive academic emotions; and iv) the influence of one’s peer group (Haimovitz, Wormington, & Corpus, 2011; Leroy & Bressoux, 2016; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Ryan, 2001; Smith, 2004).

Smith (2004) and Haimovitz et al. (2011) studied how the time of year influenced internal motivational factors. Smith (2004) surveyed Year 12 Australian students throughout one school year, concluding that positive motivational attributes such as mastery goal orientations and academic self-efficacy were replaced by negative attributes, including anxiety and depression. Haimovitz et al. (2011) researched the relationship between students’ perceived intelligence and intrinsic motivational change, positing that students who believed themselves to be intellectually inferior were more likely to experience declines in their motivation.

Smith (2004) argued that the Year 12 students experienced these internal changes because they believed themselves to be inadequate in comparison to their peers, and
because of the pressure of examinations, as well as university or college acceptance.

Similarly, Haimovitz et al. (2011) postulated that students who experienced motivational decline put forth less effort into their studies because they believed that increased effort would not result in increased academic performance.

Opdenakker et al. (2012) investigated teacher and student relationships of 566 students age 11-13 over the course of one school year, concluding that teacher interpersonal relationships and their influence on student behaviour decreased throughout the year. Student autonomous (intrinsic) motivation also deceased and, as a result, teachers were more inclined to use managerial strategies to promote student engagement. Over time, this led to a decrease in student-teacher interpersonal bonds because teachers placed more emphasis on keeping students on task, rather than continuing to build on and maintain positive relationships.

Leroy and Bressoux (2016) examined the motivational trajectories of 1082 Grade 6 mathematics students throughout the course of a school year, positing that student motivation decreased as the school year progressed, while amotivation (low levels of motivation) increased. These researchers argued that student motivation decreased because of changes in their beliefs about the value of mathematics. At the beginning of the year, students engaged in mathematics because they deemed it to be an important subject. However, as the year progressed, students stated that mathematics was “a waste of time and a useless subject” (Leroy & Bressoux, 2016, p. 49).

Ryan (2001) studied the influence of peer group on middle school students’ achievement beliefs and behaviours. She concluded that student academic motivation often decreased from fall to spring, and that a decline in motivation was more likely if
students associated with low-achieving peers. Conversely, peer groups did not influence student perceived usefulness and importance of school; Ryan (2001) suggested that parents and teachers may be more influential in this regard.

2.7.2 The Interaction Between Internal and External Factors

While there are limited yearlong temporal studies on student motivation, the relationship between internal and external influences on student motivation has been extensively researched (De Feyter et al., 2012; Elliot & Tudge, 2012; Gomez & Ang, 2007; Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, & Baumert, 2006). The following section synthesizes relevant literature on the dynamic, interconnected relationship between internal and external influences of motivation.

2.7.2.1 Personality and the External Environment. Although people’s personality traits are often due in part to genetics, their personality develops through the “dynamic, continuous, and reciprocal process of interaction, or transaction, with their environment” (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998, p. 1531). Similarly, Bouchard Jr. (1994) posited that humans are “dynamic creative organisms [who have] the opportunity to learn and to experience new environments” (p. 1701). This suggests that the physical and social environment can influence people’s personality, while their personality can also influence their surroundings. Although an individual’s personality is stable over a period of days or weeks, it can change over months or years as a result of his or her interactions with the social and physical environment (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998; McGeown et al., 2014).

Personality is an integral component of student academic success, as it can influence their academic standing, subject interest, and social relationships (De Feyter et al., 2012). One personality trait that bears a significant impact on student intrinsic
motivation is conscientiousness. Conscientious students are more likely to be competent, dutiful, achievement-oriented, self-disciplined, and deliberate (De Feyter et al., 2012; McGeown et al., 2014; Spinath et al., 2014). Openness – being aware of one’s feelings, having an active imagination, curiosity, and sensitivity – is also a positive predictor of intrinsic motivation (McGeown, et al., 2014; Spinath et al., 2014). Additionally, honesty and humility – categorized as one trait and referring to sincerity, fairness, modesty, and greed avoidance – promotes student mastery goals (Dinger et al., 2015).

2.7.2.2 Attitudes and Values and the External Environment. Parents transmit, either explicitly or implicitly, their personal values regarding academic achievement, which greatly influences their children’s beliefs about education (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012). These beliefs “can have a profound influence on how children come to perceive their intellectual abilities and the value of learning and education” (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012, p. 316). In addition, an individual’s home life, schooling, and behaviour are interconnected, as “home attitudes and values… influence what occurs in school, just as school behaviour influences what occurs at home” (Elliot & Tudge, 2012, p. 167). Family difficulties can also negatively impact student attitudes towards school and learning, as students may become more occupied with family dynamics, and less focused on their academics (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

Students who like their teachers are more likely to have positive academic attitudes in that class (Montalvo et al., 2007). Student attitudes – specifically effort and persistence in their studies – were higher in classes in which they liked their teacher, resulting in higher student academic achievement (Montalvo et al., 2007). However, student values or
beliefs play a role in their motivation, and, despite quality teacher instruction, students may lack motivation because of their beliefs about that specific subject (Macklem, 2015).

Research demonstrated that it is important for youth to associate with a social group at school, as the rejection of one’s peers can lead to negative academic attitudes (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). In addition, Ryan (2001) argued that students’ peer groups affected their beliefs about learning, as students who associated with pupils who enjoyed school were more likely to enjoy school themselves.

Marsh (1988) posited that participation in extracurricular activities leads to improved attitudes towards schooling. Furthermore, after-school activities were a positive predictor of grades as, for example, the GPA of high school students increased during participation in extracurricular school soccer, and decreased when the season ended (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Silliker & Quirk, 1997).

2.7.2.3 Interest and Enjoyment and the External Environment. It is important for schools and curriculum developers to increase student interest in learning and enjoyment of school, as these factors can influence student effort, motivation, and knowledge retention (Trautwein et al., 2006). There are two main forms of interest: situational interest, which is context-dependent enjoyment of an activity or task, and individual (personal) interest, which derives from an individual’s predisposition or attitude towards a specific topic or activity (Schraw et al., 2001; Trautwein et al., 2006). Situational interest is more readily influenced because it is affected by the social and physical environment (Schraw et al., 2001).

Student perception of a strong friend group influences their enjoyment of school. Conversely, disruptive peer behaviour has been found to decrease student interest and
enjoyment of learning (Gorard & See, 2011). One’s friends and peer groups can also contribute to a student’s sense of comfort during instructional (class) and non-instructional (lunch) times (Gorard & See, 2011). Additionally, student perception of their competence in relation to their peers affects their interest and enjoyment of school, as there is a positive correlation between higher levels of self-perceived competence and one’s interest and enjoyment of school (Trautwein et al., 2006).

A relaxed school atmosphere, small class sizes, perceived learning support, and student choice of courses contribute to their enjoyment of school (Gorard & See, 2011). Teachers can increase student interest and enjoyment by using a variety of teaching strategies, which makes classes more engaging and less monotonous (Gorard & See, 2011). Students perceive their classroom time to be valuable, and appreciate teachers who clearly explain the rules and expectations of the learning environment, and monitor these rules closely (Kunter, Baumert, & Köller, 2007). Mutually respectful student-teacher relationships also positively correlate to student enjoyment of school, as students prefer working with teachers who treat them with respect (Gorard & See, 2011). On the contrary, students tend to dislike teachers who unfairly reprimand the class (Gorard & See, 2011).

2.7.2.4 Goals and the External Environment. A student’s academic goals act as a mediator between the external environment and his or her motivation. An optimal learning environment may positively support students in goal achievement, whereas a negative environment will not necessarily diminish one’s personal goals (Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013).
Students who like their teacher tend to have greater learning goals than those who dislike their teacher (Montalvo et al., 2007). A teacher’s ‘goal-focus’ also influences the goals of his or her students (Ames, 1992; Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013). Teachers who are more performance-goal oriented – emphasizing grading or public evaluation, social comparison, and extrinsic rewards – will transmit this mindset to their students, which in turn decreases the enjoyment of the learning process (Ames, 1992; Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013).

One’s peers heavily influence student motivation for educational attainment, as an individual’s closest friends are a key determinant of his or her post-secondary goals and educational aspirations (Cham, Hughes, West, & Im, 2014; Christofides, Hoy, Milla, & Stengos, 2015). Individuals are also more likely to associate themselves with other students who have similar goals or levels of academic achievement (Cham et al., 2014; Ryan, 2001).

Many students participate in extracurricular activities to improve the chances of achieving their post-secondary goals, such as university acceptance or receiving a scholarship (Brooks, 2013). Work and volunteer experiences also influence student career choices, as some students wish to pursue a vocation that relates to activities they do outside of school (Pitts, 2007).

2.7.2.5 Self-Determination, Self-Efficacy, and the External Environment. A school’s culture has the potential to improve students’ social and psychosocial well-being by helping them develop competence, confidence, positive social behaviours, character, and the “ability to care and contribute to society” (Gomez & Ang, 2007, p. 97). Students also have the ability to positively or negatively affect their school community and those
within it, illustrating the interconnectedness of internal and external influences. For example, Elliot and Tudge (2012) demonstrated how the academic culture at two different schools could influence student self-confidence, as high-achieving students at one school were popular and admired by their peers, whereas high-achievers at another school were labeled as ‘nerds.’

Teacher educational expectations are indicators for student motivation, as high expectations may influence students’ self-competence beliefs (Cham et al., 2014). This transcends external environments, as students who have a high sense of competence in the classroom feel more connected to the school community, and, as a result, may be more likely to participate in school events (Cham et al., 2014).

Excelling in extracurricular activities positively influences a person’s self-perception or self-concept (Marsh, 1988). Pitts (2007) reiterated this notion, in her study of the experiences of 11-15 year olds in an extracurricular musical production. She concluded that participation in the musical production improved student confidence and sense of belonging and, as a result, students developed a more positive educational affiliation.

2.8 Synthesizing and Extending on the Literature

The research synthesized in this literature review can be categorized into two areas: i) Studies examining one or two influences of student motivation in relation to the time of year (Haimovitz, et al., 2011; Leroy & Bressoux, 2016; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Ryan, 2001; Smith, 2004); and ii) general internal and external influences of student motivation with no relation to temporal factors (De Feyter et al., 2012; Gorard & See, 2011;
Macklem, 2015; Montalvo et al., 2007; Pitts, 2007; Trautwein et al., 2006; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

In an attempt to supplement and add to the literature, this research used a multivariable approach to observe the progressive internal-external interactions of student motivation during three phases throughout one school year. This study was designed to identify common themes of student motivation, encourage educators to question and self-reflect upon their pedagogical beliefs, and to provide a basis for future research on the dynamic nature of student motivation.

2.8.1 Implications of this Motivational Theory

This study’s adapted motivational theory, containing elements of the Ecological Systems Theory and Positive Youth Development models, has numerous implications for the educational community. The fluid nature of motivation suggests that it can be changed due to external influences, while internal changes in one’s motivation may in turn affect the external environment. The time of year is an integral component of motivation, as temporal factors may influence internal aspects of student motivation.

By understanding the nature of motivation and the interaction of internal and external factors over time, teachers can work to create and maintain a positive learning environment, be proactive in preventing negative behaviours, and optimize the student learning experience.

2.9 Summary of Chapter 2

The focus of Chapter 2 was to review relevant literature and research on student motivation. This chapter defined motivation, discussed the relationship between human development, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, and PYD, and how these
theories contributed to the framework of this study. It also provided an overview of other studies that have examined the relationship between internal, external, and temporal influences of motivation. This chapter concluded with an explanation of how this current research aims to add to our understanding of student motivation over the school year.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Chapter 3

This chapter describes the research methods used in this study, in addition to providing a research design rationale. It begins with a review of the aim of this study, the research questions, and an explanation of the perspective used. Afterwards, the logistics of this study – location site, participant characteristics, sampling methods, confidentiality, permission, information about the interview tool, privacy, and dissemination of results – are discussed. This chapter concludes with a description of the data collection methods and analysis procedures.

3.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the progressive relationship between internal, external, and temporal influences of student motivation, in addition to determining how the external environment can be modified to improve student motivation. Personal interest in student motivation led to the development of the following research questions:

- What factors influence student motivation throughout a school year?
- What do students suggest or identify that teachers and curriculum developers might do to improve student motivation?

3.3 Research Approach

An adaptive theory approach (combining both inductive and deductive approaches) was used during this study (Hewege & Perera, 2013). Existing literature examining student motivation was used “during the problem formulation stage” (deductive approach) to develop a “skeletal theoretical framework” and to “guide the researcher in deciding the nature of data to be collected” (Hewege & Perera, 2013, p.
However, an inductive approach during data analysis allowed the theoretical framework to be changed or revised as a result of the emerging data (Gray, 2013). Therefore, the research design began with a theoretical frame that formed initial thinking and the development of the research questions and interview tool, while the open-endedness of the interview tool allowed for new themes to emerge.

### 3.3.1 Theoretical Perspectives

This research was developed and viewed from a positivist and interpretivist lens. These two approaches were appropriate for this study because: i) Positivism argues that empirical inquiry is necessary to test a theory when the theoretical framework for a study is developed prior to data analysis (Gray, 2013); ii) interpretivism suggests that meaning is an individual construct and recognizes that a student’s interpretation of events may vary; and iii) interpretivism takes into account student subjective experiences and ways in which they ‘make sense’ of their surroundings, events, experiences, and behaviours (Gray, 2013). This study’s design illustrated the need for a different perspective – both positivist and interpretivist – to theorize student motivation, as it tested a theoretical framework, yet also allowed participants to discuss, in detail, the motivational influences that were of personal importance.

### 3.4 Rationale for Chosen Methodology

#### 3.4.1 Qualitative Interviews

The methodology of semi-structured qualitative interviews was chosen for the following reasons:

i. Participants’ understanding of their motivation was dependent upon their context or perspective. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their
responses, while also allowing me to clarify their meaning (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

ii. This methodology provided participants and me the opportunity to engage in deep, rich discussions about student motivation within a specific context (Gray, 2013). Because motivation is a multi-faceted construct, semi-structured qualitative interviews provided in-depth analysis of the various internal and external factors that influence student motivation, and how these factors can be affected by the time of year.

iii. Qualitative interviews were appropriate due to limited sample size, participants, and participant data. The results and recommendations of this study provide insight as to how eight high achieving participants perceived their motivation during one school year, and may not coincide with the beliefs of the general student body. Instead, the results of this study may lead to suggestions and considerations for how teachers may think about student motivation in general.

iv. Using semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to share their individual perspectives on motivation, as the theory framing this study argues that individuals’ motivation is constructed through the interaction of their internal and external experiences. That is, each participant’s motivation is uniquely constructed, and interviews allowed participants to voice this. Semi-structured interviews also provided the researcher with an opportunity to ask questions related to the theoretical frame of the study (a deductive approach) while allowing respondents the openness and space to take the interview in the directions they wanted. Thus, new themes and concepts could emerge (an inductive approach).
3.4.2 Exploratory Narrative Case Study

The plasticity of human development and motivation required an exploratory holistic approach to understand the progressive interactions between internal and external influences, allowing for the “multiple facets” of motivation to be examined (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). In addition, narrative case studies enable the influences on motivation to emerge in a biographical context, so that the interplay of variables can be noted. Furthermore, patterns emerge through comparison across narratives.

3.5 Participants

The participants in this study were selected from an independent school in British Columbia. The school has approximately 550 students, and consists of three distinct programs: i) Early Learning Centre for preschool and kindergarten; ii) Junior School for grades 1-6; and iii) Senior School for grades 7-12. All students who attend the institution either pay tuition, which varies depending on grade level, or have received some form of scholarship or funding. The student body is predominantly Caucasian, and the vast majority of students come from higher socioeconomic families and backgrounds. Many of the students attending the school live in other municipalities in the area, and some have a thirty to forty five minute commute. There is also a small international population, consisting of approximately eight to twelve students.

Students were recruited through a formal information session, in which I explained the purpose of the study, their role in it, and how it will benefit the educational community. I gave all Grade 11 students the opportunity to sign up to participate. Students and their parents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. I did not recruit students who I was currently teaching.
When conducting interviews, a sample size of at least six participants is considered to be sufficient, as this sample size allows researchers to obtain meaningful data from participant responses (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). There were approximately forty Grade 11 students who attended the school during the 2015-16 school year. Of the forty students, only eight signed up to be interviewed for a 20% response rate. All students were chosen to participate in this study to account for potential participant dropout. Interview sessions were designed to take approximately twenty minutes, but varied depending on the participant.

Grade 11 students were chosen because they are most likely to be between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, which is the middle adolescence stage of human development (Coe, 2003; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). During this stage, adolescents begin to develop higher cognitive abilities in regards to understanding their behaviour, the cause and effect of their actions, and how their schooling will affect their future (Coe, 2003). Similarly, from a moral perspective, adolescents develop an enhanced comprehension of their societal role. Students in this age bracket also possess more self-awareness and were therefore able to provide more reliable responses regarding the factors that affect their motivation (Coe, 2003). Although some Grade 12 students may be sixteen or seventeen years old during the timeframe for this study, they were not chosen as possible participants because external events such as graduation and university applications may affect their motivation – factors that do not require one’s immediate attention in Grade 11.

3.6 Sampling

To obtain demographic data, participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire that explained their gender, age, ethnicity, academic standing, and the number of years that they have attended the school. The majority of participants in this study were female, but all
participants were coded using female pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. All of the participants were high achieving students, as six participants stated that they were A to A+ students, and two stated that they were B- to B+ students. Some participants began attending the institution in Grade 6, while some students began attending in later grades, including Grade 11.

3.7 Ensuring Participant Confidentiality and Privacy

To ensure student anonymity, participants’ identification was coded using gender-neutral pseudonyms, and no other identifying factors were used. Additionally, all feminine pronouns were used when referring to participants. Student names and any details that could possibly identify students – for example, an award – were not published in the findings of this study.

3.8 Obtaining Participant and Guardian Permission

University ethics approval was obtained from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) at the University of British Columbia - Okanagan, while school ethics approval was obtained from the Head of School of the study’s site. I explained the purpose of this study to the Grade 11 Homeroom teachers, and ensured that I had their permission to use some of their class time to invite students to participate in the study. In attempt to minimize lost class time, my presentation was well prepared prior to visiting both Grade 11 Homeroom classes in September. A formal letter was sent to parents or guardians, informing them of the intent and nature of this study. Permission to participate in this study was required from both students and parents or guardians, who were asked to sign consent forms. The duration of the study was clarified to those who chose to provide their consent. Students and parents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time throughout the year. The
consent form explained that students would receive an honorarium for participating in this study.

3.9 Interview Tool

The interview tool is included in the Appendices section (Appendix C) of this thesis. All questions were developed by the Student Researcher – with guidance and feedback from Dr. Catherine Broom, Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta, and Dr. John-Tyler Binfet – and are based on the study’s aim of exploring factors that affect student motivation throughout a school year.

3.10 Data Collection

Eight Grade 11 students were interviewed three times during the year: October 2015, January 2016, and May 2016. The interviews consisted of ten open-ended questions, all pertaining to student motivation. Significant participant responses were recorded manually, while the audio of the entire interview was recorded using Voice Record Pro. This data-recording method allowed me to obtain accurate and reliable information, and access the recordings at a later time for data analysis (Gay et al., 2012). After each interview, participants and I reviewed my notes to ensure that their thoughts had been correctly recorded. Interviews were then transcribed in Microsoft Word.

3.10.1 Phase 1: Early-Year

Interview times were coordinated with the eight students who decided to participate, and were conducted at lunch in empty classrooms during the following two weeks. Students were asked to eat their lunch prior to the interview, but were permitted to finish their lunch during the interview if needed.
3.10.2 Phase II: Mid-Year

In January 2016, I contacted students to set up their second interview time slot. This was done during school hours. At this time, students were re-informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The second interview consisted of the same questions, and also took place in empty classrooms during lunch. I maintained the same pseudonym for each student so that I could track their motivation from Phase I to Phase II; no other identifying factors were used. No students decided to withdraw from the study during Phase II.

3.10.3 Phase III: End-of-Year

The final set of interviews was conducted in May 2016. Once again, I contacted students during school hours to coordinate their third interview time. I re-explained the purpose of the study and reiterated their right to withdraw. This interview consisted of the same questions as the previous two interviews, while the same pseudonyms were used to ensure student anonymity. Seven interviews were conducted during lunch, and one interview was conducted after school. All interviews were conducted in empty classrooms at the school. After each interview I provided students with their honorarium (a $15 gift card to a local mall) for their participation in this study.

3.11 Dissemination of Results

The findings of this study were presented in written format to the Study Team, as well as orally during my thesis defense. A paper copy of my thesis was also provided to the research site (the school), and to any students or parents who wished to see the results.
3.12 Data Analysis

3.12.1 Grounded Theory for Qualitative Analysis

A Grounded Theory method was appropriate during data analysis because it allowed the researcher to construct categories that emerged as a result of the data, and to interpret this data to construct theories (Charmaz, 2008). As motivation is a dynamic phenomenon, it was necessary to incorporate an “inductive, indeterminate, and open-ended” approach, which accounts for the various factors that may affect one’s motivation, and allows for the elaboration and clarification of unanticipated responses (Charmaz, 2008, p. 155). The internal and external themes discussed in Chapter 2 were used to guide data analysis. However, in accordance with Grounded Theory and adaptive research methodology, additional categories were constructed to account for the other themes that emerged during data analysis.

3.12.1.1 Using Questions to Analyze Data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) explain that, when analyzing data, there is no “set of rules or procedures that must be followed,” as analysis is often “intuitive and requires trusting the self to make the right decisions” (p. 72). They do suggest, however, that it is important for the researcher to ask questions during each analysis stage, as continuous research considerations can lead to deeper insight into the data.

3.12.1.2 Using Comparisons to Analyze Data. It is important to constantly compare sets of data, as this comparison “allows the researcher to differentiate one category/theme from another and to identify properties and dimensions specific to that category/theme” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 74). It is also important to examine how findings are connected to one another, such as the relationship between internal, external, and temporal influences of motivation (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007).
3.12.1.3 Drawing upon Personal Experience to Analyze Data. Researchers have preconceived notions of a phenomenon, as a result of their own personal experiences (Adams et al., 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These beliefs may be similar to the participants’ and, as such, researchers are able to use their insight to more proficiently understand or to probe participant responses. However, as per the foundation of qualitative research, it is important to note that the experience of each individual, although similar, will remain unique to that person.

3.12.2 Data Coding Method

The interviews were transcribed – word for word – using Microsoft Word. Each interview was then read three times. The first set of readings was simply to read through the transcription, and to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of potential common themes and participant responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During the second set of readings, common themes were coded and minor concepts were related to broader ones, as per the main categories and themes of this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The third set of readings ensured that participant responses were coded correctly, and that codes were analogous throughout each transcription. Throughout the coding process, I allowed new themes to emerge and coded these too. Coding was done shortly after each interview, as doing so helped improve my understanding of future data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.12.3 Coding Rationale

Themes were coded in accordance with previous literature on the internal and external factors that influence student motivation. Having a rubric of codes allowed me to identify how themes manifested themselves as a result of student discourse, and which themes were mentioned the most often during interviews. I deemed these codes appropriate because they
were the grounds for the motivational theory used in this research. Two additional categories were included: “time of year” and “other factors.” “Time of year” was included because I was investigating the temporal factors that influenced student academic motivation, while the “other factors” category accounted for motivational influences that were not included in the literature review.

After transcribing and coding participant responses in Microsoft Word, I then transferred the results to an Excel spreadsheet. Participant pseudonyms were written on the x-axis, while common themes were written on the y-axis. The frequency of each theme throughout a single interview was recorded. For example, if Participant A mentioned that peers influenced his or her motivation nine times during the interview, a ‘9’ was recorded. Significant participant responses were also recorded under the corresponding heading.

Results were analyzed from May to July of 2016. Findings across each case study, during each phase, were analyzed to identify variability of individual participant responses. To identify the variance between the themes at these different time frames, each theme was compared at interview Phases I, II, and III. This analysis was used to determine whether or not individual participant motivation increased, decreased, or remained stable during each phase, in addition to determining the extent of internal and external influence on student motivation. Both of these results (common themes and individual participant responses) were analyzed in Phase I and Phase II, Phase I and Phase III, and Phase II and Phase III.

3.13 Research Authenticity

Adams et al. (2007) suggest that there are “no set standards…for evaluating the validity, or authenticity, of conclusions in a qualitative study” (p. 330). They emphasize, however, the importance of carefully considering the methodology and data analysis used, as these factors
influence the accuracy of drawn conclusions. Additionally, a researcher’s data analyses, discussion, and conclusion should be honest, informative, and reflect any problems that resulted from their study (Adams et al., 2007). They should not try to skew participant data or responses given, and provide readers with accurate account of their research. It is also necessary to consider the credibility (trustworthiness) of the participant, the spontaneity of responses, and how the presence of the researcher may have influenced participant responses (Adams et al., 2007).

Factors increasing the reliability of this study included the following: using the same ten questions (interview tool) during each interview, having a consistent interviewer and data-recording techniques, having the same data interpreter apply a consistent coding scheme, and providing “rich and thick…descriptions of participants’ accounts to support findings,” which are provided in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 35).

3.14 Beliefs, Perspectives, and Reliability

Davies and Dodd (2002) argue that researchers should try and “remain objective and free of bias” during data collection and analysis (p. 282). Similarly, Morrow (2005) explains that qualitative researchers minimize bias and subjectivity by “making their implicit assumptions and biases overt to themselves and others” – a process that has been termed “bracketing” (p. 254). Morrow (2005) also suggests that researchers must remain reflexive or self-aware throughout the research process, in effort to ensure that their beliefs and biases do not affect the research method or data analysis. However, qualitative studies are never “free of researcher bias,” as one’s prior experiences and beliefs may influence their research objectivity (Davies & Dodd, 2002, p. 282).
As a teacher, I had a distinct set of beliefs and values about student motivation prior to and during this study. Therefore, I acknowledge that these beliefs and values could contribute to potential researcher bias. I believe that education is important in a child’s development, that teachers can make a positive difference in a child’s life, and that young people can develop effective academic and social qualities – leading to optimal growth during maturation, and the potential to be productive citizens during adulthood. In addition, I believe that each student brings a unique perspective to the educational environment, as one’s previous experiences, values, and interests can affect his or her in-school behaviour.

King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) explain the importance of knowing “the process by which the data were generated” as researchers will then “be able to produce valid descriptive or causal inferences,” minimizing the possibility of a biased view (p. 23). Prior to the commencement of this study, to minimize researcher bias, both the Principal Investigator and Study Team provided feedback to improve the quality of the Student Researcher’s study questions, theoretical background, and interview tool (Bergman & Coxon, 2005). However, the semi-structured nature of these interviews allowed for variability in the prompting and follow-up questioning. This introduces the possibility of unconscious research bias into this study.

Neutral documentation occurred during each interview in effort to minimize researcher bias. I recorded notes and used an audio-recording device throughout the interviews, and then transcribed each interview. Transcribing the interviews facilitated the analysis of participant responses within their context, while minimizing potential for misunderstanding or misinterpretation due to my preconceived educational biases.
As I was a teacher at the site of this study, my dual role as researcher and teacher may have influenced participant responses. This potential confounding variable was minimized by selecting participants that I was not currently teaching and by applying the principle of participant confidentiality.

When transcribing and reviewing participant responses, established research methods such as coding, multiple readings, and tables were used. Additionally, throughout the data collection and analysis process, the Student Researcher sent the Principal Investigator his codes and data table to review (Bergman & Coxon, 2005). This “meticulous record keeping” increased the likelihood of obtaining accurate data and decreasing researcher bias (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 35).

This study’s literature review focused on five internal and external themes of student motivation. However, in accordance with the grounded theory method, an additional category was included during data analysis to account for unanticipated participant responses that did not align with the themes in the literature review, or with my preconceived educational bias (Noble & Smith, 2015). For example, one participant explained that sleep played a significant role in her academic motivation – a factor that I had not previously considered. Additionally, some participant responses were not in accordance with my expectations for this study. I had hypothesized that students would mainly use short-term goals as motivators, such as obtaining high marks in a particular course. Instead, participants’ long-term goals (for example, post-secondary education) played a significant role in their motivation and short-term goal orientation (grades). Despite this contradiction to my previous bias and educational beliefs, I did not try to influence participant responses, lead the interview to suit my expectations, nor did I skew the results during data analysis.
3.15 Summary of Chapter 3

The aim of this chapter was to discuss this study’s research methodology and design. I explained the perspective of this study, and also defined a number of terms that were relevant to this study. Afterwards, I discussed the study site, participants, sampling methods, confidentiality, permission, information about the interview tool, and participant privacy. I then reviewed the data collection and data analysis methods used. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study’s validity and reliability, in addition to an explanation as to how my prior beliefs were mediated in effort to provide an unbiased viewpoint.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 discusses participant responses over the course of the school year, and compares the ten internal and external variables against the three interview phases. A narrative of each participant’s motivation over the course of the year is provided, and the factors affecting his or her motivation are explained. Common themes that emerged during each phase are identified, as are general trends in participant motivation.

4.2 Temporal Considerations

This study’s site has three terms in the academic school year. Term I is from September to the middle of November, Term 2 is from the middle of November until Spring Break (the middle of March), and Term 3 is from April until the end of the school year (the middle of June). These time frames differ from the interview phases. Although one set of interviews took place during each term, interviews were conducted in a particular month and not throughout the term. The first interview phase was in October, the second in January, and the third in May. Therefore, it is possible that participant motivation could have been high during one interview phase, but low during the rest of that term.

4.3 Participant Motivation

The following is a summary of each participant’s motivation levels during the school year, as well as a description of the internal and external factors that affected their motivation.

4.3.1 Participant A – Dakota

Dakota began the year as a new student at the school, and indicated that she was a B- to B+ student. However, after her first two report cards, she explained that she had obtained over 86% (an A) in multiple classes. At the beginning of the year, Dakota’s
family was a main contributor to her motivation, but, as the year progressed, she recognized that the school’s culture and teachers played a significant role in her motivation. Dakota realized that she would “never be at the academic level I am now” if she was at her old school, because the teachers at this school “make you wanna [sic] work harder.” During Phase III, Dakota’s peers replaced her family as the foremost external motivational influence. She stated that if “one friend [in a group] thinks [one thing], then usually the other person will go along,” and suggested that this influenced her academic motivation. Additionally, at the end of the school year, she witnessed the Grade 12 “girls that get accepted into U of T and…the old graduates who are coming [back] from Business at UBC,” impacting her desire to succeed in her academics.

4.3.2 Participant B – Casey

Casey had strong motivation throughout the entire school year, primarily because her long-term academic goals – to become a veterinarian or a pediatrician – kept her motivation high. She realized that grades were very important for her career choices, which contributed to her positive academic attitude. The one instance in which her motivation did waver was coming back from Winter Break (her motivation was only “pretty strong”). Casey had brought school work home to prepare for midyear exams, but was not productive because “it’s just hard when you’re not at school to see the direct impact of not doing it” and because, at home, “you’re not surrounded by everything that does motivate you.”

Competency beliefs also contributed to Casey’s motivation, as she was “proud of having good grades” and had a set of “standards so that I can achieve what I want to achieve.” Similarly, Casey took pride in how she was perceived by her peers and
teachers, as she was “motivated to be the person that other people think I am, because…there’s [sic] some amazing people” at the school who are “so nice and so kind and…say really flattering things.”

4.3.3 Participant C – Tatum

Tatum began attending the school when she was in Grade 6 and was an A- to A+ student. During Phase I, she explained that her motivation was always strong, yet during the second and third interview phases, she indicated that her motivation was “medium-strong” and “desperately-strong.” During Phase II, Tatum explained that she wanted to sleep more because there was minimal sunlight, and because the days were shorter. She had a lot of homework during the three weeks prior to the third interview phase, and was feeling burnt out as a result. However, she “pushed, cause [sic] I just wanted to be done,” and told herself that “you can’t give up now because you’re almost there.” Tatum’s motivation also remained strong because of her personality and academic attitude. She stated that “I’m motivated to completely understand things 100% so that I have a good chance of getting 100% in tests, cause I like [achieving] 100%.” Additionally, Tatum explained that it was important to “take pride in what you do,” to “not [have] a boring life,” and to fill “up your time with stuff that’s worthwhile and that you care about.”

4.3.4 Participant D – Jamie

The 2015-16 school year was Jamie’s third at the school, as she had begun attending in Grade 9. Jamie described herself as a B- to B+ student, but indicated that she was capable of obtaining higher marks in some classes. Jamie believed that it was important to stay positive in all areas of life, and that she tried “to keep myself positive and surround myself with positive people [which] really helps…keep yourself
motivated.” It was also important for Jamie to do “things in your life that make you happy.”

Jamie indicated that the “teachers play a huge role” in her motivation because “of their willingness to help you out.” She was motivated in the classes that she found interesting, and enjoyed various teaching strategies including note-taking, creative assignments, and research projects. Jamie also thought it was important for teachers to “change things up” and not employ or assign the same activity every day.

4.3.5 Participant E – Corey

Corey began attending the school in Grade 6, and considered herself an A- to A+ student. She explained that she wanted to do well in school and that she “can be competitive with myself and other people around me.” Corey did not want to disappoint her parents and teachers, who played significant role in her motivation. Her parents were “always yelling at me [to] manage my time,” which increased her academic effort and the time she spent on homework. Corey also stated that her teachers were “always pushing me to study and work harder,” and that she preferred teachers who treated her with respect. These factors drove her to study diligently in hopes of achieving high academic marks, in addition to displaying positive student behaviour in class. Conversely, Corey was less motivated in classes with “teachers [who] hate everyone,” or if her teachers acted like they were “the lord and we’re their serfs.”

4.3.6 Participant F – Quinn

Quinn previously lived overseas, and began attending the school when she was in Grade 10. During Phase I, Quinn described herself as an A- to A+ and stated that her academic motivation was strong because it was currently soccer season. Soccer helped
foster a positive academic outlook because it gave her something to look forward to throughout the day. Quinn’s motivation remained strong during Phase II and Phase III because of positive family support and high academic goals.

Quinn was very motivated in Pre-Calculus and Math because she “loved planes,” while she enjoyed Social Studies because her teacher incorporated current events into the classes – keeping her “updated with everything going on around the world.” In regards to her peers, Quinn believed that she was more positive if she associated with positive people, explaining that:

“When I sit with particular people I start talking a lot. I don’t concentrate, my motivation goes down, we start planning what to do in summer and what to do on the weekend and then I get really distracted and do way less work than I should be doing…but when I sit with the right people I do lots [sic] of work.”

4.3.7 Participant G – Jordan

Jordan began attending the school in Grade 6. She was a high achiever, consistently obtaining marks in the low 90s. Jordan’s academic motivation was strong at the beginning of the year, because she wanted to be a surgeon and knew that she needed high marks to be accepted into this field. Her motivation dipped slightly during Phase II and Phase III because of fatigue, as she was tired from her four jobs/volunteer positions, and because she had some teachers who “just keep piling [homework] on.”

Out of school commitments had a significant impact on Jordan’s academic motivation. Her jobs and volunteer positions impacted the amount of time she could spend on homework, in addition to the amount of sleep she obtained at night.
example, Jordan stated that she sometimes had to wake up at 5:00am to complete her homework because she was “working till [sic] 10:30pm and then...[had an] assignment due the next day.”

4.3.8 Participant H – Morgan

Morgan was in her first year at the school, and considered herself an A- to A+ student. She was often motivated because of internal influences including her future aspirations and her competency beliefs. Morgan’s motivation was weak during Phase I and Phase III because she had “been studying for a long time and I need...a week off.” Her motivation peaked in Phase II because “the Winter Break just ended so I feel relaxed and I don’t feel any pressure, and because it’s before midyear [exams],” which motivated her to study.

Morgan’s peers played a significant role in her academic performance, because “when I see somebody do something really good...I want to do it very good.” She also felt an “obligation to finish [an assignment] as soon as possible” if her classmates were finished. Negative peer behaviours impacted Morgan’s motivation, as she suggested that “when you are placed in an environment that is noisy, loud, and unfocused in the class, you just do the same and you won’t be really focused.”

4.4 Themes of Student Motivation

The semi-structured interviews contained ten standard questions pertaining to student motivation. Participant responses were coded for the five internal and five external themes, plus temporal considerations.
4.4.1 Most Common Themes Versus Most Influential Themes

The most commonly mentioned motivational themes in this study may be different than the most influential motivational themes of student motivation. For example, although student aims and goals were infrequently cited during interviews, they were often underlying contributors to student motivation, as high academic goals may lead to positive in-class behaviours and academic attitudes.

4.4.2 Internal Influences

Subject interest and enjoyment was the most commonly mentioned internal influence over the course of the school year. For example, one participant enjoyed Social Studies because it was “something I take a lot of interest in,” while another participant enjoyed Music Composition, because she loved playing drums, and because she did “tons of projects and learn[ed] how to use technology [and] how technology is related to music.”

The next most commonly mentioned themes were attitudes and values, and personality. For example, Quinn realized that “if you work hard you’ll always reach whatever you want…I used to not work hard and I used to not get good grades but now I really work hard and you can see the results.” Corey also explained that “a lot of my personal motivation just comes from my personality type and wanting to do well.”

Self-determination, self-efficacy, and student goals were the least mentioned themes throughout the year. However, participants did suggest that these factors affected their academic motivation, and contributed to their ability to persevere and work diligently during periods of low motivation. Participants explained the following regarding self-determination, self-efficacy, and personal goals: “I don’t want to put my
talents to waste;” “I don’t wanna [sic] be left behind, or be separated into a…class that’s for less smarter people;” and “I have a goal set in place [and I know]…what I need to do to get there.”

4.4.3 External Influences

Teachers were the most frequently mentioned external influence of student academic motivation. Participants stated that their teachers were “always super encouraging…and super passionate,” motivating them to work hard on their academics. The next most common external influence was participants’ peers, who had the ability to “affect how motivated you are to complete or even to try to do [something] to the best of your ability,” and how engaged participants were in class.

Extracurricular activities, work, and volunteering was the third most often mentioned external theme in this study. Out of school commitments either positively or negatively impacted student motivation, as one participant believed that her commitments forced her to “compensate for the time I’ve lost.” However, another participant suggested that she had to “stay up all night to meet a deadline” because she was too busy with other activities.

The fourth most often mentioned external influence was family. Participants stated that their families positively influenced their academic motivation, because they “always supported [their] schoolwork” and because they pushed them “to go to university and to succeed in life.”

Although it was the least frequently mentioned external theme, participants suggested that the school culture impacted their motivation. Participants explained that the school “carries such a high standard” and its “reputation helps with motivation cause
[sic] you wanna [sic] do well and not get a bad grade on something, cause [sic] you may let someone down.” Additionally, the classroom sizes of 20 or fewer students, the “easy and applicable” Smart Boards, as well as “the views [of nature] that we have” affected academic motivation.

4.5 Student Motivation during each Phase

In addition to ranking the frequency of each theme, student motivation was categorized during each phase. A number was assigned to each category – strong (5), strong/medium (4), medium (3), medium/weak (2), and weak (1) – and a mean numerical score was used to determine which phase had the highest student motivation.

4.5.1 Phase I: Early-Year

During Phase I, six participants described their academic motivation as strong, one as medium, and one as weak, for a mean numerical score of 4.25. Participants cited the following reasons for strong motivation: “It’s…a new year so you get a fresh start [and]…you know you can improve;” and because “the first report card…doesn’t have an exam and exams are usually hard to do good [sic] on…so it’s nice to get a high mark in Term 1 when it’s more possible.”

4.5.2 Phase II: Mid-Year

Five participants stated that their motivation was strong in Phase II, as opposed to six during the previous phase. Two participants described their motivation as strong/medium, and one as medium. Thus, the mean for Phase II was 4.5, and higher than Phase I. Although the poor weather negatively affected their motivation, participants explained that they felt more energized because they were “coming back from a break.”
Additionally, participants reported high motivation because they “need[ed] to study to get good grades” on the upcoming midyear exams.

**4.5.3 Phase III: End-of-Year**

Student motivation during Phase III was the lowest of any phase. Only three students described their motivation as strong, while two described their motivation as strong/medium, one as medium, one as medium/weak, and one as weak. The mean for Phase III was 3.6. Some participants’ motivation was weaker during Phase III because they were “getting to the end of the [school] year and…would like to be finished,” and because they were “quite tired…because there’s always so much going on in [their lives].”

**4.5.4 Individual Participant Motivation in Phase I, II, and III**

Although two participants’ motivation remained strong during all three phases, the other six experienced motivational peaks and troughs throughout the school year. Two students’ motivation levels fluctuated between strong to weak or medium/weak, while the other four’s fluctuated between strong and medium. Participants explained that their “motivation fluctuates a lot” throughout the school year, especially at “the end of the year.” Additionally, “one little incident [can] make you lose a vast majority of your motivation.” For example, one participant stated that one day she “got yelled at [by her teacher] so I just didn’t do any work the rest of class cause [sic] I was sad. The following three figures show how participant motivation fluctuated throughout the three phases.

**4.6 Interpreting Graphs**

The graphs in the following sections provide a visual representation of participant responses during this study. These graphs should not be interpreted from a quantitative
perspective, as this study consisted of qualitative interviews of eight participants from a specific demographic. Instead, the graphs illustrate that participant motivation can be affected by a variety of influences, and that it has the ability to change and fluctuate throughout the school year. Additionally, the number of times a theme was mentioned does not signify the extent of which that theme influenced student motivation; it simply provides numeration in regard to how often that theme was mentioned during the interviews. Participant quotations in response to the interview questions provide deeper insight into the intricacies of their motivation throughout the school year.

These graphs do suggest what factors students believe influence their academic motivation. Educators can use these graphs as starting points to explore which factors may affect student motivation, and reasons as to why motivation may change over a school year.

Figure 4.1. Mean participant motivation during each phase.
Figure 4.2. Participant motivation during each phase.

Figure 4.3. Fluctuation of each participant’s motivation in each phase.
4.7 The Influence of Temporal Factors on Internal and External Themes

In the previous section, the eight participants’ mean motivation was examined during each phase, as was whether or not each individual’s motivation fluctuated or remained stable. This section will discuss the influence of individual themes during each phase.

4.7.1 Internal and External Factors

Changes in participant motivation were based upon different mixes of internal and external factors during each phase. Participants mentioned internal factors more often than external factors (not including temporal factors) during the first phase, as internal factors made up 53% of participant responses. During the final two phases, however, external factors were more influential. External factors comprised 52% of participant responses in Phase II and 53% of participant responses in Phase III. Figures 4.4-4.6 show how often each theme was mentioned during the three phases, while Figures 4.7-4.8 show the four most often mentioned themes.
Figure 4.4. Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase I.

Figure 4.5. Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase II.
Figure 4.6. Frequency of themes mentioned during Phase III.

Figure 4.7. Four most commonly mentioned themes compared across phases.
4.8 Participant Explanations for Changes in Motivation: Emerging Temporal Themes

Participants explained that their motivation fluctuated at various times throughout the school year. Common themes in motivation fluctuation were as follows:

i. Student motivation was generally high at the beginning of the school year, and often decreased as the year progressed. Participants cited the following reasons for strong motivation at the beginning of the school year: “you just have that positive outlook and you just wanna [sic] get going and do well;” and “it’s always good to come back, meet your friends and see new people [and] see new teachers; you’re just looking forward to the new curriculum.”

ii. Student motivation was often low in Term 2 during the winter months (from November to March), but not during midyear exams. Participants attributed this lack of motivation to a variety of factors including: school “just sort of
becom[ing] daily routine;” “I’m tired and cranky;” and because its “cold and its dark.”

iii. The culmination of the school year (June) may increase or decrease student motivation. One participant indicated that her motivation increased at the end of the year because the weather is “nice again, you’re working towards your end of year [exams], [and] you’re…look[ing] forward to summer.” On the contrary, another participant explained that “I’m not as motivated anymore cause [sic] I’m just too tired of the year…and I’m eager to have summer.”

iv. Student motivation was affected prior to and after a break (Winter Break, Spring Break, and long weekends). Some participants reported that an approaching break increased their motivation, indicating that “you need breaks or else you get tired of working so hard.” However, some participants stated that “it’s really hard to focus and do the assignments” when approaching a break.

v. The end of a unit or project, exams, tests, deadlines, and report cards altered student motivation. One participant explained that her motivation was low at the beginning of a new chapter because there is minimal homework and the assignments are “worth less.” Midyear and final exams increased participant motivation because “you have to do well on those to get a good final mark in the class.” Deadlines and report cards also increased student motivation, as participants suggested that their motivation “is mostly to do with the deadlines” or “before your marks are coming out.”
4.9 Emerging Themes

Aligning with the Grounded Theory method, additional themes influencing student motivation emerged during data analysis. Participants explained that individuals outside of school – for example, their bosses at work or their athletic coaches – may affect student goals because of their professional accomplishments. One participant also suggested that fictional television shows or movies may influence students’ career choices, as they may become interested in a career based on their favourite television show. Additionally, some participants indicated that a lack of sleep could negatively influence their motivation and productivity during class.

4.10 Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter discussed each participant’s narrative story throughout the 2015-16 school year. Academic motivation trends were discussed in relation to the interview phases, as well as the school terms. Several common themes emerged during all three phases, providing insight into which factors students believe may influence their motivation. Emerging temporal influences and their impact on student motivation were also discussed.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview of Chapter 5

This chapter discusses six major themes that arose during data analysis, and provides recommendations and strategies for teachers to consider related to student academic motivation. Drawing from the thesis’s framework, both internal and external factors are considered. The conclusion contains a personal reflection of this study.

5.2 Emerging Themes, Implications, and Recommendations

Although additional themes were evident – as discussed in Chapter 4 – the six most significant themes that emerged as a result of this study of eight high achieving students are as follows:

i. Teachers had significant influence on student interest and enjoyment of a subject.

ii. The attitudes and values of a participant’s peers and family affected his or her motivation and academic goals.

iii. Student motivation generally decreased as the year progressed.

iv. Excluding January, students had low motivation during the winter months.

v. An extended break often reenergized students, and positively influenced their academic motivation.

vi. Tests and assessments may increase student motivation, but this increase may be dependent upon personal academic goals and aims.

5.2.1 Recommendation Considerations

The purpose of the following recommendations is to encourage educators to reflect on their pedagogy and educational beliefs, and how these may influence student
motivation. These recommendations are based on the responses of eight participants, which may not represent the beliefs of the entire student body. The eight participants in this study were highly motivated, and from affluent families who emphasized the importance and value of education. Additionally, participants had lofty goals that contributed to their high academic motivation.

The following themes and suggestions are provided for teachers to consider as they design their lessons over a school year.

**5.2.2 Teacher Influence on Student Interest and Enjoyment**

During all three phases, teachers were the most commonly referenced external factor of participant academic motivation, while student interest and enjoyment of a subject was the most often mentioned internal theme. Both personal interest as well as situational interest may foster student enjoyment of an activity. Therefore, teachers may have the ability to improve their pupils’ situational interest by creating stimulating and engaging lesson plans and activities, thereby increasing student motivation (Schraw et al., 2001; Trautwein et al., 2006). The following sections provide educators with examples of teaching strategies and behaviours that may improve student motivation.

**5.2.2.1 Teacher Attitudes and Skills.** Effective teaching – including supportive attitudes and strong teaching skills – has been shown to improve classroom quality and student behaviour (Virtanen, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus, & Kuorelahti, 2013), in addition to fostering positive student emotions, including enjoyment (Macklem, 2015). As a result, students are more likely to be successful in their academic endeavors, set greater academic goals, and take pride in their schooling (Macklem, 2015; Virtanen et al., 2013). In this study, participants attributed higher academic motivation and improved academic
success to the high-quality teaching at the school, indicating how supportive external influences can positively impact students.

Participants gravitated towards educators who were passionate, caring, who took interest in students’ personal lives, and who were willing to meet with students outside of class to assist them with their studies and academic goals. These results matched findings by Montalvo et al. (2007), who concluded that a supportive and encouraging teaching environment “promotes student interest” of a subject or during learning activities (p. 154). In contrast, Virtanen et al. (2013) observed that a teacher’s quality of instruction and classroom organization, rather than their high emotional support in isolation, positively influenced student motivation. These researchers suggested that lower levels of student-perceived emotional support resulted from having subject specific teachers in secondary school, as this limited the amount of time that students spent with each teacher. In the current study, the small school size may have contributed to enhanced emotional teacher-student connection for these participants, because students often had one teacher for multiple subjects, or were in the same teacher’s class in consecutive years. In alignment with the Positive Youth Development theory, adolescents in this study believed that positive adult support improved their academic confidence and competence.

5.2.2.2 Teaching Strategies and Assignment Types. In this study, there was no clear consensus regarding the teaching strategies and types of assignments that students enjoyed. Participants did enjoy, however, when their teachers utilized a “variety of learning techniques.” These findings correlated with previous literature, which highlighted the importance for educators to use different teaching strategies (Brophy, 1999; Montalvo et al., 2007).
Students enjoyed completing Project Based Learning, labs, and research assignments, as these teaching strategies were mentioned the most often during the three interview phases. Five participants cited these learning strategies in Phase I, while seven participants referenced them during the final two phases. Specific tasks that teachers may wish to assign could include: a poster board presentation, PowerPoint, diorama, or model. Future studies can explore whether less motivated students follow the same pattern as these research participants.

Another strategy that teachers may consider incorporating into their teaching repertoire is the use of jigsaw activities, in which each student is responsible for one section of a greater whole (Buijs & Admiraal, 2012). During the interview phases, participants referenced group assignments twice during Phase I, four times during Phase II, and five times during Phase III. Although participants generally enjoyed group assignments, this was often dependent upon whom they were working with.

Teachers may also consider having students discuss or present their projects to their classmates. This strategy increases student responsibility of learning because students are teaching their peers (Buijs & Admiraal, 2012). Participants in this study generally enjoyed presenting their work as, for example, one participant liked a project in which students went “around group to group and share[d] everything that [they had] learned” about their chosen topic. She enjoyed this type of assignment because she wanted “to be able to help people and…make sure that they have a really good understanding of the information that I’ve been able to understand.” Using these strategies may increase student confidence and competence beliefs, as they are able to become an expert on their topic and demonstrate the knowledge they have gained. However, it is important to
recognize that class presentations may cause anxiety for some students. Not every student may feel comfortable presenting their research in front of their peers because of social comparisons, as they may fear that their presentation is inadequate in relation to their classmates’.

Incorporating technology into curricular activities may also increase student motivation (Yang & Wu, 2011). Of the participants who cited technology as a mediator of their motivation in the current study, all of them explained that it was enjoyable learning tool; thus, increasing their motivation. For example, one participant enjoyed a particular class because it allowed her to use technology to create and edit her own music, while another participant enjoyed an out of school video assignment. Teachers may choose to incorporate technology into the classroom in the following ways: subject specific videos, PowerPoint or Prezi, creating videos or a webpage design on a topic, or having students use their smartphones for research purposes. In my classroom, I have had students use Twitter as an exit slip, as well as Socrative, an online quiz app, as these strategies allowed me to check for student understanding. Future research can explore if the use of technology can improve academic motivation for students of various achievement levels.

Additional activities that participants completed throughout the year included textbook, workbook, and essay assignments, as well as note-taking and PowerPoint lectures. However, only half of the participants who did cite these strategies actually enjoyed these methods, while the other half found them to be ineffective. Other effective teaching strategies that emerged during the interviews included: games, quizzes, debates,
classroom competitions, and the ability to resubmit assignments and rewrite tests. However, these strategies were infrequently mentioned during the interview phases.

5.2.2.3 Choice and Creativity. During the three interview phases, student choice of activities and the ability to be creative were referenced multiple times by numerous participants. According to Evans and Boucher (2015), choice “plays a critical role in promoting students’ intrinsic motivation and deep engagement in learning” (p. 87). Not only may choice improve student motivation, but it may also promote student autonomy and decision-making, as they have to choose and create the type of task they wish to participate in (Evans & Boucher, 2015). However, these experts recognized the need to implement some guidelines and restrictions, as students may not meet the desired learning outcome if they are given unlimited freedom when choosing their assignment.

Creative assignments also allow students to complete an activity in their own unique way, giving them the freedom to explore a variety of approaches to learning (Brophy, 1999). In contrary, a study by Buijs and Admiraal (2012) suggested that out of four possible homework assignments (critical thinking, fragmented assessment, jigsaw assignments, and student choice), ‘student choice,’ in which students could choose their homework completion method, resulted in the “lowest time on task and class participation” of the four activities (p. 777). Nonetheless, Buijs and Admiraal (2012) suggested, as did the current study, that providing students with a choice of assignments positively impacted task enjoyment. Future research may choose to examine the relationship between student motivation and assignment choice.

5.2.2.4 Scaffolding. During lesson design, educators can consider how to scaffold their teaching of concepts to keep students engaged (Brophy, 1999). Similarly, students
may lose interest if the information is too simplistic, making it essential that educators match their “learners’ cognitive levels” (Brophy, 1999, p. 76). The eight participants in this study explained that appropriate (typically high) academic challenge positively influenced their motivation, and that succeeding on assigned tasks increased their self-competence beliefs. However, it is recognized that not all students are at the same academic levels as this study’s participants. Thus, the general competence level or abilities of a class (internal factors) may affect a teacher’s lesson plan, as teachers (external factor) may assign more (or less) difficult work to correspond to the academic levels of their pupils. This illustrates the interconnectedness of internal and external motivational influences.

5.2.2.5 Relevance to Students. Aiming and Aimin (2006) explained that student motivation decreases when students “have to learn something which…[has] no relevance to their lives” (p. 61) and increases when students participate in activities that they deem to be relevant. In this study, participants were interested in subjects that had relevance to them (for example, current events in Social Studies), indicating that teachers may be able to improve student interest by teaching relevant material.

5.2.2.6 Classroom Organization. Unlike previous research by Virtanen et al. (2013), participants in this study rarely cited classroom organization as an influence of their academic motivation. While one participant explained that she preferred working in a controlled classroom with clear expectations, rules, and routines, most of the eight participants believed that the main teacher qualities that can influence student motivation included: taking interest in their students, demonstrating respect and enthusiasm, and utilizing enjoyable teaching strategies.
5.2.3 Changing the Attitudes and Responsibilities of Educators

Specific educational strategies for teachers to consider related to student motivation were previously discussed. However, the paradigm shift in the British Columbia education system and the new curriculum suggests that the role of teachers has been transformed in 21st Century education. Teachers now have greater comprehensive responsibilities when compared to traditional teaching models (memory and recall of facts), as there is more emphasis on student social and personal competencies, and the development of 21st Century skills – critical thinking, collaboration, communications, and technological aptitude (Ministry of Education, 2015). Adopting a more holistic view regarding their educational responsibilities may assist educators in meeting the requirements of the new curriculum and helping prepare students for success in the 21st Century.

In accordance with Positive Youth Development and strengths-based education, educators may benefit from focusing on their teaching strengths. Educators who recognize their strengths and incorporate these strengths into their lessons may improve their teaching practice and create a more engaging learning environment for students (Lopez & Louis, 2009). For example, a teacher who has strong lesson-delivery skills but weaker behaviour management skills may choose to focus on designing effective and stimulating lesson plans. This may increase student motivation and, as a result, possibly decrease negative or disruptive student behaviour within the classroom.

Educators’ abilities to help students recognize and build upon their own talents and strengths may improve student confidence and academic success (Lopez & Louis, 2009). Instead of telling youth how to feel or what to do, educators may guide students in
changing their behaviour on their own accord, as “the most powerful motivations for changing our behaviors [sic] don’t come from others, but from ourselves” (Singh, 2014, p. 209). The eight participants in this study liked teachers who demonstrated respect, and supported and encouraged their students. Aligning with PYD and strengths-based education models, educators may choose to adopt the following mentalities to encourage positive student development, assist students in understanding their own feelings and behaviours, and improve responsible decision-making: Recognize that all students have the potential to make positive changes; focus on student strengths; use supportive language; create authentic relationships; and value differences and the need to collaborate (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012). Additionally, asking questions, expressing empathy, and providing guidance and discussions of potential outcomes may aid in accomplishing the goals of PYD and strengths-based education (Ginsburg, 2014; Singh, 2014).

Specific teaching strategies that can teach problem-solving and may help youth recognize the consequences of their actions include role-playing, decision trees (cause and effect diagrams), and case examples (Ginsburg, 2014). These strategies emphasize autonomous decision-making and may empower youth to feel confident in their ability to make positive changes (Singh, 2014). Although improving student social and emotional competencies traditionally fell within the realm of the school counselor, the structure of the new curriculum suggests that teachers can play a greater role in promoting positive student change.

5.2.4 Connecting Students, Teachers, and the Curriculum

Based on the results of this study and previous literature, students, teachers, and curricular content can be considered to be interconnected. Positive interactions between
all three elements may improve student motivation. This relationship can be conceptualized by the Venn Diagram outlined in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1. The interrelationship between teachers, students, and curriculum on student motivation.](image)

In accordance with the new British Columbia curriculum, teachers are required to provide students with opportunities to develop and improve their understanding of academic content, as well as personal and social competencies (Ministry of Education, 2015). As such, educators may wish to explore various strategies to build positive relationships between themselves, their students, and the subject matter (curricular content). Teachers may be more likely to have a positive impact on their pupils’ development if they are able to accomplish the following: Implement all aspects of the curriculum through engaging lesson plans; create meaning in ways that interest and educate students; help students identify their strengths and passions, and give them
opportunities to build upon these areas (Hammond & Zimmerman, 2012; Lopez & Louis, 2009).

5.2.5 Peer and Family Influence on Student Attitudes, Values, and Goals

While student-teacher relationships were often mentioned in regards to student interest and enjoyment of school, an individual’s peers and family were frequently mentioned influences of student academic values and attitudes.

5.2.5.1 Peers. Correlating with previous research, participants were more likely to be engaged in class and work diligently if they were sitting with a positive peer group, while they also reported that it was difficult to learn if they were in a class that was noisy or distracting (Gorard & See, 2011; Ryan, 2001; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Because participants had high aspirations, they often chose to sit with peers with similar academic behaviours – for example, those who were quiet and focused.

This study also showed that the educational goals of one’s peer group may influence his or her goals and aims, matching earlier studies by Cham et al. (2014) and Christofides et al. (2015). Participants reported that their friends’ goals, as well as the goals of other students, contributed to their academic focus and diligence. Furthermore, participants were privy to the successes of the graduating class, as the graduates were “talking about their universities and other acceptance posts on social media.” Their Grade 11 peers had also started to discuss their post-secondary plans and, as a result, participants in this study began to investigate the requirements of different careers.

In contrast, previous research (Ryan, 2001) suggested that one’s peer group did not affect his or her beliefs about the importance of school, positing that parents and teachers were more significant contributors. While this study consisted of Grade 11 students,
Ryan’s (2001) study was conducted in a middle school environment, which may contribute to the discrepancies in student attitudes. As Coe (2003) postulated, students in the middle adolescence stage of human development (between the ages of fifteen and seventeen) may “reject family values,” have more family conflicts, and may begin to spend more time with their friends (p. 32). Additionally, adolescents in this stage of development begin to develop “higher level of concern for the future,” which influences their educational beliefs (Coe, 2003, p. 32).

Participants in this study suggested that their academic behaviours and attitudes contributed to a mutually beneficial relationship with their peer groups. For example, one participant explained that she enjoyed “helping [her peers academically]…and being [viewed as] a good role model,” while the people that she helped (and had become friends with) invited her to socialize with them at lunch and on weekends. These newfound friendships illustrate the dynamic and interconnected relationship between internal and external influences, as this participant helped her peers, who in turn helped her in a different area, positively contributing to her overall happiness and well-being.

School administrators and schedule organizers can attempt to improve student attitudes towards school by arranging classes so that students have a positive peer group within their class. Similarly, a teacher can choose to implement a seating plan in an effort to build or maintain positive peer relationships, which in turn, may improve student motivation and also create a productive classroom environment. Educators may want to think about how classroom arrangement may influence student motivation.

5.2.5.2 Family. In addition to peer group, the participants in this study frequently cited their family as an external academic motivator, supporting previous literature which
argued that an individual’s family significantly impacted his or her academic attitudes, values, and goals (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012; Elliot & Tudge, 2012). Participants suggested that “family is the really big thing that influences how...kids do in school,” and that their family’s values and attitudes towards education impacted their academic motivation. Participants also believed that their families were supportive, took interest in their schooling, and were successful themselves, contributing to the high academic goals and aspirations that these students set for themselves.

The interconnectedness of one’s home life and educational motivation and behaviour (Elliot & Tudge, 2012) was exemplified in this study, as one participant explained that her parents would get into occasional arguments at home. In turn, this made it more difficult to focus on both her homework and her schoolwork during the following day. On the contrary, another participant suggested that she had always had a positive attitude towards school, and that her parents had always supported and praised her academic achievements. This example demonstrates the reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between one’s internal feelings and attitude and the external environment, as this participant put forth a high level of effort in school, achieved high grades, obtained positive feedback from her parents, which led her to continue to work hard academically.

Another theme highlighting the prevalence of family academic attitudes and values was the fact that participants’ parents and guardians had made the choice to pay tuition or to apply for a scholarship to send their children to a private school. Participants were aware of the fees that their parents were paying for them to attend this school and, as a result, reported that there was more responsibility to work diligently on their academics.
This suggests that these eight participants valued their family’s support, assistance, and guidance, as these factors led to high academic motivation. Future research can explore how the amount of support students receive from their family (or whether their family values education) influences students’ academic motivation.

It may be difficult for educators to influence the attitudes and values that parents transmit to their children. However, educators can consider the following strategies, which may help illustrate to parents the importance of positive student academic attitudes: Teachers may choose to inform parents—through individual or group notes, emails, or newsletters—of the current units of study, student progress, or student goals; and consider providing parents with resources or information regarding positive student academic, social, and emotional behaviours.

5.2.6 Temporal Influences

Although internal and external factors may influence student motivation, temporal influences also appeared to impact the academic efforts, drive, and focus of these eight high achieving students. While this study focused on a specific demographic, educators may wish to consider how temporal factors may influence their students, and perhaps adjust their lessons to accommodate different motivational levels.

5.2.6.1 Student Motivation Decreased Throughout the Year. In accordance with existing literature, participant motivation appeared to decrease as the school year progressed (Haimovitz et al., 2011; Leroy & Bressoux, 2016; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Smith, 2004). Participants primarily cited stress, anxiety, and fatigue as the main causes for decreases in their motivation. Specifically, participants indicated that the pressure of obtaining high grades and achieving strong examination marks increased as the year
progressed, thereby increasing their stress and anxiety. This is in keeping with the findings by Smith (2004), who argued that the pressure of examinations led to depression and anxiety.

Previous research identified the following factors as contributors to decreases in student motivation throughout the school year: negative perceived intelligence beliefs of oneself and in comparison to one’s peers; weaker teacher interpersonal bonds; and a decrease in student-perceived subject importance (Haimovitz et al., 2011; Leroy & Bressoux, 2016; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Smith, 2004). However, participants in this study did not cite these factors as contributors to their declines in motivation. Instead, participants suggested that intelligence beliefs in comparison to one’s peers actually increased their motivation, because they wanted to achieve the same academic success as their friends. Subjects also claimed that their relationships with their teachers remained strong throughout the year. Additionally, although some participants found certain subjects less enjoyable as the year progressed, perceived subject importance remained stable. This was a result of recognizing the relevance of these subjects to their future academic goals.

The above-mentioned factors may not have negatively influenced student motivation because the participants in this study were highly motivated, high achieving students with lofty goals. However, other students may experience decreases in motivation because of the following reasons: the inability to stay on the same academic level as their peers; poor student behaviour resulting in poorer teacher-student interpersonal bonds; and a less optimistic academic future, decreasing students’ perception of the relevance of some subjects.
Although teachers want to ensure that they cover the curriculum and prepare students for final exams, they may choose to think about their reasons or rationale for assigning a certain amount of homework. There are also technology programs, such as MySchool – a software that was utilized at this school – that allow teachers to view how much homework their students have in other classes. Being able to view their students’ workload may allow teachers to gauge the quantity of homework to assign, in addition to potentially limiting the number of tests that fall upon the same day. Although this may be inconvenient (teachers would have to spend time viewing the portal and also adjusting their teaching schedule), it may decrease student burnout, while possibly improving their motivation and performance on assessments.

### 5.2.6.2 Low Motivation During Winter Months

Phase II had the highest levels of academic motivation, yet some of these eight participants referenced feeling unmotivated during other times throughout Term 2 for the following reasons: minimal sunlight, winter weather, and limited ability to participate in outdoor activities, including extracurricular activities. This correlated with research indicating that children are happier on sunnier winter days (Ciucci et al., 2011) and that an individual’s happiness is maximized at 13.9°C (Tsutsui, 2011), suggesting that student happiness – and potentially their attitudes and enjoyment of activities – may decrease during winter months, when the temperature is lower. Other research by Denissen, Butalid, Penke, and van Aken (2008) proposed that limited sunlight can negatively affect one’s mood, while also increasing fatigue. Students also explained that it was difficult to keep their motivation high after midyear exams (in early February) and continue to work diligently until Spring Break.
5.2.6.3 Extended Breaks. Some participants reported that extended breaks refreshed them, and that they needed “a lot of breaks [in order] to refuel” and refocus throughout the year. Another theme that arose was the duration of a break, as participants inferred that it was important that Winter and Spring Break were not too long. Students explained that they found their three-week Winter Break “pretty extensive,” and that it was hard to come back and study for midyear exams after such a long break. Because breaks have the ability to reenergize students, educators can consider the following suggestions regarding the structure of holidays and breaks:

i. Examine how much homework is assigned over long weekends, Winter Break, and Spring Break, and consider assigning minimal or no homework during these breaks. This may give students the time and freedom to pursue other interests, in addition to possibly recharging their energy reserves before the next school week.

ii. Consider giving students additional time off in either October or November. Currently, apart from professional development days, students receive only two days off (Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day) during this time. This suggestion is in accordance with some European countries – for example, Belgium, Germany, and Denmark – who receive an “Autumn Break” in October or November (EACEA, 2014).

iii. Consider giving students an extended break in April or May. Spring Break – which is two weeks in numerous British Columbia school districts – could be split into two different time periods and students could be given one week off in February – perhaps during the same week as Family Day – and another week
off in April. Some European countries, including Slovakia, Norway, and Sweden, have five days (one week) off during February, in addition to a one or two week Spring Break (EACEA, 2014).

iv. Previous literature illustrated that additional time spent in school does not necessarily equate to improved academic performance (Clark, 2010). Thus, addition breaks may improve student health and emotional welfare, without the risk of falling behind academically.

The above-mentioned suggestions may not necessarily improve student motivation and decrease student fatigue. However, it is important for educators to consider how student motivation and learning may be affected by the kinds – time, duration, and purpose – of holidays and breaks that are allocated throughout the school year. Future research on changing holiday and break schedules may be beneficial to identify the most advantageous academic schedule.

5.2.6.4 Temporal Considerations. Three temporal trends emerged during this study of eight high achieving students, suggesting that, in this study, student motivation was influenced by temporal factors: i) Motivation generally decreased; ii) motivation was low during the winter months (except January); and iii) breaks often reenergized students. As a result, educators or future researchers may wish to explore the following questions:

i. What would the temporal trends be for a more diverse population?

ii. If motivation decreased during the school year for this group of high achieving students, what implications does this have for medium or low achieving students? For example, participant motivation in this study was initially strong, and often stayed strong or medium during the school year because of their
desire to excel academically. If these mediating factors (goal-orientations) did not affect participant motivation, perhaps motivation would have been even weaker throughout the school year. Educators and researchers may want to consider how the temporal structure of the school year affects the academic motivation of varied students.

iii. Are the majority of students motivated by midyear and final exams, or does this trend mainly apply to high achieving and highly motivated students?

iv. If student motivation decreases equally for most students, what kind of strategies can teachers use to mediate this decrease? Should teachers provide more inquiry based assignments (as per participant suggestions)? What kind of relationship building activities can be implemented throughout the year to promote positive student-teacher relationships?

v. Is there a correlation between decreases in motivation and academic performance (grades)?

Future research in this area may provide educators with a more proficient understanding as to how and why student motivation may change throughout a school year.

5.2.7 The Impact of Assessment and Enjoyable Assignments

Despite citing the poor weather as a negative motivational influence during Phase II, participants explained that they had strong motivation due to their upcoming midyear exams. Participants also reported that although their motivation was low in May (during Phase III), it would likely increase in June because of the pressure of final exams.
5.2.7.1 Exams, Tests, and Quizzes. Despite low internal motivation in the above-mentioned instances, participant academic motivation remained high because of examinations – a form of extrinsic motivation. Previous research demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is more desirable than extrinsic motivation because it leads to more proficient learning (Deci & Ryan, 1982), more complex thinking (Cordova & Lepper, 1996), and, as a result, greater subject mastery (Lei, 2010). However, during times when students may have less intrinsic motivation, they could require an extrinsic push, such as a test or exam, to compensate for this loss of intrinsic motivation.

Another suggestion that may affect student motivation is to assign numerous fragmented tests as homework or in class, as research has shown that students believe this task to be “meaningful and challenging” (Buijs & Admiraal, 2012, p. 776). It may also allow students to gauge their degree of subject mastery, and could provide teachers with feedback in regards to their classes’ comprehension levels. However, frequent testing is not always a viable long-term solution, as this strategy may cause the following: low intrinsic student motivation, frustration due to lack of success for low-achieving students, and boredom among high-achieving students because of repetitive testing (Nichols & Dawson, 2012).

Participants in this study generally had lofty future ambitions and aspirations, influencing their short-term goals, as well as the time, effort, and energy that they dedicated to an assignment, or when preparing for a test. As a result, their ‘performance results’ (their achievement on assessments) served as external indicators regarding how well they were performing in relation to their career goals. This allowed participants to adjust their behaviours to ensure they were meeting both their short-term and long-term
goals. Participants also referenced mastery-goals – subject or task mastery – as an academic motivator, as these goals drove participants to persevere during difficult tasks (Covington, 2000).

Some students in other educational contexts may not have the same academic aspirations or goals as the participants in this study. Future research can explore whether tests and other assessment strategies only improve academic motivation if students are driven to succeed. Students who lack academic goals, regardless of the goal orientation, may be unmotivated to study and may not perform well during tests and assessments. Illustrating the interconnectedness of motivational influences, this in turn may decrease their self-efficacy or attitudes towards their school; making them less academically motivated.

5.2.7.2 Other Teaching Strategies to Improve Motivation. Because participants were fatigued prior to an academic break and after an intensive academic schedule (for example, after midyear exams), teachers can consider incorporating the following teaching strategies and assignments prior to a break, as the eight participants in this study generally enjoyed these types of methods: Project Based Learning, labs, research assignments, group activities, and presentations. Incorporating technology and providing students with choice and creativity for assignments may also improve their motivation.

5.2.6.3 Aligning with the New British Columbia Curriculum. The new British Columbia curriculum has eliminated provincial examinations in Science 10, Social Studies 11, Language Arts 10, and Math 10, as in-class assessment will compose 100% of a student’s grade (Ministry of Education, 2015). This suggests that the Ministry of Education is adopting a more flexible and personalized approach to assessment, and
allowing educators “greater flexibility to decide how and when students are assessed” (Ministry of Education, 2015). Aligning with Positive Youth Development and Strengths-Based Education models, greater emphasis has been placed upon self-reflection, growth mindsets, constructive feedback, and lifelong learning (Lopez & Louis, 2009). To more effectively serve the needs of the student body, educators may choose to question their pedagogy and various elements of their teaching, obtain student input in regards to assessment and teaching strategies, and account for various academic levels and behaviours.

5.3 Addressing the Literature Gap

The results of this study provided a rich, detailed description of the internal, external, and temporal factors that influenced student motivation in eight high achieving students, providing some insights for researchers and educators to consider.

5.3.1 Influences of Student Motivation

In accordance with PYD and the Ecological Systems Theory, this research suggests that both internal and external factors mutually contribute to a youth’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Larsen, 2006; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This study also suggests that educators and researchers can consider human development and its specific features – in this instance, motivation – through a holistic lens, in an effort to understand the relationships that exist between systemic parts (Lerner et al., 2012; Overton, 2013).

As the school year progressed, each individual appeared to experience internal changes as a result of his or her external environment. These changes illustrate the plasticity of human development, which argues that individuals have the ability to change during maturation (Lerner et al., 2012). This study also showed that student behaviours
may affect the external environment and those within it. For example, students’ in-class behaviour may influence their teacher’s teaching strategies and classroom management. These adaptive developmental relations illustrate the potential for mutually beneficial relationships to exist between an individual’s external environment and his or her social, emotional, and cognitive development (Brandtstädter, 1998). Further research can explore the dynamic nature of students’ motivation.

5.3.2 Educator Impact on Student Motivation

PYD theorists argue that factors influencing an individual’s development can be viewed as resources that a person uses to grow, and can lead to either positive or negative social and emotional growth (Overton, 2010). This study suggests that, because of the fluid relationship that exists between students and the external environment, teachers may have the ability to impact pupil development – specifically, their motivation towards their academics. Additionally, these findings correlate to other research that suggests that teachers can influence student goals, self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes towards school, as well as interest in or enjoyment of a subject (Ames, 1992; Cham et al., 2014; Montalvo et al., 2007; Trautwein et al., 2006).

Although curriculum developers were not referenced directly by participants, they were an indirect influence of student motivation, as their decisions transcend environments into schools and classrooms (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Because the government of British Columbia organizes and manages the education system, government decisions – such as classroom sizes, teacher qualifications, and subject requirements – may influence adolescent development and student attitudes towards education. As previously discussed, educators and curriculum developers may have the
ability to positively impact internal and external student motivational influences, in addition to creating temporal circumstances that may lead to improved student motivation. Further research can explore this possible correlation.

5.4 Considerations for Future Research

The eight participants in this study may not represent the values and beliefs of all students because they were from a specific demographic. This study’s participants consisted of only Grade 11 students of high socioeconomic standing, in a school of approximately 550 high achieving students from affluent families. Participants themselves were also high achievers and had high aspirations, which positively influenced their academic motivation. To further expand upon this study, future research on student motivation could sample a greater number of participants from more diverse backgrounds in different types of learning environments.

Participant responses and opinions were rooted in their interpretation of internal feelings (beliefs) and external events. As such, their interpretations of, for example, a teacher’s behaviour, may have been different than other people’s interpretation. Participants may have also had difficulty comprehending or expressing how internal and external influences affected their motivation. Additionally, some motivational themes could have been easier for participants to understand and discuss, influencing them to focus on these themes. These factors were difficult to mediate, as it was ultimately the participants’ understanding of their feelings and the external environment that influenced their responses.

The implications and recommendations of this study are emergent, and further exploration in this area is required. The study’s findings provide topics and questions for
researchers to further explore the intricacies of student motivation, as well as how and why student motivation may change during one school year.

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this exploratory narrative case study was to identify how internal, external, and temporal factors may influence student motivation during one school year. In accordance with the PYD model, it appears that external forces may positively influence a pupil’s motivation, illustrating the fluidity of a person’s development. Additionally, internal factors of motivation may also influence student academic success, and the external environment. Based on this study conducted with eight high achieving students and aligning with conclusions from previous literature, I have provided recommendations as to how teachers and curriculum developers may think about their students’ motivation. Continuing to examine motivation through a holistic lens may help educators develop a deeper understanding of student motivation in order to create educational circumstances that foster positive adolescent academic, social, and emotional development.

5.6 Personal Reflection

I enjoyed working with the participants in this study, as each interview provided me with a unique insight into their individual lives. I appreciated their willingness to devote three lunch hours during the year to discuss their personal goals, accomplishments, and difficulties, as their academic views and experiences were the foundation of this research. Hopefully these eight adolescents have an increased awareness of their own motivation as a result of participating in this study.
From a personal standpoint, this research has improved my understanding of student motivation, and how it can be influenced by internal, external, and temporal factors. I have also gained a more proficient understanding of my own professional motivation, and my personal motivation in other areas of life. I also feel as though I have completed my own deductive and inductive journey during this research, and that my abilities as a researcher, scholar, and teacher have improved as a result. Prior to commencing this study, I had a skeletal theoretical belief (deductive framework) about student motivation. Now, after finishing my research (as a result of the inductive process), my theoretical beliefs about student motivation have been altered, and I have a more proficient understanding of the dynamic nature of motivation. Additionally, I have become more inquisitive and interested in not only student motivation, but also in other educational areas.

When I began my thesis, I was a young teacher who was developing his pedagogical identity. Two years later, I am much more confident in my abilities as an educator, and have been able to make positive changes to my teaching methods, behaviours, and assessment strategies, which I believe has resulted in a more enjoyable learning environment for my students. My understanding of effective leadership has also improved, and I have become more comfortable voicing my opinion during staff meetings and within my educational community. Despite these improvements, one of my goals is to continue develop and improve my pedagogy, which will result from ongoing professional development and self-reflection.

I have recently moved from British Columbia to Ontario, and have been fortunate to obtain a teaching position at an independent school. It has been interesting to teach the
Ontario curriculum and compare its guidelines and goals to the new British Columbia curriculum. I am also growing accustomed to the expectations and routines of a new school, and have enjoyed collaborating with my new colleagues and learning from their personal professional experiences. Administration permitted me to present an overview of my research to staff members, and it was rewarding to educate them on the intricacies of student motivation, and explain the findings of my study. In the hope of improving other educators’ pedagogies, I will look into opportunities to present the findings of this study during conferences and professional development days in other schools throughout the region.

One goal for me is to continue to incorporate the findings of this research into my teaching practice, as I have a more proficient understanding regarding how teachers may be able to improve their students’ motivation and academic attitudes. Not only do I hope to foster pupil excitement and interest in my subjects, but I also hope to build and maintain positive teacher-student relationships with every pupil. Continuing to be a passionate, genuine, and encouraging role model while creating a positive classroom environment and incorporating different types of teaching strategies and assignments will help me achieve these objectives.
References


Dinger, F.C., Dichauzer, O., Hilbig, B.E., Muller, E., Steinmayr, R., & Wirthwein, L. (2015). From basic personality to motivation: Relating the HEXACO factors to achievement goals. *Learning and Individual Differences, 40*, 1-8. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2015.03.023


Appendices

Appendix A – Student Interview Consent Form

An Investigation of Student Motivation throughout the School Year

- Student Researcher: Jonathan Lee, MA in Education Student, University of British Columbia – Okanagan
- Principal Investigator: Dr. Catherine Broom, University of British Columbia – Okanagan
- Study Team: Dr. John-Tyler Binfet, University of British Columbia – Okanagan; Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta, University of British Columbia – Okanagan

Dear Student:

- You are invited to participate in a brief interview study about your views of motivation in education. The general purpose of the study is to understand young people’s views of the role that motivation plays in their academic achievement, and how teachers can improve student motivation. This study is being conducted as part of Jonathan Lee’s thesis, and is for thesis purposes.
• If you agree to take part, you will complete 3 interviews in September 2015, and January and May of 2016. Interviews will only be conducted with one student at a time. After you have completed all 3 interviews, you will receive a $15 gift card to Orchard Park Mall.

• Each interview takes about 20 minutes, and will be conducted during lunch hours in September, January, and May. Interviews will ask you to explain the role that motivation plays in your education, in addition to demographic information. You will be asked to respond to 10 open ended questions.

• You don’t have to answer any questions that you don’t feel comfortable answering, and you can withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse effects. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data from previous interviews will still be used in the findings of this research.

• Each interview will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure that your responses are accurately recorded. You will also be asked to confirm that the Student Researcher has recorded your responses accurately.

• Interview forms will be coded using code names (pseudonyms), to ensure that student responses cannot be identified. Responses will then be analyzed in the summer of 2016. Participant confidentiality will be ensured at all times during the study. No names will be presented in the findings.

• Please note that the Principal Investigator, Study Team, and Student Researcher will be evaluating the interview responses. However, no one else will have access to them. This interview does not ask for personal identifiers or any information that may be used to identify you. The study has no more risks than you come across in your regular day.
• Your participation is valued, as you will be providing educators with a better understanding as to how they can make school more enjoyable, and also help young people achieve their maximum potential. You receive the benefits of being able to reflect on your views regarding your own motivation, perhaps helping you identify how you can get the most out of your education.

• If you participate, you will be given the opportunity to preview the research article, if you email the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher with this request.

• If necessary, a translator may be used in this study. The translator would sign a confidentiality form to ensure that responses are kept confidential.

• After the study, your interview form and audio recording will be collected – and your consent form, if you take part in this – and will be kept separately in a locked cabinet at UBCO, in the office of Dr. Catherine Broom. The documents will be destroyed five years after the defence of my thesis and after any publications arising from the study. No one will have access to them except the Student Researcher, Personal Investigator, and Study Team.

• This research will be publically available on the internet. No identifying factors will be used in the findings.

• Please note that only 8 students will be selected to participate in this study. Once consent forms have been submitted, the Student Researcher will randomly select 8 students to participate in this study. The ratio of students selected will depend on how many students return their consent forms. For example, if 32 students return their consent form, every 4th student will be selected to participate in this study, as this ratio allows for 8 students to participate in this study.
• If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services toll free at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

• If you have any questions about the research project itself, you may contact jonnylee4@gmail.com

Thank you.

With regards,

Jonathan Lee, B.ED

MA in Education Student

UBC Okanagan
STUDENT/ADOLESCENT CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEW & HONOURARIUM

This form can be returned to your homeroom teacher within two days. Please select the boxes below and also sign the form.

☐ I give my consent to participate in the 3 interviews.

☐ I would like to receive a $15 Orchard Park Mall gift card for participating in this study.

Name (please print)____________________ Signature____________________

Date________________

Comments/questions:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------
Appendix B – Parent or Guardian Consent Form

An Investigation of Student Motivation throughout the School Year

Student Researcher: Jonathan Lee, MA in Education Student, University of British Columbia – Okanagan
Principal Investigator: Dr. Catherine Broom, University of British Columbia – Okanagan
Study Team: Dr. John-Tyler Binnet, University of British Columbia – Okanagan; Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta, University of British Columbia – Okanagan

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child is invited to participate in a brief interview study about his or her views of motivation in education. The general purpose of the study is to understand young people’s views of the role that motivation plays in their academic achievement, and how teachers can improve student motivation. This study is being conducted as part of Jonathan Lee’s thesis, and is for thesis purposes.
• If students agree to take part, they will complete 3 interviews in September of 2015, and January and May 2016. Interviews will only be conducted with one student at a time. After they have completed all 3 interviews, they will receive a $15 gift card to Orchard Park Mall.

• Each interview takes about 20 minutes, and will be conducted during lunch hours in September, January, and May. Interviews will ask students to explain the role that motivation plays in their education, in addition to demographic information. Students will be asked to respond to 10 open ended questions.

• Students don’t have to answer any questions that they don’t feel comfortable answering, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse effects. If students choose to withdraw from this study, their data from previous interviews will still be used in the findings of this research.

• Each interview will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure that student responses are accurately recorded. Students will also be asked to confirm that the Student Researcher has recorded their responses accurately.

• Interview forms will be coded using code names (pseudonyms) to ensure that student responses cannot be identified. Responses will then be analyzed in the summer of 2016. Participant confidentiality will be ensured at all times during the study. No names will be presented in the findings.

• Please note that the Principal Investigator, Study Team, and Student Researcher will be evaluating the interview responses. However, no one else will have access to them. This interview does not ask for personal identifiers or any information that may be used to
identify students. The study has no more risks than students come across in their regular day.

- Your child’s participation is valued, as he or she will be providing educators with a better understanding as to how they can make school more enjoyable, and also help young people achieve their maximum potential. Students receive the benefits of being able to reflect on their views regarding their own motivation, perhaps helping them identify how they can get the most out of their education.

- If your child participates, your family will be given the opportunity to preview the research article, if you email the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher with this request.

- If necessary, a translator may be used in this study. The translator would sign a confidentiality form to ensure that responses are kept confidential.

- After each study, your child’s interview form and audio recording will be collected – and their consent form, if your child takes part in this – and will be kept separately in a locked cabinet at UBCO, in the office of Dr. Catherine Broom. The documents will be destroyed five years after the defence of my thesis and after any publications arising from the study. No one will have access to them except the Student Researcher, Personal Investigator, and Study Team.

- This research will be publically available on the internet. No identifying factors will be used in the findings.

- Please note that only 8 students will be selected to participate in this study. Once consent forms have been submitted, the Student Researcher will randomly select 8 students to participate in this study. The ratio of students selected will depend on how many students
return their consent forms. For example, if 32 students return their consent form, every 4th student will be selected to participate in this study, as this ratio allows for 8 students to participate in this study.

• If you have any concerns or complaints about your child’s rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while your child participates in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services toll free at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

• If you have any questions about the research project itself, you may contact jonnylee4@gmail.com

Thank you.

With regards,

Jonathan Lee, B.ED

MA in Education Student

UBC Okanagan
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM: INTERVIEW & HONOURARIUM

This form can be returned to your child’s homeroom teacher within two days. Please select the box below and also sign the form.

☐ I give consent for my child, ______________________________, to participate in the 3 interviews.

☐ I would like my child, ______________________________, to receive a $15 Orchard Park Mall gift card for participating in this study.

Name (please print)____________________ Signature____________________
Date_________________
Comments/questions:
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C – Student Academic Interview Form

Student Researcher: Jonathan Lee
University of British Columbia Okanagan
Student Code __________

1. Gender: (circle one) Male Female Other
2. Age: Month_____ Day_____ Year_____
3. How do you identify yourself? (select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( ) Aboriginal</th>
<th>( ) Caucasian</th>
<th>( ) Black</th>
<th>( ) South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( ) Chinese</td>
<td>( ) Japanese</td>
<td>( ) Latin American</td>
<td>( ) West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ) Filipino</td>
<td>( ) Korean</td>
<td>( ) Arab</td>
<td>( ) Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Mixed Race (please indicate) __________ & __________
• Other __________

4. When did you start attending the school? Year______ Grade Level______

Instructions
• I am going to read you a number of statements that relate to student motivation in education. Listen to each question carefully and respond to the best of your ability. I am happy to repeat each question as needed.
• There are no right or wrong responses.
• This information will be used for research purposes your answers will be combined with other answers. Your information will be shared but your answers are anonymous.
• You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty to your grades or academic standing.
• Your answers will help us better-understand student motivation.
• Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As you know, I will be asking you to answer question in three different interviews – one today, one in the middle of the school year, and one at the end of the school year.
I. Define motivation. What is motivation? What does it mean to be motivated?

II. Describe your current motivational state in regards to your classes. Overall, would you consider your academic motivation strong, medium, or weak?
III. What, within this school, motivates you and why?

IV. In which classes (e.g., English or Math) are you most motivated to learn the material? In which classes are you least motivated to learn the material? What strategies do teachers from these classes use to create either an enjoyable or boring class?
V. Thinking about the assignments you’ve done this term, which did you enjoy the most and why? What is it about these assignments that you find motivating?

VI. Does your peer group (who you sit with or hang out with) affect how engaged you are during class? Does it affect your motivation to learn? Please explain.
VII. When you think about the school year, from start to finish, do you notice your motivation changes at all? If so, how?

VIII. How do activities outside of school affect your motivation towards your studies? Are there any people, events, or situations that influence your school performance?
IX. I want you to list all of the things that motivate you. Your job is to list as many things as possible.

X. When you think about your role as a student here and about your motivation, is there anything else you’d like to tell me about what you know or understand about what motivates you?