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HOW MIGHT STUDENT GENDER INFLUENCE THE BOOK CHOICES A TEACHER MAKES: A STUDY OF READING MOTIVATION IN MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways that gender might impact reading choices of a mixed gender group of grade 7 students and how such choices might inform language arts instruction. A survey of reading preferences was given to all grade 7 students enrolled. This survey consisted of Likert scale and open response questions that helped to determine which novels students would like to read, which novels they have already read, and their general feelings towards reading. The data was examined for trends within book choice and between genders. It was concluded, based on the responses on the surveys, that students are motivated by story elements and genre and a student’s gender and a character’s gender has less impact on a student’s reading choice.
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DEDICATION

Without the support and love from my family and friends, this project would not have been possible. A very special thank you to my other family, the teachers, students and parents of the West Point Grey Academy community because their support drives me forward and challenges me to grow within the career that I love.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

My Motivation

As a grade 7 Language Arts teacher at a private school in Western Canada and as a graduate student at the University of British Columbia, I am interested in gender inequalities in reading. As a practicing teacher, I have witnessed that boys often score lower than girls on reading assessment tasks. I have often wondered if this is result of lower reading ability or lower motivation to read thoroughly what is assigned. I have tried to create reading assessments that contain reading material that interest the boys in my classes and, generally, they do achieve higher results than normal on those assessments. Surprisingly, the girls also achieve better on these boy-directed assessments; thus, generally, a class average on a reading assessment will increase if I have tried to use only passages that seem to be engaging for boys. But I struggle with the idea that I have to choose one gender over the other in order to create success in my class. What material will appeal to both genders? This choosing of material that appeals to both boys and girls becomes even harder when I move into our language arts novel unit.

Over the years, I have found that using literature circles to study novels is the most effective way to encourage thoughtful discussion about what is read and for students to realize the pleasure of reading. Through my experience in choosing literature circle novels for co-educational grade 7 classrooms, it seems to me that avid readers of both genders read similar books. Thus, choosing novels for my high level readers is relatively easy. However, as reading levels decrease, differences between the reading preferences of girls and boys increase. Students who read at lower levels seem to prefer reading books with a protagonist who is the same gender as themselves. This creates a
challenge in identifying appropriately leveled books that are of interest to struggling grade 7 readers.

As a subject specific teacher of language arts, I love to read and my background does not help me with determining what a child who is less interested in reading might like to read. This raises the question for me: How do I go about choosing novels that match my class's reading demographic in a way that allows my students choice? An additional question is: When choosing books for my grade 7 classes, what impact does/should gender have on these choices?

**Significance and Questions for the Study**

The research on reading and motivation raises three important points:

- Interest is a larger controlling factor than gender (Asher & Markell, 1974; Kelley & Decker, 2009; Nippold, Duthie & Larsen, 2005; Davila and Patrick, 2010)
- Boys read more than non-fiction (Clark & Foster, 2005; Davila and Patrick, 2010;)
- The more students read the better readers they become (Logan & Johnston, 2009; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008).

Teachers are frequently told that the way to engage or interest a boy is to use non-fiction for the classroom reading program. However, there is a body of research that refutes this, for example Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish & Shapiro's (2007) study, which identified that boys enjoy and choose narrative texts just as much and often as girls. For both boys and girls, the controlling factor appears to be interest not gender. Although teachers, intrinsically, know this, the problem remains as to how to identify what particular topics,
characters, genres, etc. appeal to intermediate grade students and whether there are books that are more appealing to boys. Specifically, what is missing from the research (and which is of particular interest to practicing language arts teachers) is what books are of particular interest to 11- and 12-year-olds. To address this question this study will explore:

- What specific titles (from a limited selection of fiction trade books) does a group of 11- and 12-years-olds enrolled in three grade 7 English classes identify as preferred reading for their grade 7 literature circles?
- How should teachers select reading texts for intermediate elementary literature circles?

**Theoretical Framework**

Two aspects of Vygotsky’s perspective on children’s learning form part of the framework for the study. First, Vygotsky proposes that the relationships children have with each other is important to their learning. That is, children’s learning is scaffolded through interactions with a more capable other in what is referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) writes that the ZPD “is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Second, Vygotsky proposes that what children learn must first take place at the social level before it becomes internalized:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people
(interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

Literature circles reflect these two aspects of Vygotsky’s theory on learning in that they are spaces within which children can explore their thoughts, feelings and ideas about literature in a social group before such feelings, thoughts and ideas are internalized at the individual level. Literature circles can also work to cement a child’s relationship with reading. If a child is engaged in a literature circle with a group of students who enjoy reading, the child may be scaffolded/motivated to read and internalize this desire.

Another key figure in reading research, Rosenblatt (1978) describes reading as a transaction between the reader and the text. In order for this transaction to occur, the reader must be engaged and able to bring with him or her, his or her own experiences and life knowledge. This is the “raw material” of reading and is what a reader bases his interpretation on. Without background knowledge of a particular topic, it is unlikely that the reader will comprehend the text since the reader has nothing to support or build his or her understanding on. Rosenblatt goes on to say that the reader must be active and dynamic, not submissive or lethargic. The reader must actively create and interact with the text. Without this engagement the reader does not learn.

As a teacher, I use the perspectives of Vygotsky and Rosenblatt as frameworks to view teaching and learning. My students come from their own individual backgrounds and bring different feelings and opinions of and for reading. My job is to create a community of readers who bring their particular reading strengths and interests and who
are willing and keen to share these strengths and interests with others in the classroom reading community. Part of creating a community of readers is identifying texts that will engage the readers and lead to further reading.

It is hoped that the results and analysis of this study, will provide practicing teachers with direction in choosing novels for their classroom reading programs that engage and motivate children to read.

The following section explores the literature as it pertains to literature circles, reading preference, reading motivation, the perceived gender gap and the connection between interest and success on standardized tests.
SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

My purpose in this literature review is to acquaint the reader with the research relevant to this study. To that end, this review will focus primarily on peer-reviewed studies that target preadolescent and adolescent youth. Part one of the review will explore the research on literature circles and gender interactions. Part two will discuss reading motivation, interest and preference. Part three will explore the literature on boys and reading with a particular focus on research targeting the gender gap in reading. Finally, part four will look at the research on reading motivation on standardized test scores.

Part 1: Literature Circles and Gender Interactions

There are two contributing factors when it comes to the effectiveness of literature circle discussions: group dynamics and book choice.

In any classroom, with any make-up of students, literature circles are not effective unless it is understood that each reader is active and that the understanding of a text is not a linear process, but instead a messy self-ordering of information known and gained (Rosenblatt, 1978). This self-ordering is supported in literature circles through a continuous discussion with other students who have read the same text. From this process of close reading, the student creates meaning, or a ‘poem’, as Rosenblatt (1978) calls it.

Like Rosenblatt’s reading response theory, post-structuralism holds that the culture within which children live influences and creates their understanding of a text. Post-structuralism assumes that the meaning of a text can never be cemented because the meaning behind language is always changing through dialogue and the interplay of social
constructs (Cherland, 1994). Different subjectivities or ways of understanding the world (Cherland, 1994) also help to create the meaning that is produced during a literature discussion.

Within the context of both reader response and post-structuralism, the concept of performance theory may also offer insights into social interactions within a literature circle setting. Using performance theory as a lens, Cynthia Lewis explored the “Social Drama of Literature Discussions in a Fifth/Sixth-Grade Classroom.” Using this particular framework enabled the researcher to evaluate the social interactions of participants in discussion groups and to note the ways in which the speakers took positions in relation to the expectations of others (Lewis, 1997).

Lewis’s (1997) study took place within a split grade 5/6 classroom in a small elementary school. The teacher of this class, Julia, maintained a pedagogy that used multiple opportunities for students to lead discussions and create meaning about a text through talk with their peers and their teacher. Within this class, Lewis directed her attention towards five focal students, three in grade 5 and two in grade 6. The grade 5 students, James, Jason and Nikki ranged in ability from low to high, with the latter and the only female grade 5 student with the highest ability becoming the focal student. The grade 6 students, David and Mackenzie were both strong students and represented each gender. In this split class, Julia created literature circle groups that were not based on grade level, but instead on which novel the student wanted to study. Initially, Lewis was going to only be an observer but throughout the course of the year, she became a key participant in the classroom and contributed to discussions, read the read-alouds and helped manage the class while the teacher was away.
Throughout her longitudinal study, Lewis (1997) focused on three key questions:

1. How do students and teachers create meaning from literature within social and interpretive expectations?

2. How do a student’s personal definition of reading and discussing create the understanding of a group?

3. How do other social influences outside the classroom affect the literature circle discussions?

Through audio taped discussions, classroom observations and informal and formal interviews, Lewis collected data and evaluated the roles of the teacher, the students and even herself, within the culture of the classroom. She determined “…that when the teacher gives up power, powerful students will take up the slack” (Lewis, 1997). Within each literature circle there was a student that was aligned with Julia’s method of textual evaluation and ordered the circle discussions similarly to how a class discussion would be run. These students acted as the teacher in each circle. In Lewis’ study, the leadership figures were predominantly girls and their strength was emphasized and confirmed by the teacher choosing them to be the recorders as they were asked to hold the recording clipboard. This clipboard, like Golding’s conch, named the holder the leader. There was no set way of choosing; Julia chose based on her understanding of the students’ leadership skills. By doing so, the teacher re-enforced the success of some students and re-enforced the lack of ability of others.

There is no doubt that gender played a role in this study evidenced by the actions of both the teacher and the researcher. Julia openly admits to understanding and knowing girls better. In her own words, “…I just think I have more in common with the girls”
(Lewis, 1997). Lewis’ female focal students were academically stronger than two of the boys. As well, few lower ability girls were mentioned in this study and even fewer high ability boys were mentioned, especially from the fifth grade. This creates a gender inequity and limits the validity of Lewis’ conclusion regarding power transfer within a classroom.

When reviewing the research compiled regarding the use of literature circles, Karen Evans determined that one key voice was missing from most of the papers and that voice was the voice of the students. To fill this void, she created a study and published a paper called, “Fifth-grade students’ perceptions of how they experience literature discussion groups” (2002). This study was another yearlong study that occurred within a grade 5 classroom in a school situated within a working class neighbourhood, where one of her former graduate students was a teacher. The class was composed of 11 girls and 11 boys. Throughout the year, Evans participated in many aspects of the class and even taught when the teacher, Marcy, was absent. As Marcy and Evans had worked together previously, they had a similar pedagogy and a rapport with each other that allowed for an equal contribution of ideas. Throughout the year, the students were involved in on-going literature circle groups, some heterogeneous and some homogeneous, based on the novels they choose. As the students proceeded through the year, Evans videotaped their discussions and then had the students watch their discussions and reflect on what they saw. The students were also asked for a written reflection at the end of the year that indicated what they valued in a discussion group member.

Evans (2002) consolidated three main themes from her interactions with the students:
1. Students understood what it takes to make a discussion group work;

2. Students felt that gender can influence the productivity of a discussion group; and,

3. Students felt that a controlling member of the group can impede the natural discussion process.

This study also noted a correlation between gender and frictional relationships. That is, within heterogeneous groups that struggled, gender was blamed for the issues that arose. For example, if a child demonstrated controlling behaviour during a discussion, her/his behaviour was identified as a characteristic of that gender. Evans found that students, who were perceived as controlling in a heterogeneous group, became effective leaders in a homogeneous group. She reflected that in a homogenous setting, behaviour was aligned with the social expectations of their peers, allowing students, once labeled as controlling, to be thought of as leaders by their fellow group members.

These two studies underscore how influential relationships between students can be on the outcomes of a discussion and, thus, the importance of the teacher carefully identifying the members of a particular literature circle and structuring the expectations about interactions between the members of the literature circle. Another important aspect of literature circles, which impacts behaviour and participation in discussions, is book choice.

**Part 2: Reading Motivation, Interest and Preference**

Literature circles in my classroom are based on students’ book choices. Students are given the opportunity to choose from a certain number of novels, say five, and indicate which they would most like to read. In Kommer’s article entitled,
“Considerations for Gender-Friendly Classrooms” (2006), he discusses how students read more when they have choice over which books they can read. This ability to choose allows them to be more interested in what they are reading and motivates further reading. This idea of interest and preference as key in reading motivation is well supported in the literature. Davila and Patrick (2010) discuss the differences in preference and interest: Preference for a reading text occurs when there are a limited number of books for a child to choose from and the child must choose one out of a select few. In this situation, a child is not showing necessarily what he or she is interested in, just what they prefer to read out of that specific pile of books. Interest, on the other hand, occurs when a child may choose a book from an unlimited number of books and he or she is welcome to choose a type or kind of reading material that reflects his or her own personal interests. Taylor (2004) adds another layer to the discussion of interest and preference and how it connects to motivation. He specifies that interest is the interaction between a person, his or her environment and the context of the reading topic (Taylor, 2004). Any reading material that motivates a reader to think more deeply about a subject or topic is one that has hooked the reader (Rosenblatt, 1978; Taylor, 2004).

Kelley and Decker (2009) note that this interest might only take children so far in their understanding and desire to read. In their research, “The Current State of Motivation to Read among Middle School Students,” they specified that as students become older, the students’ perceived value of reading decreased and with it, the students’ academic scores. This conclusion is also reflected in the work of Nippold, Duthie and Larsen (2005) who found that reading for pleasure or interest declined for most students through the ages 11 to 15. A more recent study had similar results, but also demonstrated that as
students became older, their intrinsic motivation to read increased (Mucherah and Yoder, 2008). In the younger grades, grade 6, for example, students were motivated more by extrinsic factors, like pleasing the teacher and reading goal prizes. By the time a child reaches adolescence, pleasing the teacher is less important and instead, grade 8 students chose to read for themselves (Mucherah and Yoder, 2008). This study also suggests that the amount of reading students partake in is a strong predictor of academic success and those who enjoy the topic of the reading material are more likely to answer questions about it correctly (Mucherah and Yoder, 2008).

When it comes to what genres children choose to read, both genders chose similar topics. The favorite in a recent study was adventure (Clark and Foster, 2005). Within the 4,341 boys polled, 65% preferred adventure stories with 58% preferring comedy. Similarly, the 3,865 girls polled 62% preferred adventure stories and 57% preferred comedy stories (Clark and Foster, 2005). The study also showed that among avid readers, there was no difference in what they were interested in. When Davila and Patrick (2010) studied these numbers, they noted that although this showed the reading interest genres for 2005, as our world changes, so might the topics that interest our youth. In the research, there also has been a trend towards believing that boys are more interested in non-fiction reading. The data collected by Clark and Foster, (2005), gives statistics that show 30% of boys and 26% of girls chose non-fiction as a preference. As fiction was preferred by both genders, the standard claim that boys prefer non-fiction is challenged. Topping, Samuels and Paul (2008) indicate in their study, “Independent Reading: The relationship of challenge, non-fiction and gender to achievement,” that the level of challenge in reading non-fiction may be more difficult. Boys may like to read it, but their
ability to understand and analyze the concepts within it is underdeveloped. If teachers expect to use it as a teaching tool, they must be able to provide students with the ability to read it accurately. The perceived differences in gender will be thoroughly explored in the next section.

Part 3: Boys and Reading: The Gender Gap?

During the final professional development days at my school last year, I heard Barry Macdonald, an authority on boys and learning, speak about the ideas he discussed in his book, Boy Smarts: Mentoring Boys for Success at School. He opened with the line that is repeated in his book: “Boys typically score lower than girls on standardized tests in the language arts.” Hearing that as a Language Arts teacher, I wanted to know if the discrepancy between girls’ and boys’ achievement was founded and how much interest in a text plays into the situation. Are girls really better readers than boys? What does the research say about how gender and interest influences reading comprehension?

To tackle these questions I explore the research in the following two areas: individual and situational interest. Individual interest is characterized as interest in a topic that is present before the task and persists after the task. Situational interest is interest created only by the specific features of the task (Ainley, Hillman, & Hidi, 2002).

If the data in many of the studies is read superficially, the girls outperform the boys in nearly all instances of reading comprehension (Chiu and McBride-Chang, 2006; Ainley, Hillman and Hidi, 2002; Oakhill and Petrides, 2007; White, 2007). Despite this, the strongest predictor of a strong result was not gender, but interest. Asher and Markell’s initial study in 1974 was one of the first studies to look at the difference in boys and girls reading comprehension proficiencies. Nearly thirty-six years ago, girls were determined
to be more adept at reading comprehension. This study used a cloze test to demonstrate reading comprehension. First, the study determined the interests of the children by asking them to respond to a set of pictures. In the subsequent sessions, the students were asked to complete two sets of cloze assessments, one with high interest passages and the second with low interest passages. For the high interest passages, both genders were successful at the same level, but with the low interest passages, the girls ranked higher and even had comparable results to their high interest passages. The boys' lower results seemed to not be an indication of lower ability and, instead, indicate lower motivation (Asher & Markell, 1974).

In 2007, Oakhill and Petrides, completed a study that came about because of noticeable difference in Year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests (6 SATS) given annually in the United Kingdom (UK) to assess children's academic attainment before they enter secondary school in that country. Oakhill and Petrides' study focused on the 1998 and 1999 6 SATS test scores. The 1998 test had a number of themed passages about the evacuation of children during the Second World War, the following year, this theme was replaced with numerous passages about spiders. The 1999 results demonstrated an overall marked improvement over the 1998 scores. Oakhill and Petrides wanted to investigate the role that the reading passages might have played in the scores. Like Asher and Markell's study (1974), the researchers had three meetings with the children. The first session was a survey to gather the level of interest for certain topics, and the second and third sessions were the reading comprehension activities. The package that included the Spinners reading passages (spiders) contained a factual information piece, a story and a poem. The Leaving Home passages (evacuation of children during WWII) consisted of a longer
narrative and some letters to the author. Both packages contained four different types of questions: short one-word answers, several line answers, longer answers that required an opinion and an explanation, and multiple-choice questions. When the results were gathered, the girls did outperform the boys in the overall scoring. Their percentage correct for the *Leaving Home* passages was 61.31% and for the *Spinners* passages it was 65.00%. The boys had 38.25% correct for *Leaving Home* and 60.38% for *Spinners*. In this study, it is the breakdown of the results that offered some insight. When the results are broken into genre, the boys outperformed the girls on the factual text, achieving 84.37% correct compared to the girls 77.23%. While the girls outperformed the boys to the highest degree on the Letters to Author reading selection, where they received 61.9% correct and the boys 25.00%. When this data was compared to the data collected at the start of study about interest, the boys did much better on the assessment when it reflected their interests while for the girls this seemed to be less relevant, for example, the girls had higher achievements on *Spinners*, the passage they purported to be the least interested in (Oakhill and Petrides, 2007).

Monica Rosen’s (2001) study compared and contrasted children’s document reading performance across thirty countries. Rosen’s definition of a document is “a text type which requires students to process information organized in matrix formats, such as maps, tables, charts, graphs, schedules, forms and diagrams” (Rosen, 2001). Rosen used data collected by The International Association collected for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. In thirty countries, nine year olds and fourteen year olds were given a set of document passages to read and answer multiple-choice questions and one written response. Rosen (2001) found that there was variance in gender and document
reading ability between countries, but not within a country. For example, there were few
gender differences in East Germany and Greece while Denmark, Hong Kong and Spain
had the most obvious gender difference. The females had higher achievement levels in
Denmark, while Hong Kong and Spain had higher male achievement. Rosen’s conclusion
was that the achievement levels for reading documents were also connected to a
country’s cultural viewpoint.

Chiu and McBride-Chang’s study (2006) examined how SES (socioeconomic
status) at the country, family and school levels, number of books at home, reading
interest and gender contributed to reading comprehension in 43 countries. This study
once again had a large number of participants: 199,097 fifteen year olds. The
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Program for International
Student Assessment (OECD-PISA) had students and principals complete questionnaires
in order to help them determine how to make their education system more effective. The
students completed a two-hour assessment and a 30-40 minute questionnaire. Through
random sampling, the schools were selected and then the students were selected within
the schools. In their study, gender accounted for 1.9% of the variance in reading
comprehension. Girls still outperformed the boys, but their level of interest was also
higher. There was also little variance within schools as opposed to between schools. The
average readers were spread throughout the countries and schools, but the weak readers
were clustered in certain schools. The school’s SES was more of a predictor for student
success than the students’ families, according to Chiu and McBride-Chang’s data (2006).

To further evaluate the impact of interest on reading comprehension achievement,
Ainley, Hillman, and Hidi (2002) completed a study that looked at how interest level
effected the way 86 grade 10’s read and understood a set of passages. Four texts were chosen, two with female protagonists and two with male protagonists. At certain points throughout the first 900 words of each passage, students were given three multiple choice questions and then the choice to keep reading or to stop. The children initially decided what to read based on the title of the passage and a short description of the content. A computer program was used to record the decisions made. A similar result was found as in the previously discussed studies (Asher & Markell, 1974; Oakhill & Petrides, 2007); when interest was high, both genders reached the same level of achievement, but when interest was low, girls persisted more effectively.

Bray and Barron’s (2004) descriptive study, investigated correlations between correct responses, interest, gender and verbal ability. Ninety-eight passages were broken into categories of genre and also whether the passage was male-focused or female-focused. Participants were 19,735 students in grades 4 to 8. Overall, it was noted that as students grew older, their individual interest in reading decreased. The female-focused passages were of interest to the girls, but both genders performed at a higher level on passages they were interested in (Bray & Barron, 2004). In this study, boys showed no significant difference in their comprehension of female-focused passages as compared to other passages in the set. Poems seemed to create the least amount of interest in either gender.

In Logan and Johnston’s study, “Gender differences in reading ability and attitudes: Examining where these differences lie,” (2009) it was identified that boys’ reading ability correlated with boys’ attitudes towards reading and school, while the attitudes of girls did not. That is, it appeared that if a boy feels negatively about school he
is less likely to perform well, while if a girl does not like school or reading, she is more likely to still achieve academic success.

The findings from the research of Marinak and Gambrell (2010) and Merisuo-Storm (2006) appear to indicate that boys enjoyed reading less than girls; and that girls liked reading more, read more on their own and performed better on standardized assessments. The research also found that boy participants in this study, were more interested in reading comics and humour-based books as these formats and genres were more widely accepted by the boys’ peers (Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

Kathy’s Sandford’s (2006) study investigated the effect of teacher expectations on student learning in classrooms in British Columbia, Canada. For her study, Sanford made regular visits to two classrooms, one with a female teacher and one with a male teacher. She conducted interviews with the students and with the teachers over the course of a year. The responses the teachers gave to Sanford’s interview questions indicate a stereotypical view of the genders in their classrooms. Both teachers frequently described the girls as hard workers, but with fewer natural abilities. The boys, on the other hand, were thought to have a weaker work ethic, but when they did work, they excelled. Sanford also noted the role of family in children’s attitudes and learning. If a child’s family encouraged a multi-activity lifestyle without gender connotations, the child would not see their world governed by gender (Sanford, 2006).

In summary, findings show that the reading interests of boys and girls are not impacted by the gender of the main protagonist (Ainley, Hillman & Hidi, 2002; Bray & Barron, 2004). Girls also show little difference in reading comprehension ability for what would be called a boy-friendly text (Oakhill & Petrides, 2007; White, 2007). White’s
study (2007) showed that all students regardless of gender, did better on the narrative texts and poorest on the graphic texts. This coincides with Rosen’s (2001) document research that indicated that variance in ability to understand a graphic was comparable by country, not by gender. The socioeconomic implications and cultural impact on a child’s reading ability could explain the differences in the data collected between countries and the small amount of variance within. Similarly, within school populations, there could be little variance in reading comprehension ability between genders, but it could be present when comparing separate schools. Chui and McBride-Chang’s (2006) study also found that a co-educational school’s overall achievement was higher than a school that was only open to boys. The infusion of girls into the school culture seemed to create an environment where reading was more valued and discussed in a way that promoted a higher degree of success.

Part 4: The Influence of Reading Motivation on Standardized Tests

Many of the studies described above used the data from standardized tests to form their assertions. This section will focus on the data collected from this type of assessment. In most, if not all of the data collected, girls out preformed the boys when it came to demonstrating reading ability through a standardized test (Asher and Markell, 1974; Oakhill and Petrides, 2007; Thorpe, 2006). As already stated, but its importance deserves repetition, when taking a close look at other results, there was less of a difference between gender and more of a difference between other factors. If a boy and girl showed a high level of interest in a passage, his or her achievement would be the same (Asher and Markell, 1974; Oakhill and Petrides, 2007). It was also found that students who read for aesthetic purposes (Rosenblatt, 1978), generally did better on the assessments (Mucherah,
2010). In both boys and girls, if they read for mostly social reasons, they did not do well on the assessments (Mucherah, 2010). This correlation suggests the importance of reading as an activity outside the classroom. It was also found that students who frequently challenged themselves with harder reading material also did better on the standardized tests (Topping, Samuels and Paul, 2008). This relates back to the reading cycle, that is, the child who reads more becomes a better reader, feels more success and is able to challenge him or herself with harder material, therefore, becoming a better and stronger reader.

Oakhill and Petrides (2007) completed an analysis of two years of results of a standardized test completed in Britain. For the first year they looked at, the reading material in the assessment, which focused in year one on the evacuation of children during the war and in the second year on spiders. Although the girls still out-performed the boys on both assessments, the boys’ results showed a higher level of understanding on the second assessment where the reading focused on spiders. The authors purported that as girls read more outside the classroom, their reading base would be broader and they would have a greater ability to show understanding of a variety of kinds of texts. The boys, on the other hand, would have less experience reading many kinds of texts and would be more comfortable and interested in reading one that appealed to them (Oakhill and Petrides, 2007). It was also thought that girls might also be more likely to show understanding despite being disinterested in a topic (Oakhill and Petrides, 2007).

All the studies showed that if a student had a high degree of interest, his or her chances for success were greater (Ainley, Hillman & Hidi, 2002; Asher & Markell, 1974; Bray & Barron, 2004; Oakhill & Petrides, 2007; White, 2007). Students read longer,
showed more focus and a deeper understanding. On texts that had a high interest level, there was little or no variance between genders. A child’s overall interest in literature did not affect their reading ability, the individual interest in the content was more important (Ainley, Hillman & Hidi, 2002). There was also no way to efficiently determine what was a boy-friendly or a girl-friendly text. In most cases, a girl-friendly text was easier to determine, but both genders found interest in many of the texts that the researchers thought would be boy-friendly. Different genres did provide different interest levels, with the hardest and least interest being poetry (Bray & Barron, 2004; Oakhill & Petrides, 2007).

Despite the loud voice the gender gap has had in our newspapers and our society, the research shows that it is not a defining force in how classes should be taught. The more important consideration for reading comprehension is interest. By giving students choice in what they read and the ability to seek out their own interests, both high achievers and low achievers, alike, will feel success and, therefore, be encouraged to continue the reading process. With low achievers, the more interest they feel, the more inclination they will have to read and improve their reading ability.

However, even if gender is not an issue in reading success, there are still gaps in achievement that need to be addressed. How do we engage our low-level readers and provide them with strategies that increase understanding? As interest plays a role in lower achievers, care has to be taken to develop programs that re-enforce reading strategies for different kinds of genres. As well, the amount children read appears to decrease with age. How do we create cultures where reading is encouraged and natural even into high school? A closer look at the effects of a school’s socioeconomic status on reading

(21)
comprehension should also be completed. Instead of examining and comparing genders, differences in reading ability within genders may lead to greater understanding and an increase in skill.

**Summary**

The research read for this project identifies three important factors in supporting young readers:

1. **Interest is a larger controlling factor than gender;**
2. Boys reading interests include more than non-fiction; and,
3. The more a student reads the better reader s/he will become.

For both boys and girls, the controlling factor for reading success is interest not gender. If a child of either gender is interested in a book, whether it be fiction or non-fiction, he or she will be more likely to read it and then read another book: It is this cycle that the classroom teacher should be trying to attain. Teachers, intrinsically, know this already, but what they do not know is how to get there.
SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Methodology

The participants in this small study are 76 students enrolled in my three English 7 classes. Two classes have 25 students and one class has 26 students. The school is a non-denominational, co-educational private school and the reading level of most children is at or above grade level. Out of the 76 students, 62 students (23 males and 39 females) returned their consent and assent forms in time to participate in the survey. The survey was designed to explore the reading interests of these particular grade 7 students. Seven novels were chosen for the survey. The criteria for novel selection was

- Strong male and female protagonists;
- At a variety of reading levels and
- From different fiction genres (fantasy, historical, and realistic).

The questionnaire mixes forced answer Likert scale questions with open written response questions; the data collected was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The only personal data recorded on the survey was the child’s gender.

After parental consent and student assent forms were collected, the survey was administered to all grade 7 students. The survey was handed out one by one to each child, and as a survey was given, the teacher wrote in pen on the top of the survey FC for full consent (parental and child) or NC for no consent. Only the surveys with FC were used for the research, but all of the surveys were used to develop the current grade 7 programme.

For each class, the survey was administered in the following way:

1. Students lined up in alphabetical order outside the classroom with a pen or pencil.
2. As students entered the classroom or library, the teacher handed them a survey with either FC (full consent/assent) or NC (no consent/assent) written at the top.

3. Once the students were seated, the teacher gave each novel a short positive description in the following way:
   a. Held up novel, read the title and the author
   b. Described other novels the author has written and a few facts about the author
   c. Read the back of the novel or the front cover flap. Described the initial plot of the novel, mentioning both the male and female protagonists with equal emphasis.

4. Once the descriptions were complete, the teacher asked the students to complete the survey.

5. Once a student had completed the survey, he or she placed it in an envelope at the front of the room. To keep class anonymity all the surveys were kept in one envelope to ensure the surveys from all three classes were mixed before handing them back to the researcher.

6. After the three homerooms completed the surveys, they were sorted into two piles, FC and NC. Only the FC forms were used for this research.

7. The survey took approximately 30 minutes.

After the surveys were completed, the responses to the novels were counted and the student responses were explored for emerging themes. Throughout the collection and analysis of data, student anonymity was maintained. The complete survey, the letters sent
home, consent forms, assent forms and the approved Human Ethics Application are included in the appendices.

**Findings**

As the numbers of males and females that participated in the study were not equal, percentages will be used to compare the results between genders. For the written responses, the totals will indicate the combined male and female responses. Due to low numbers of Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses, only three of the Likert scale categories will be discussed. Please see Appendix A for the full set of data.

**Written Response Thematic Category Overview**

As the written responses were evaluated, certain themes became evident. These themes were noted and then clustered to create categories. Once the categories were defined, the written responses that connected to each category were counted. For the purposes of this project eight meta-categories were identified: Interest, Story Elements, Genre, Reluctance, Ambivalence, Peer Connection, Author Connection, and Reading Pace.

- **Interest**

If a child expressed a desire to read the novel based on interest or excitement, it was counted as being a part of this category. A statement that indicated liking the novel also counted as interest. Examples of these theme statements are “it sounds interesting,” “cool” or “sounds really good.”

- **Story Elements**

Any statements that explicitly or implicitly connected with plot, character, setting, imagery or creativity were placed in this category. Sometimes a term would be used such
as plot, and other times a child would discuss the images or the events in a novel. Comments like “This book had a very good plot,” “the topic sounds cool,” or “sounds complicated” were included in this category. If a child made a decision to read or not to read a novel based on character it was coded as a story element. As well, if a child thought he or she was like a character, it was placed in this section. Comments ranged from “I like the girl character. She is a lot like me.” to “I love reading about people the same age as me…”

- **Genre**

Any mention of genre, like mystery, science-fiction, fantasy, non-fiction, fiction, were coded in this category. Comments contained phrases like “fits into many genres,” “I love fantasy and science-fiction,” and “I think this is not my type…” Comments in this category could also include any mention of liking action, adventure or survival. When a child was basing his or her decision to read or not to read a novel on whether this element was included, the comment was placed in this category. Examples include: “I love action” or “because of the adventure.”

- **Reluctance**

These comments indicated that a child did not want to read a novel or he or she had reservations about an aspect of the book. Examples of this theme are comments like “I don’t really want to read…”, “I don’t like…”. or “sounds boring.” The comments could connect to plot, character, theme or any aspect of the novel.

- **Ambivalence**

Comments that fell into this category were ones where the child expressed an uncertainty or an attitude of uncaring. Comments that began “I don’t care…” or
contained words or phrases like “neutral”, “I don’t mind” or “it doesn’t matter” fell into this category. If a child stated that an outcome depended on certain elements like character, the comment was also placed in this category. Comments where a student said it was “okay” were included, though, as these comments had an undercurrent of reluctance.

- **Peer Connection**

  When students indicated that a peer had recommended a novel to them or they had heard a peer speaking about the novel, it was coded as a Peer Connection. Common phrases were statements like “people I know,” “my friends have told me lots about it” or “heard good things.” Even when the child did not specifically say peers/friends but instead said people it was still counted as part of this category.

- **Author Connection**

  Any stated connection to the author or basing interest on what the author had written in the past or what the student had previously read by that same author was included in this theme. Comments like “Terry is a funny writer” or “I like the *Uglies* trilogy so I like this author” are counted in this category.

- **Reading Pace**

  These comments were present for the most part in the final question of the survey. Any indication of reading speed, whether it was slow or fast, is included in this category. Comments like “I’m a fast reader” or “I am a slow reader” fit into this category.
Figure 1. Bar Graph of the Frequency of Categorized Written Responses
The Results of the Questionnaire: Novels

Results for *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

Table 1. Likert Scale Percentages for *The Hunger Games*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I would like to read <em>The Hunger Games</em> by Suzanne Collins.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>60.87%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>20.51%</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the chart indicates, both genders were equally in the agree and strongly agree categories, with the majority of students wanting to read the novel and very few who did not.

Figure 2. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for *The Hunger Games*

Within their written responses, students showed a high degree of interest and a low level of reluctance to read this novel. Peers were a large contributing factor in the decision making process with story elements and genre also having a great influence on whether a student wanted to read the book. The Peer Connection for this novel was the highest amongst all the novels.
Results for *Revolution is Not a Dinner Party* by Ying Chang Compestine

Table 2. Likert Scale Percentages for *Revolution is Not a Dinner Party*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results were very different from *The Hunger Games* and there was a definite difference between the male and female results. More females than males were in agreement with reading the novel, but a large proportion of the females were neutral towards reading it. The neutral percentage increased for the males. Overall, this novel created less interest.

*Figure 3. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for Revolution is Not a Dinner Party*

The figure above shows that a large proportion of responses indicated a reluctance to read this novel. The decisions the students made about this book were based on their affinity to what they knew of the plot and whether they thought they liked the genre. This is shown through the comparable levels of coded genre and story element responses.
Results for *The Gravesavers* by Sheree Fitch

Table 3. Likert Scale Percentages for *The Gravesavers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Gravesavers* seemed to appeal more thoroughly to a female audience, which was indicated by the percentage of students who strongly wanted to read it. The males, though, still had a high percentage of agreeing and an even higher percentage for neutral. This indicates that they would not mind reading it, but given a choice would prefer to choose something else.

**Figure 4. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for *The Gravesavers***

The majority of written responses indicated interest in the novel with the largest contributing factor being genre. In particular, the most prevalent genre response was a positive response that included liking mysteries.
Results for *Nation* by Terry Pratchett

Table 4. Likert Scale Percentages for *Nation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I would like to read <em>Nation</em> by Terry Pratchett.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>41.03%</td>
<td>28.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This novel had similar percentages for both boys and girls. When added together, the agree and strongly agree percentages are in the 60% range for both genders. The neutral percentages indicate that few children made the effort to disagree with this statement.

*Figure 5. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for Nation*

This novel had a broad range of responses. As some students knew of the author and some students had had this book recommended to them, there were responses in those categories. Students made a decision to be interested in this novel for many reasons, with the most frequent being genre. Multiple comments mentioned the idea of survival.

Results for *The Thief* by Megan Whalen Turner

(32)
Table 5. Likert Scale Percentages for *The Thief*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>43.59%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Thief* also had high agreement percentages with both genders having similar percentages when the strongly agree and agree percents were combined. The neutral percentages did seem to be high for this novel and were similar to *Revolution is Not a Dinner Party*, despite a general interest in the novel. Males seemed to be more likely to express a strong interest in this novel while females were more likely to just express an interest.

*Figure 6. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for The Thief*

*The Thief* also initiated many interested responses with Story Elements and Genre making up a large component of the responses. Reluctance was higher for this novel, in comparison to other novels, but there were no responses that indicated ambivalence.

**Results for Leviathon by Scott Westerfeld**
Table 6. Likert Scale Percentages for *Leviathan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>25.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This novel had a very low neutral percentage for the boys and the girls were nearly three times as likely to be neutral. Although not shown in the table, girls were also more likely to express not wanting to read this novel.

Figure 7. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for *Leviathan*

This distribution shows a large amount of interest based on Genre, Story Elements, and Author Connection. A component of the responses indicated reluctance and most often the reasoning was connected to genre. Children often voiced reluctance because they disliked “war.”

Results for *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak

Table 7. Likert Scale Percentages for *The Book Thief*

<p>| Question: I would like to read <em>The Book Thief</em> by Marcus Zusak. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>60.87%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>41.03%</td>
<td>13.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both genders were interested in reading this novel, with males having an extremely high percentage when strongly agree and agree are combined. Females were more likely to be neutral or express a disagreement with wanting to read it.

**Figure 8. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses for The Book Thief**

This chart indicates that the responses were varied. Children chose to be interested or not interested in the novel based largely on the story elements known. The genre, reluctance and ambivalence categories all had a similar number of responses.

**Novels: Overall Outcomes**

When all the percentages are calculated and the viewpoints of both genders taken into consideration, the students would be motivated to read the novels in the following order:

1) *The Hunger Games*

2) *Nation*
3) *The Thief*

4) *The Book Thief* and *The Gravesavers*

5) *Leviathan*

6) *Revolution is not a Dinner Party.*

Depending on the novel, the students based their choices on a variety of reasons. In all the novels the most prevalent reasons to choose a book were connected to its plot, characters, and the genre that the child assumed the book fell into. If a book flap was interesting to them or an aspect of the teacher’s description captured their attention, they were more likely to feel strongly about a novel. Students also used feedback from their peers to decide about a novel. If a peer had read it or recommended it, a student was very likely to want to read it, as well. There were a few responses that were not in the majority but are worth mentioning. In total, there were three responses that were connected to gender. Two responses labeled books as “boyish” and one response indicated a dislike based on romance. Some students also made decisions about wanting to read a book based on fear. In general, more females left questions blank than their male counterparts.

---

**The Results of the Questionnaire: Genre**

**Results for “I like to read.”**

Table 8. Likert Scale Percentages for “I like to read.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I like to read.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(36)
The percentages collected within the survey indicate that the majority of students like to read. The combined agree and strongly agree percentages were very similar for both boys and girls. There were very few students who expressed dislike.

Figure 9. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses Regarding Liking to Read

From the distribution of responses, genre and story elements are clearly deciding factors in liking to read. It was common for students to discuss the escapism aspects of reading within their responses.

Results for “I prefer to read fiction.”

Table 9. Likert Scale Percentages for “I prefer to read fiction.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I prefer to read fiction</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>48.72%</td>
<td>28.21%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once again the combined strongly agree and agree percentages for both genders are very similar. There is a difference in the number of students that felt neutral about whether they liked to read fiction more than non-fiction. Fewer males disliked reading fiction, than females.

![Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses Regarding Prefering Fiction](image)

Students based their interest in fiction on their knowledge of the genre and the story elements that it contained. Some students did indicate they were ambivalent about either fiction or non-fiction, it just depended on the topic and whether or not it interested them. The level of reluctance within both genders was similar.

**Results for “I prefer to read non-fiction.”**

**Table 10. Likert Scale Percentages for “I prefer to read non-fiction.”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I prefer to read non-fiction.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>60.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>12.82%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentages indicate that a higher percentage of males strongly agree that they like non-fiction where a similar percentage of females merely agrees with this statement. The neutral choice is also telling as most of the males fall into the neutral or strongly agree categories where the majority of females fall into the disagree category.

Within this distribution, the overall deciding factor is still genre, with story elements also making a contribution. The topic of the book or material seems to be the most important. In their responses, some students were quite particular about what kind of non-fiction they did like. Some described cookbooks and others even mentioned books with pictures and captions.

Results for “I like books with characters that are the same gender as me.”

Table 11. Likert Scale Percentages for “I like books with characters that are the same gender as me.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I like books with characters that are the same gender as me.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(39)
Females | 20.51% | 28.21% | 43.59%

The females indicated their strong agreement with this statement as the majority of them fell into the neutral to strongly agree categories. The males were more likely to be neutral. Another note, that is not obvious from the chart given above, is that both genders had similar percentages for the disagree category.

**Figure 12. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses Regarding Preferring Characters of the Same Gender**

This distribution shows a high proportion of ambivalent responses. Most students discussed how they liked a character they could relate to which was more likely a character of the same gender, but it could be anyone as long as it was a “good” character. As most of the responses discussed character, the majority of the responses fell into the Story Elements category.

**Results for “I am a good reader.”**

Table 12. Likert Scale Percentages for “I am a good reader.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: I am a good reader.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Males were more likely to strongly agree with this statement than females, but females were more likely to either agree or strongly agree, The males neutral percent was higher than the females, but both sexes disagree percentages were very similar.

**Figure 13. Bar Graph of Categorized Written Responses Regarding Being a Good Reader**

Within the written responses for this question, students frequently connected to pace of reading as a way to determine if they were a good reader or not. Some mentioned that whether they were good or not depended on the content of what they were reading.

- **Genre: Overall Outcomes**

  The written responses indicated that students valued general story elements over the gender of characters and whether or not the reading material was fiction or non-fiction. Few seemed to feel that they were good readers, but most equated good with
speed. Girls were more likely to want to read about girls and stated more often that non-fiction had too many facts in it and was, therefore, boring.

**Study Limitations**

The influence of peers was a factor that I, as a researcher, was unable to control for. I could not predict that when I showed a novel’s cover to a class, those students who had read the novel or had heard about it would react and make comments about the novel to their peers or to me. Their enthusiasm or lack thereof certainly could have swayed some of choices of the students around them. Since the students completed the survey in three groupings, the reactions varied between the groups; thus, students heard different comments about the novels and could have been influenced differently depending on what group they were in. This became a limitation as I had not accounted for the influence on peers in the procedures and the data reflects how much influence the peer group has over interest.

Students also questioned me about their reading skills. They seemed to want to please me with their answers. I encouraged them to write down what they thought about their reading skills, but their comments indicated that they were unsure about what a good reader was. As the comments linked good reading to speed and few if any linked good reading directly to understanding, their responses show a discrepancy between what students think is true and what they think they should think is true. Some written responses indicated that if a student liked a book he or she thought he or she was a good reader. This kind of comment implicitly connected reading ability to understanding, but still had an element of uncertainty on the side of the child.
SECTION 4: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I began this study with two questions. The first question focused on the reading preferences of a group of grade 7 students. A questionnaire survey was administered to 62 participants. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis interrogated the data for themes and categories in the students’ written responses and comments. Eight themes emerged from the data that indicated factors that impacted the students’ reading choices:

- **Interest:** A student expressed a desire to read the novel based on interest or excitement

- **Story Elements:** Statements made by the student that explicitly or implicitly connected with plot, character, setting, imagery or creativity in ways that impacted his/her choice

- **Genre:** Any mention of genre, like mystery, science fiction, fantasy, non-fiction, fiction with regard to book choice.

- **Reluctance:** These comments indicated that a student did not want to read a novel or he or she had reservations about an aspect of the book.

- **Ambivalence:** Comments that fell into this category were ones where the student expressed an uncertainty or an attitude of uncaring toward a book.

- **Peer Connection:** Comments made by a student indicating that a peer had recommended a novel to them or they had heard a peer speaking about the novel,

- **Author Connection:** Any stated connection to the author or interest in the author’s previous work or statements on texts read by the same author
**Reading Pace:** Any comments made on reading speed.

Analyzing the data quantitatively it became clear that two factors predominate when grade 7 students are making choices regarding novels for literature circles:

1. The story elements (plot, character, action, etc.); and,
2. Genre.

However, while genre and story are important, it is essential to note that the social element of reading was also a strong contributor to student preference. In their written responses, students identified that they were influenced by the reading of their peers. That is, if a peer had indicated an interest in or had liked a book, the student would be more likely to want to read it. Since most friendships between 11- and 12-year-olds are gender based (i.e., boys are most likely to be close friends with boys and girls are most likely to be close friends with girls) it can be deduced that boys will have a greater impact on the books read by boys and girls will have a greater impact on books read by girls. Having said that, it is important to note that being viewed as a reader (particularly as the reader of books sanctioned by the peer group) can be seen as membership within the social group.

This social element was also apparent in a student’s desire to connect with a character. Having a relatable character, regardless of gender, was important. Another relationship that appeared to impact students’ responses was their relationship with the teacher. In the written comments, one student indicated that he/she might now read the book because the teacher suggested it. As this group of grade 7’s teacher, it was clear that my personal relationships with the students and my enthusiasm, influences the students’ choices, too.
The second question for this study, *how can teachers choose books for study in literature circles*, is answered, in part, by the responses to the first question (i.e., what factors influence the reading preferences of a group of grade 7 students?). It is argued here that if the teacher knows what factors impact students’ book preferences, then the teacher can use these factors in selecting books for literature circles.

It probably comes as no surprise that those novels with strong adventure-based plots and relatable characters interest 11- and 12-year-olds. Students are always interested in reading a novel about a character that they connect with. As plot and topic are also distinguishing features for students, teachers must survey their students to determine where their students’ interests lie and then provide a range of novels that fall within those interests. This means that the same set of novels may not be able to be used each year; the novels read will have to change depending on the interests of the children. A survey completed at the start of the year about reading interests would help a teacher choose novels for later in the year.

This study has brought to light the strong influence of the peer group on reading preferences of a group of grade 7 students and how peer group recommendations have a big impact on the choices made by their classmates. A suggestion, therefore, is to use peer presentations of novels. The involvement of students in *advertising* books for literature circles may well encourage classmates to engage more with the chosen texts.

Before students begin literature circles, teachers might consider administering a survey similar to the one used in this study. This might be helpful in determining which books might be of most interest to the students.
Final thoughts

I began this study wondering how best to choose books for grade 7 literature circles. I found that for students to be engaged and excited, they must have a part in choosing. Accessing the students’ interests is essential and requires teachers to provide students with numerous books to choose from. Accessing information on student interests can be accomplished through surveys and questionnaires: these do no have to be as long or as complex as the one designed for this study.

In an ideal teaching environment, books may be changed every year, but budgets do exist and teachers rarely have the freedom to purchase the novels they feel are appropriate. The one aspect that should NOT be considered when a teacher chooses literature circle novels is gender. This study has shown that a students’ gender or the gender of characters does not necessarily predict interest in a novel and teachers should not choose novels based on this one element.
REFERENCES


*Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48(4):290-298.


APPENDIX A: RAW DATA

The Tally of Likert Scale Responses

Males: 23  Females: 39  Total Students: 62

Table 13. The Raw Totals for the Likert Questions in Part 1: Novels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) like to read The Hunger Games</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) not like to read The Hunger Games</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) like to read Revolution...</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) not like to read Revolution...</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>5) like to read The Gravesavers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) not like to read The Gravesavers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) like to read Nation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) not like to read Nation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9) like to read The Thief</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) not like to read The Thief</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) like to read Leviathan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(51)
Table 14. The Raw Totals for the Likert Questions in Part 2: Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) I like to read</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I prefer to read fiction.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I prefer to read non-fiction.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I like books with characters the same gender as me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I am a good reader.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written Responses From the Survey

Part 1: Novels

1) I would like to read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins.
2) I would not like to read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

**MALE:**
- It's very interesting
- I read it.
- Just from the overview, it sound like a book I would enjoy.
- From the inside cover, it sound pretty interesting. However, I don’t care if I don’t read it.
- I would like to read it because of the adventure part in it.
• It sounds cool and fun will buy the series
• Description is spooky
• I would really like to read this novel because I love action books and this is a book that lots of people loved.
• This book had a very good plot and felt like it be could real. This is probably because of the description. It was a page turner, and made me really interested and connected to the book.
• I would like to read this novel because I have intended to for a while because of many friends recommending it to me.
• I thought this was an amazing novel. It kept me gripped to the very end with amazing details and suspense.
• I have not read it yet, but my friends say its really good.
• People killing each other sounds epic and people who read it like it.
• Best book!
• I have already read this book and I thought it was genius, amazing.
• Its fast paced action and I like thise survivel books
FEMALE:
• I don’t really want to read the Hunger Games because I’ve already read it.
• Because it sounds really good and fascinating and my friends have read it and they think its really good.
• I would really like to read this because I like mystery, action, and some drama. My friends always talk about it but I haven’t had the chance to read it. Now I could.
• It sounds interesting!! I would read it.
• The main characters are almost our age so we can tie in with us. It would be more enjoyable.
• Sounds good but not exactly, my first pick. It seems gruesome and disturbing to think this could be our future
• I haven’t read it.
• I would like to read this book because I like action and adventure. Also, my friends have read it and they said it was really good.
• I have read the book. I liked the book because the book clearly illustrates how a revolution can easily start and how people are greedy for power.
• I think this is my type of book. I think it fits into many genres which is what makes it interesting. (No, I have not read it)
• I would like to read this book because it sounds exiting and the people I know that have read it love it.
• I still haven’t read this novel but everyone prefers the Hunger Games and I would like to read it!
• Could be to scary for me?
• I have readed this book it is very VERY good and I would happily read it again
• It sounds interesting and my friends have told me lots about it
• I would like to read it because I’ve been meaning to read it.
• I would like to read it, because I have only heard good things about it, plus the topic sounds cool.
• I have read this novel, and I really liked it. I would not mind reading it again. I have forgotten a lot of what happened.
• People say it’s a really good book
• I am in the middle of reading and I like it.
• I agree because a lot of people said they loved the book so I would like to have a chance to read this book.
• I would like to read the hunger games because it sounds interesting
• I would like to read the Hunger Game because I always wanted to read it but never got the time and because their were so many good comments about it.
• I would like to read this book because I know many people who have read it, and said it was a good read.
• I have read a bit of it But I love the book and I would love to continue reading it with my classmates
• I would truly love to read The Hunger Games since I have heard a great amount of positive comments about it. As well I enjoy reading adventurous books.
• This book sounds very interesting. I like books that aren’t boring
• I have already read it. It was my favorite series. BEST book
• I have this novel at home. I read a little but it did not interest me. I didn’t like it but in class Ms Fast mack it sound ok.
• I have already read it. I loved it and couldn’t put it down. One of my favourite books ever.
• It sounds awesome! I love fantasy and science fiction. I loved it.
• This books sounds interesting and exciting. I would love to read this book!

3) I would like to read Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party by Ying Chang Compestine.
4) I would not like to read Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party by Ying Chang Compestine.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

MALE:
• I wouldn’t mind reading this story or not.
• From the review, it sounds quite boring.
• I like the problem of the story.
• I would not think of reading this book because I don’t think it would be very exciting and my type of book.
• It sounds interesting, and the topic the Chinese Revolution is also interesting. It seems like a good plot. Sounds like an interesting read.
• I would like to because the plot seems interesting and not too cheesy.
• I’ve never heard of it.
• Doesn’t sound really ‘epic’ and ‘exciting’.
• I don’t like historical fiction.
• I don’t really like books on cultural things I like no-real books but have people in them and could be true

FEMALE:
• I would like to read this book because it would be cool to learn about the cultural revolution.
• I think this is not my type because I have read books like this and haven’t been able to finish them.
• It sounds like an adventure. I would probably read it.
• Sounds kind a boring. No action or much excitement.
• I would like to read this book because I am interested in China’s communism society.
• If this book is about politics, I won’t like it. I just don’t get politics
• I would not like to read this book because it reminds me of a book I have already read and I didn’t like it.
• Revolution is Not a Dinner Party is an amazing book. It is one of the best!
• I own this book but never had time to read it.
• This book sounds good.
• I have read this book already and it is very good.
• It sounds complicated I don’t know if I could into reading it.
• I have already read this book. It was good, but I don’t think I want to read it again.
• This book sounds interesting.
• This books has a strong story about what happened in the old time in China. So this book is very meaningful. I know because I have read the book.
• The story sounds ok
• I would like to read this book because it sound adventurous and full of action. Two of my favourite genres.
• I have read this book and loved it!
• It sounds like a good book, but It sounds confusing too.
• I have read it.
• It sounds interesting, but I’m not such a big fan of realistic stories.
• This books is okay, Though I have never heard of the Chinese problem.
5) I would like to read *The Gravesavers* by Sheree Fitch.
6) I would not like to read *The Gravesavers* by Sheree Fitch.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

**MALE:**
- Sounds alright
- This sounds like an interesting book, but I am not wild about the idea.
- It sounds like a good book because if there is a lit circle choice for this book I will read it.
- The plot seems "typical" but the discussion of the Titanic makes the book more interesting. It sounds, however, of a regular mystery. Neutral.
- This sounds like an okay book however it wouldn't be my first choice.
- Don't like romance. But it sounds cool.
- Sounds O.K.
- I am interested in mysteries and action with old things.

**FEMALE:**
- Seems very scary
- I would like to read this book because I love mysteries!!
- It sounds really good!!
- I want to know the secret.
- Very exciting
- Very exciting and interesting with an intriguing plot with a twist of love. I like it.
- I would like to read this book because I like mysteries.
- I don't like historical-past books.
- I think the characters appeal to me, but not the story.
- I haven't read this book before and I haven't heard of it. It sounds good, though.
- This book sounds really good. I like mysterie se
- I would like to read this book because it's different and unique
- I love mysteries, and this one sounds very interesting.
- I have never read this book but would love to try and read it.
- I don't know if I want to read this novel, but I wouldn't mind reading it.
- This book sounds not good, but not terrible so it's neutral.
- This sounds like a great book.
- I like mystery books and this book sound intruging.
- That sounds awesome and I LOVE mystery. It's my favourite type.
- I love mysteries! This book looks very interesting.

7) I would like to read *Nation* by Terry Pratchett.
8) I would not like to read *Nation* by Terry Pratchett.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

**MALE:**
- Very good. I want to read it.
- A survival story always interests me.
- This sounds quite creepy.
- Sounds good
- The description doesn't give enough insight.
- I've heard it's a pretty good book.
- Sounds epic and cool
- It sounds really interesting.
- I like the fact that its Adventure and in the jungle

**FEMALE:**
- Sounds interesting
- It seems a bit boyish.
• Would maybe read it. Seems fun
• Has a creative twist to this novel
• A very interesting plot with my favourite scenery, a rainforest. Very realistic. May even be quite a real synereeo
• I want to read this book because it sounds interesting and I like fantasy.
• I am interested in survival books. And different cultures being in the story.
• It sounds and looks pretty good.
• It sounds OK
• It sounds like a good topic and it sounds funny
• Sounds exciting
• I have never read this book either so I would like to try and read this book.
• This book sounds very interesting.
• It sounds interesting but no something I would be really into.
• I like adventure but this book sounds uninteresting.
• I have read some of the books that Terry Pratchett has written, and they were fantastic
• I also like adventures.
• I’m not sure. It might be interesting… I guess.
• Very exciting book! I have aculy read Johnny and the bomb. Terry is a funny writer.

9) I would like to read The Thief by Megan Whalen Turner.

10) I would not like to read The Thief by Megan Whalen Turner.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

MALE:
• Cool
• It sounds interesting and quite mysterious.
• Seems like an “epic” survival novel. Sounds like an folk-tale-like story. Interesting.
• I had begun to read this book but I stopped because I began to find the book boring.
• I’ve read a book like this before and it was very interesting. This book seems like a good choice.
• Sounds epic and a bit like me
• I don’t really want to read it.
• I like twifing books that have Action.

FEMALE:
• I wouldn’t mind reading it.
• I don’t really like medieval era stories.
• Interesting
• It’s got such a typical plot. I can name many books with almost alike of a plot.
• I read the book but the book wasn’t interesting I was in (Grade 6)
• An interesting story…
• It sounds amazing!
• It sounds good
• It sounds EPIC!
• Also I have never read this book so I would really like to possibly try and read this book.
• It sounds mysterious and adventurous.
• Seems interesting and a genre I would enjoy.
• Really interested
• I loved that one too.
• Not my type. But mysterious.

11) I would like to read Leviathan by Scott Westerfeld.

12) I would not like to read Leviathan by Scott Westerfeld.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?
MALE:
- I REALLY WANT IT.
- The overview was exciting and epic. I would definitely want to read this book.
- This book sounds amazing. I would love to read it!
- It sounds like a book that I would not like because there is not enough action.
- Fantasy novels like these don’t interest me. May make an interesting war story.
- This is one of the most amazing stories books I’ve ever read. AMAZING!
- Seems interesting
- Sounds epic. People killing each other
- Sounds cool.
- I like war books.

FEMALE:
- Umm...kind of guyish... But cool!
- OK
- It sounds very interesting!
- Too historical. Kinda boring
- I’m not thrilled about wars
- I think it’s too dramatic and it’s about fighting which I don’t like.
- I wouldn’t like to read this book because I don’t like books to do with war.
- I am reading Uglies and so far it is an awesome book. It is very interesting.
- It sounds very interesting.
- I like the Uglies trlogy so I like this author
- It sounds really intresting!
- I have already read it. It was very good.
- It sounds okay. I read Uglies and I liked it.
- A bit boring.
- Sounds vieleont. I like the girl charater. She is a lot like me.

13) I would like to read The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak
14) I would not like to read The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak.
Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

MALE:
- This book sounds interesting, but a bit frightening.
- I would because I like action, mysteries and war survival.
- Sometimes seems an unusual plot; but the inclusion of WWII makes it interesting. Would want to read it. If written well, I think it would be intriguing.
- I would like to. The plot is unique and the time is was set in is a very interesting time period.
- This sounds like a very interesting book.
- Sounds like a good read
- He’s Australian... Duh! There’s Death, too (happy face)!
- I don’t like Nazis
- I Just DO

FEMALE:
- I have heard a lot about this book
- I’ve heard of this book! It sounds so good!
- It sounds very interesting! and I love War books!
- Meh. But I like the idea
- Seems like a typical story line. Someone catches her and she learns a lesson and never does it again
- The only think that appeals to me is that it’s narrated by “Death”
- I have read The Book Thief before. It is great.
- The narration sounds cool.
- It looks very good. I wouldn’t mind reading it.
• This book also sounds very interesting.
• It sounds like a pretty good book.
• I don’t really like a story about war.
• Sounds interesting.
• I have already read this book, it was ok.
• Maybe…
• I like the girls, though, I do not approve to much of her stealing books

Part 2: Genre

1) I like to read.

Explain.

MALE:
• I read every night for at least 1 hour.
• I don’t read a lot but I wouldn’t mind reading.
• I like reading, but I prefer non-fiction.
• It gives me something to do and I learn by reading. To me it is better than Xbox.
• Reading offers things and stories, I would never have found or thought of otherwise. If it’s a non-interesting book; neutral. If a good novel; agree.
• I like reading and it is a great thing to do, though I often don’t reserve much time.
• Reading is an amazing ability I read almost everyday.
• Reading can tell you a lot.
• Reading is one of my hobbies.
• Books are my friends!

FEMALE:
• Reading is a very comforting and relaxing. It takes my mind to a whole different place
• I love to read because books can take you into a different world.
• I like getting an image in my head when I read.
• I like the excitement of a different world or a different life to open up to another realm.
• Good stories are very exciting.
• I love to read because you can both learn new things and experience adventure in you head.
• I like reading so I have most of the fiction books
• I think there are more books in my house than lightbulbs. And that’s not an exaggeration. I’ve grown up with books and they have been my everything.
• I enjoy reading when I find a book I like but I find it hard to pick ones I will like.
• Reading is awesome.
• It’s like a movie in your head that you make up.
• It depends on what book I’m reading: if exciting I really enjoy it, if it is boring, I don’t.
• I really like to read, it’s one of my hobbies.
• It depends what I’m reading, if I find a book that I can’t put down I love reading, if not, I hate it.
• I love to enter a new world, and forget about the one I live in.
• I like to read because it is interesting and fun.
• It helps me improve my writing. Also I learn new words.
• Reading is fun.
• I like to read certain Genre of books. I dislike reading all types of books.
• It really all depends on what type of book it is.
• I love to read. It transports me to another world.
• It takes you to a whole other world.
• How else am I going to pass the time? Reading is the BEST
• Reading is very enjoyable. I love reading.

2) I prefer to read fiction.

Explain.
MALE:
- Usually most of my books are fiction.
- I don’t mind if the book is fiction or not.
- Fiction is okay, but I still prefer non-fiction.
- They all have problems in the plot which I like
- Because it is more exciting
- It depends on the topic of the story. And the plot.
- I don’t mind even care about the genre I read, as long as it’s good.
- Fiction stories are usually more adventurous and they are always interesting.
- They’re cool.
- Fantasy books
- I lets my imagination go wild.
- Mix with non

FEMALE:
- I prefer longer books. I prefer to read fiction.
- I love imaginary things.
- (happy face symbol)
- I like to read fiction and non-fiction together so it is a story but it has facts woven inside
- I don’t like, especially our history. Like how we treated the first nations
- Its more creative
- I don’t like to read fiction because I don’t find it very fun to read.
- I prefer unrealistic, magical stories
- Like I said, my world has been built around books. Stories appeal to me more, and I guess that’s why I like writing them, too.
- Fiction is more interesting.
- They are good reads, but sometimes
- I do like fiction because it is creative.
- I like read fiction, things that are made up, things that I haven’t seen/read before. Something new.
- Fiction can be anythings authors don’t have to worry about the truth. Also fiction stretches your imaginations
- Its so exciting and cool
- I do not enjoy reading fiction.
- I like fiction. Even though it is not real.
- Having something real in my head makes me feel scared. Like if something was related to death or sad stories and they are real.
- Because anything can happen
- It is more fun for me to read
- I really do enjoy reading fiction books. I love being able to explor adventurous storys
- Much more interesting
- It’s my favourite.
- Fiction is very good.

Examples:
MALE:
- Winston Breen (good), Young sumurai (…)
- Percy Jackson and the Olympians
- Alex Rider, Alceist, Airborn, Skybreaker, Starclimber
- Harry Potter, Book Thief (war, action, survival)
- Leviathon and Hunger Games
- Secrets of the Immortal Nicolas Flamel
- Mythology
- Sphere, Shade’s Children, Uglies, Scarecrow
- ??

FEMALE:
3) I prefer to read non-fiction.

**Explain.**

**MALE:**
- I don't really read them.
- I don't mind if the book is non-fiction
- Nonfiction is incredibly interesting whether it's science, history or Guinness world records, I love it.
- Because it seems nerdy and boring
- It depends on the topic of the book
- Non-fiction stories can be interesting however they are sometimes boring
- They tell u a lot
- I isn't fun to read.

**FEMALE:**
- Sometimes it can get boring
- I'm not a fact person.
- I like learning knew things.
- Way too many facts and I can't take it in.
- I like reading histories
- I love non-fiction because it's fun to read
- I like the one with pictures and descriptions but not stories
- Too many facts. Even though it's reality. It can be overwhelming
- I don't enjoy reading non-fiction books as much
- Some are good, but too well
- I like books that are based on true events
- I prefer fiction
- Non-fiction can be very interesting too. Like ancient history, war, etc.
- I don't enjoy them and I find them kind of boring.
- I find non-fiction usually boring. Except for baking books since I love to bake.
- I enjoy reading non-fiction books because it is interesting and entertaining.
- I like non-fiction. Even though it is real.
- I think reading is fun and not to jam facts in my head. I already get enough at school.
- It's very fact based, and there's no creativity in it.
- It doesn't get me hooked.
- I do not enjoy reading non-fiction.
- Non-fiction bores me
- It's boring
- I sometimes like to read about amazing real people.

**Examples:**

**MALE:**
- The Romans, Guinness World Records
• Non-fiction books about making things
• ?
• Sports lists (Top 10), DK, etc.
• Warriors, hunger games, cherabe

FEMALE:
• Any depending on the subject.
• Diary of Anne Frank
• The Kepper
• The 39 Clues, The Sight, Inkheart

4) I like books with characters that are the same gender as me.

Explain.

MALE:
• Books with just 1 gender is boring!
• I like books with characters the same gender as me because it is easy to relate to.
• I find it easier to connect with characters that are the same gender.
• I do because then I can connect more
• It depends on the book, in my opinion.
• It doesn’t matter as long as the character is interesting and realistic.
• A book having the same gender doesn’t matter to me
• I found out that books don’t focus on one gender
• I don’t really care.
• I can relate

FEMALE:
• Because I have more things to connect to.
• I love reading about people the same age as me because its interesting.
• It depends
• I don’t care
• It doesn’t matter as long as the book is good
• I don’t mind either because as long as there is a good plot, I like it.
• I feel that I can understand the character better.
• I can relate to them more. It’s that simple.
• It doesn’t really matter to me but I find it easier to connect with the character if it’s the same gender.
• I don’t mind too much, but I just feel more comfortable with the same gender.
• I think you can understand them more
• I like character’s that are the same gender because you can relate to them and their point of view.
• I don’t mind what gender they are.
• It is easier to relate when it is the same gender as you but it doesn’t really matter
• It doesn’t really matter what gender is is. As long as the person is interesting.
• I don’t care as long as it is a good book.
• I can relate with what they are like with myself
• If they are the same gender as me, I can probably relate to them.
• I can relate to the character. If her mom yells at her I can relate
• I like both because they’re told in a different perspective
• I don’t care about the gender
• The gender does not matter to me
• I like feeling connected to the character, experiencing what they are experiencing. I do like some books with boys, however, sometimes
• It doesn’t really matter to me. I like both
• In the Nemon Kind and Magyk the narrator is a boy.

Examples:

MALE:
• Winston Breen
• Red Pyramid
• Alex Rider
• Factory girl
• Percy Jack and Annebeth Chase in Lightening Thief
• Cherabe

FEMALE:
• The hunger Games
• Alex Rider, Revolution is not a Dinner Party
• Twelve by Lauren Myracle
• Percy Jackson, The Scepters of the Ancients, City of Bones
• Harry Potter

5) I am a good reader.

EXPLAIN.

MALE:
• I’m not that sure.
• I am a good reader when it comes to non-fiction but not so much fiction.
• Because I can soak the book in more that most people even though I am slow
• I would say I’m an okay reader
• I’m just that pro
• I like fat books!!!
• I read a lot

FEMALE:
• I like to read a lot so I think I’m a good reader.
• What is a good reader? If it is enjoying and taking time reading the I guess I would be a good reader.
• I read fast and take it in.
• I’m a fast reader
• I try to read every day
• I read so much that I can’t not be a good reader.
• I can read at a reasonable pace.
• I like to read and I can understand many books, but I am a slow reader!
• I can read a small book in 2 days (if I can get into it)
• I’m a good reader if I’m reading a good book
• I’m not sure if I’m good or a bad reader. I love reading for fun.
• I am a good reader when I am really into a book. Otherwise, I get distracted and I am pretty slow.
• I read oday but then sometimes I get very bored and sometimes I get really hooked to the book.
• I read pretty slowly.
• I am a neutral reader not fast not slow
• I am not a very good reader, I usually only read if I’m into the book a lot.
• I like to read but it is hard to read large books.
• I love reading espically when I have a book to enjoy.
• I’ve read a lot of books. If you name I book I would most likely know or have read it.
• I read Brinsgre (800pgs) in two days (6 hours of reading total).
• I read a lot!
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS

PARENT CONSENT

March 4th, 2011

Re: Permission for Your Child to Participate in Ms. Fast's Masters Project

Dear Grade 7 Parents:

As some of you may know, Ms Fast is completing her Masters in Education in Literacy out at the University of British Columbia. For her final project, Ms Fast has decided to look at how student gender may influence book choice in 11 and 12 year olds in the hopes of determining how such choices might inform language arts instruction. To evaluate a grade 7 student's reading motivation, Ms. Fast has created a survey that your child will be asked to complete. Please read through the following before you complete the attached consent form.

How Might Student Gender Influence the Book Choices a Teacher Makes: A Study of Reading Motivation in Middle School Children

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marlene Asselin
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC
Tel: (604) 822-5733

Co-investigator: Ms. Sarah Fast, Masters Student
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which gender might influence the reading choices of a mixed gender group of grade 7 students and how such choices might inform language arts teaching practices.

PROCEDURES
Your child will be given a survey to complete that asks questions about seven novels that he or she may or may not have read and asks them to decide whether they want to read them or not. There are a few general questions about reading and your child's inclinations towards it. The survey will be given in your child's English classroom or the library.

DURATION
The survey will take less than one teaching block, approximately 30 minutes.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Your child's identity and that of the school will be kept strictly confidential. The only personal information the survey asks for is your child's gender. As the surveys are collected, they will be placed in an envelope that will mix all the homerooms. Data will only be made available to the co-investigator and investigator.
REFUSAL
Participation in this project is optional. You and your child have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Not participating in the survey will not impact or influence a child’s mark or his or her relationship with Ms Fast. If your consent is not given and/or your child’s assent is not given, your child will still complete the survey as it will also be used to help Ms Fast determine literature circle novels, but it will not be included in the research data. The letters NC, standing for no consent, will be written at the top of the survey as the child receives it which will allow it to be easily distinguished from the surveys to be used for the research.

INQUIRIES and CONCERNS
We will be happy to answer your questions about the research. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Fast in person, by e-mail (sfast@wpga.ca), or by telephone. As well, you may contact Dr. Marlene Asselin at (604) 822-5733 or at marlene.asselin@ubc.ca.

If you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at (604) 822-8598.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marlene Asselin
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC
PARENT CONSENT FORM

How Might Student Gender Influence the Book Choices a Teacher Makes: As Study of Reading Motivation in Middle School Children

CONSENT
Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form, have read the attached letter and are giving consent for your child to participate in the project if he or she wishes. Please keep a copy of the form for your own records.

Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary and he or she may refuse to be part of the project at any point, regardless of your consent.

Please check the box and sign:

☐ I give my child consent to complete the survey for Ms. Fast’s Masters Project.

Your child’s name (please print):

____________________________________________________________________

Your name (please print):

____________________________________________________________________

Signature: Date:

____________________________________________________________________

(65)
STUDENT ASSENT

March 4th, 2011

Re: Permission for You to Participate in Ms. Fast’s Masters Project

Dear Grade 7 Students:

As some of you may know, Ms Fast is completing her Masters in Education in Literacy out at the University of British Columbia. Ms Fast has decided to look at how student gender may help students decide what they want to read. To see what makes students want to read, Ms. Fast has created a survey that you will be asked to complete during class next week.

This survey will have two purposes: one, to see which books you want to read for literature circles and, two for Ms Fast to collect information for her masters project. If you don’t want the information to be used for her project, you need to tell Ms Fast through the form attached.

Tonight, your parents will receive an email that will describe the project and contain a permission form, called a consent form, that must be completed by them and a permission form, called an assent form, that you complete before you can do the survey. Both those forms are also attached to this letter. To have the survey be a part of Ms Fast’s project, we must have permission from your parents and from you. But you can refuse to have the survey information go towards Ms Fast’s project regardless of whether your parents give permission or not.

If you wish to know more about the project, you can read the information on the back of this letter. Of course, you may also ask Ms. Fast any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marlene Asselin
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

How Might Student Gender Influence the Book Choices a Teacher Makes: A Study of Reading Motivation in Middle School Children

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marlene Asselin
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC
Tel: (604) 822-5733
Co-investigator: Ms. Sarah Fast, Masters Student
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to see which books boys and girls would like to read.

PROCEDURES
You will be given a survey to complete that asks questions about seven novels that you may or may not have read and asks you to decide whether you want to read them or not. There are a few general questions about reading and whether you like to read or not. The survey will be given in your English classroom or the library.

DURATION
The survey will take less than one English block, approximately 30 minutes.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Who you are will be kept a secret as you will not be writing your name on the survey and the only personal information you will record will be your gender. Any information collected will only be made available to the researchers.

REFUSAL
You have the right to refuse to participate at any time. Your refusal will not change or influence your mark or your relationship with Ms. Fast. If you do not wish to participate in the project, you will still write the survey as it is connected to the upcoming literature circle unit.

INQUIRIES and CONCERNS
Ms Fast will be happy to answer your questions about the research. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Fast in person, by e-mail (sfast@wpga.ca), or by telephone. As well, you may contact Dr. Marlene Asselin at (604) 822-5733 or at marlene.asselin@ubc.ca.
If you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at (604) 822-8598.
STUDENT ASSENT/PERMISSION FORM

How Might Student Gender Influence the Book Choices a Teacher Makes: A Study of Reading Motivation in Middle School Children

ASSENT/PERMISSION
Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this permission form, have read the attached letter and are giving your permission to participate in the project. Please keep a copy of the form for your own records or give a copy to your parents to keep.

Your participation in this study is completely by choice and you may refuse to have your opinions included in Ms Fast’s project, even if you have already given yourself permission to participate.

Please check the box and sign:

☐ I give my permission (assent) to complete the survey for Ms. Fast’s Masters Project.

Your name (please print): ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________

(68)
APPENDIX C: STUDENT SURVEY

Gender (Circle one): M F

The Grade 7 Reading Survey

Directions: Place an X in the circle above the word that best describes how you feel about the statement.

For the written responses, please answer as you see fit.

Part 1: Novels

15) I would like to read The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16) I would not like to read The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

17) I would like to read Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party by Ying Chang Compestine.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18) I would not like to read Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party by Ying Chang Compestine.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

19) I would like to read The Gravesavers by Sheree Fitch.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20) I would not like to read The Gravesavers by Sheree Fitch.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

21) I would like to read Nation by Terry Pratchett.

(69)
22) I would not like to read *Nation* by Terry Pratchett.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

23) I would like to read *The Thief* by Megan Whalen Turner.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24) I would not like to read *The Thief* by Megan Whalen Turner.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25) I would like to read *Leviathan* by Scott Westerfeld.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

26) I would not like to read *Leviathan* by Scott Westerfeld.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

27) I would like to read *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak.

28) I would not like to read *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak.

Why would you like/not like to read this novel? If you have already read this novel, what did you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Part 2: Genre**
6) I like to read.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

   Explain.

7) I prefer to read fiction.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

   Examples:

8) I prefer to read non-fiction.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

   Explain.

   Examples:

9) I like books with characters that are the same gender as me.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

   Explain.

   Examples:

10) I am a good reader.
    - Strongly Disagree
    - Disagree
    - Neutral
    - Agree
    - Strongly Agree

    Explain.

(71)
APPENDIX D: BREB

H11-00089 Student Gender and Book Choice (Version 1.0)

Principal Investigator: Marlene Asselin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Employer.Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asselin</td>
<td>Marlene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:marlene.asselin@ubc.ca">marlene.asselin@ubc.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enter Principal Investigator Primary Department and also the primary location of the PI's Institution:

Last Name | First Name | Rank
-----------|------------|------
Filipenko  | Margot J.  | Instructor/Lecturer

1.3. Co-Investigators List all the Co-Investigators of the study. These members will have online access which will allow them to read, amend, and track the application. These members will be listed on the certificate of approval (except BC Cancer Agency Research Ethics Board certificates). If this research application is for a graduate degree, enter the graduate student's name in this section.

Last Name | First Name | Institution/Department | Rank
-----------|------------|-------------------------|------
Fast       | Sarah      | UBC/Education/Language and Literacy Education | Graduate Student

1.4. Additional Study Team Members - Online Access List the additional study team members who will have online access to read, amend, and track the application but will NOT be listed on the certificate of approval.

Last Name | First Name | Institution/Department | Rank
-----------|------------|-------------------------|------

1.5. Additional Study Team Members - No Online Access Click Add to list study team members who will NOT have online access to the application and will NOT be listed on the certificate of approval.

Last Name | First Name | Department | Title | Email | Address
-----------|------------|------------|-------|-------|------

1.5.1. All undergraduate and graduate students and medical residents are expected to complete the TCPS Tutorial before submission. It is strongly recommended that the Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators are familiar with the TCPS. Indicate completion of the TCPS tutorial below: All Undergraduate/Graduate Students:

Yes
### 1.6.2. All Medical Residents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A (no medical residents participating in this study)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1.7. Project Title

Enter the title of this research study as it will appear on the certificate. If applicable, include the protocol number in brackets at the end of the title.

- How Might Student Gender Influence the Book Choices a Teacher Makes: A Study of Reading Motivation in Middle School Children

#### 1.8. Project Nickname

Enter a nickname for this study. What would you like this study to be known as to the Principal Investigator and study team?

- Student Gender and Book Choice

**NOTE:** If this application was converted to RIS from our previous database, ORSIL, here is the previous ORSIL application number for your information.

### 2 Study Dates and Funding Information - Human Ethics Application [View Form]

#### 2.1. A. Start date:

March 7, 2011

#### 2.1. B. End date:

March 18, 2011

#### 2.2. Types of Funds

Please select the applicable box(es) below to indicate the type(s) of funding you are receiving to conduct this research. You must then complete section 2.3 and/or section 2.4 to enter the name of the source of the funds to be listed on the certificate of approval.

- No Funding

#### 2.3. Research Funding Application/Award

Associated with the Study Submitted to the UBC Office of Research Services. Please click Add to identify the research funding application/award associated with this study. Selecting Add will list the sources of all research funding applications that have been submitted by the PI (and the person completing this application if different from the PI). If the research funding application/award associated with this study is not listed below, please enter these details in question 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UBC Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### 2.3.1. Is this a DHHS grant?

- No

#### 2.3.2. If yes, please select the appropriate DHHS funding agency from the selection box, and attach the grant application.

DHHS Sponsor List:

- Attach DHHS Grant Application for each sponsor listed above

#### 2.4. Research Funding Application/Award

Associated with the Study not listed in question 2.3. Please click Add to enter the details for the research funding application/award associated with this study that is not listed in question 2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UBC Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### 2.4.1. Is this a DHHS grant?

- No

#### 2.4.2. If yes, please select the appropriate DHHS funding agency from the selection box, and attach the grant application.

DHHS Sponsor List:

- Attach DHHS Grant Application for each sponsor listed above

---

[Link to the form](https://dse.ubc.ca/~slee/CustomLayouts/PrintSmartForms/Project=edm/medbridge.ordination.Entity/2C2F496F70C542EC34503E08888D9C985211)](Page 2 of 12)
2.5. Conflict of Interest Do any of the following statements apply to the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and/or their partners/immediate family members? Receive personal benefits in connection with this study and above the direct cost of conducting this study. For example, being paid by the sponsor for consulting. (Reminder: receiving a finder's fee for each subject enrolled is not allowed). Have a non-financial relationship with the sponsor (such as unpaid consultant, advisor, board member or other non-financial interest). Have direct financial involvement with the sponsor (source of funds) via ownership of stock, stock options, or membership on a Board. Hold patent rights or intellectual property rights linked in any way to this study or its sponsor (source of funds).

No

4. Study Review Type - Human Ethics Application [View Form]

4.1. UBC Research Ethics Board Indicate which UBC Research Ethics Board you are applying to and the type of study you are applying for:

UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board - Behavioural

4.2. Institutions and Sites for Study A. Enter the locations for the institutions and sites where the research will be carried out under this Research Ethics Board approval (including specimens processed by pathology, special radiological procedures, specimens obtained in the operating room, or tissue requested from pathology). Click Add and enter the appropriate letter to see the locations for the institutions and sites where the research will be carried out under this Research Ethics Board approval: B for BC Cancer Agency C for Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC P for Providence Health Care U for UBC Campus V for Vancouver Coastal Health (VCHRI/VCHA). If you are NOT using any of these sites select N/A from the list.

Institution: N/A

Site: N/A

B. Please enter any other locations where the research will be conducted under this Research Ethics Approval (e.g. private physician's office, community centre, school, classroom, subject's home, in the field - provide details).

West Point Grey Academy, school library and/or classroom

4.3. A. If this proposal is closely linked to any other proposal previously/simultaneously submitted, enter the Research Ethics Board number of that proposal.

B. If applicable, please describe the relationship between this proposal and the previously/simultaneously submitted proposal listed above.

C. Have you received any information or are you aware of any rejection of this study by any Research Ethics Board? If yes, please provide known details and attach any available relevant documentation in question 9.8.

No
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review, please include the names of committees or individuals involved in the review. State whether the peer review process is ongoing or completed. A. External peer review details:</th>
<th>No external peer review has occurred.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Internal (UBC or hospital) peer review details:</td>
<td>For this proposal, peer review has occurred as Dr. Marlene Asselin and Dr. Margot Filipenko are both providing supportive and constructive feedback throughout the process of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. If this research proposal has NOT received any independent scientific/methodological peer review, explain why no review has taken place.</td>
<td>No additional peer review has occurred as both Dr. Asselin and Dr. Filipenko are providing feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5. After reviewing the minimal risk criteria on the right, does your application fall under minimal risk (and therefore is eligible to be considered for Delegated Review, executive review or review by an Undergraduate Research Review Committee)?</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6A. Pandemic Research Does this study involve research concerning H1N1 or any other urgent public health event such that it requires urgent review and approval? [If no, move on to 5; if yes, answer 4.6B]</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6B. Does this pandemic study require review and approval by multiple Canadian Research Boards (i.e. more than those covered under the certificate of approval for this application) [If no, move on to 5; if yes, answer 4.6C]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6C. Are you the Lead Investigator for this pandemic study? (i.e. the pandemic study involves numerous co-investigators from various sites external to UBC and you have been selected as the lead investigator for the entire project) [If YES, move on to 5; if NO move on to 4.7]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7. Pandemic Research Lead PI REB Please review the guidance note on the right and then answer the following question: If the study has NOT been approved by the Lead PI’s REB, UBC’s REBs will not proceed to review the study independently. They will be participating in the Lead REB approval process and accordingly, your application is premature. Please discontinue this application and submit a new application as soon as the study approval by the Lead PI REB has been obtained. If the study HAS been approved by the Lead PI’s REB, UBC’s REBs will make every effort to review your study as quickly as possible. In order to ensure that the required documentation is incorporated into the RISE system, you will be directed to respond to Question 9. For more information please see the accompanying guidance note. Has this study been reviewed and approved by the Lead Principal Investigator’s REB?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4A. Study Review Type - Undergraduate Behavioural Research

4. AI. Has this study been approved by another Canadian Ethics Board? no
If Yes, provide the name of the Research Ethics Board (REB) and the REB contact information below and proceed to the next page. Attach all relevant documentation in Section 9 of the form, including all documents submitted to the other Canadian REB. The application and correspondence between the researcher and the REB must be attached in Question 9.8. If No complete question 4. A2.

4. A2. Does this study involve individual, honours thesis or course based research by UNDERGRADUATE students that is being conducted as part of an undergraduate course offered by The University, that is NOT PART OF A FACULTY MEMBER’S research program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. A2. Does this study involve individual, honours thesis or course based research by UNDERGRADUATE students that is being conducted as part of an undergraduate course offered by The University, that is NOT PART OF A FACULTY MEMBER'S research program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If Yes, please select the applicable Undergraduate Student Research Review Committee from the list of established committees below. NOTE: There are currently no committees established, so please select No Research Committees Available.

5. Summary of Study and Recruitment - Human Ethics Application (View Form)

5.1 A Provide a short summary of the project written in lay language suitable for non-scientific REB members. DO NOT exceed 100 words and do not cut and paste directly from the study protocol.

The purpose of this study is to explore ways that gender might impact reading choices of a mixed gender group of grade 7 students and how such choices might inform language arts instruction. A survey of reading preferences will be given to all grade 7 students enrolled in West Point Grey Academy. This survey consists of Likert scale and open response questions to determine which novels students would like to read, which novels they have already read, and their general feelings towards reading. Data will be examined to look for trends in book choice within and between genders.

5.1 B Summarize the research proposal:

Research Questions:
1) What books will interest 11 and 12 year olds?
2) How does a teacher choose novels to be used in a literature circle teaching unit?
Research shows that reading motivation is predominantly influenced by interest. What the research lacks is applicable knowledge that a language arts teacher may use to choose a novel that creates interest in both male and female grade 7 readers. The goal of this study is to be able to provide language arts teachers with guidelines for novel selection.

5.2 Inclusion Criteria. Describe the subjects being selected for this study, and list the criteria for their inclusion. For research involving human pluripotent stem cells, provide a detailed description of the stem cells being used in the research.

All students in grade 7 at West Point Grey Academy will be included, if they wish.

5.3 Exclusion Criteria. Describe which subjects will be excluded from participation, and list the criteria for their exclusion.

Any student not in grade 7 will be excluded in order to focus in one one specific age group.

West Point Grey Academy is a private school where subject specialists are encouraged after grade 5. Ms Fast is the English Language Arts Specialist for grade 7 and a homeroom teacher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.4. Provide a detailed description of the method of recruitment. For example, describe who will contact prospective subjects and by what means this will be done. Ensure that any letters of initial contact or other recruitment materials are attached to this submission on Page 9.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for one of the three grade 7 homerooms. She is the homeroom teacher of 7SF and teaches Language Arts to all three grade 7 homerooms. As the teacher of all the grade 7 students, Ms. Sarah Fast will email a letter of consent to all parents and send home a paper copy. This letter will describe the project and contain a letter of parental consent. Ms. Fast will also give each student a hard copy of a letter written to the student, asking them for their assent. Paper copies of the parent consent form and student assent form will be returned to Ms. Fast and collected by her. As the consent and assent forms are returned, she will keep track of those parents and students who have returned the form and those who have not. Within the school environment, parents are accustomed to the email being used for letters and consent forms which they need to print before they sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5. Describe how prospective normal/control subjects will be identified, contacted, and recruited, if the method differs from the above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 If existing records (e.g., health records, clinical lists or other records/databases) will be used to IDENTIFY potential subjects, please describe how permission to access this information, and to collect and use this information will be obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The survey will be designed to explore the reading interests of these particular grade 7 students. Seven novels were chosen for the survey. The criteria for novel selection was:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong male and female protagonists;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Variety of reading levels and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different fiction genres (fantasy, historical, and realistic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As the questionnaire will mix Likert scale questions with open written response questions, the data collected will be quantitative and qualitative. The only personal data recorded on the survey will be the child's gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After parental consent and student assent forms have been collected by Ms. Fast, the survey will be administered to all grade 7 students. The survey will be handed out one by one to each child, and as a survey is given, Ms. Fast will write in pen on the top of the survey FC for full consent (parental and child) or NC for no consent. Only the surveys with FC will be used for the research, but all of the surveys will be used to develop the current grade 7 programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each class, the survey will be administered in the following way:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will line up in alphabetical order outside the school's library or classroom with a pen or pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At the door of the classroom, Ms. Fast will be holding a class list that indicates which students have full consent/assent (parental and student) and those who have not. As students enter the classroom or library, Ms. Fast will hand them a survey and write on it FC (full consent/assent) or NC (no consent/assent).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will sit where they are most comfortable. There will be no assigned seats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once the students have been seated, Ms. Fast will give each novel a short positive description in the following way:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Hold up novel, read the title and the author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Describe other novels the author has written and a few facts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
about the author

3. Describe the initial plot of the novel, mentioning both the male and female protagonists with equal emphasis.
5. Once the descriptions are complete, Ms Fast will ask the students to complete the survey.
6. Once a student has completed the survey, they will place them in an envelope at the front of the room. All the surveys will be kept in one envelope to ensure the surveys from all three classes are mixed before handing them back to Ms Fast. This will help keep a homeroom’s results indistinguishable.
7. After the three homerooms have completed the surveys, they will be sorted into two piles, FC and NC. Only the FC forms will be used for research.
8. The survey should take no more than 30 minutes.

Once the surveys have been completed, the responses to the novels will be counted and the student responses will be explored for emerging themes. The 2011 provincial Foundation Skills Assessment data will also be used to help evaluate overall reading ability for the cohort surveyed.

6. Subject Information and Consent Process - Human Ethics Application (View Form)

| 6.1. How much time will a subject be asked to dedicate to the project beyond that needed for normal care? | 50 minutes (less than one block of class time) 
| This time will be divided into 20 minutes for the book talks and 30 minutes for completion of the survey. |
| 6.2. If applicable, how much time will a normal/control volunteer be asked to dedicate to the project? | None |
| 6.3. Describe what is known about the risks (harm) of the proposed research. | The risks for the students are minimal, if any for some students. There is a possibility that the survey might create feelings of inadequacy in the student if they have not read or heard of the novels stated on the survey beforehand. As the survey also asks questions about liking reading and whether the participant feels he or she is a good reader, a reader that lacks confidence may feel poorly about themselves for having to recognize their inabilities. |
| 6.4. Describe any potential benefits to the subject that could arise from his or her participation in the proposed research. | As some of the novels on the survey may be used in an upcoming Literature Circle unit, some students may feel like they have more of a voice in the choice of the novels which could lead to a greater degree of student involvement in the unit. Some students may also feel like their reading ability is validated as they may have read some of the novels on the survey. |
| 6.5. Describe any reimbursement for expenses (e.g. meals, parking, medications) or payments/gifts-in-kind (e.g. honoraria, gifts, prizes, credits) to be offered to the subjects. Provide full details of the amounts, payment schedules, and value of gifts-in-kind. | N/A |
| 6.6. Specify who will explain the consent form and invite the subject to participate. Include details of where the consent will be obtained, and under what circumstances. | Ms Fast will email a letter home and send home a paper copy to the parents of the child asking for their consent. The letter will explain the form. Parents will print the form or sign the sent home form and have their child return it to Ms Fast with an indication of consent. Some parents may choose to scan the form after signing and email it back to the teacher for the teacher to print. Ms Fast will also describe the study to the students and allow them the ability to choose to participate (student assent form). |
6.6.A. If you are asking for a waiver or an alteration of the requirement for subject informed consent please justify the waiver or alteration and confirm that the study meets the criteria on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both forms must be returned in order for a child to participate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.7. How long after receiving the consent form will the subject have to decide whether or not to participate? If this will be less than twenty-four hours, provide an explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will subject be competent? Details of the nature of the fully informed consent?</th>
<th>If not, who will explain assent if not, will he/she be able to give it on behalf of the child?</th>
<th>If Yes, how will the assent be sought?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child will receive a letter that describes the study and an assent form.</td>
<td>When the letter is handed out to the children, the teacher will describe the research project and answer any questions the children may have. The letter form and assent form will go home with the child and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>As the students ages range from 11 to 13, parent consent will be necessary.</td>
<td>[Details]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.8. Will every subject be competent to give fully informed consent on his/her own behalf? Please click Select to complete the question and view further details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' parents will give consent.</td>
<td>The students will give consent on his/her own behalf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project and any questions the children may have.</td>
<td>The letter form and assent form will go home with the child and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.abc.com/CustomLayouts/PrintSmartFormsProject.com.webbridge.entity.Entity/EC09496F70C51453C45S0E388B9C883213] Page 8 of 12
6.9. Describe any situation in which the renewal of consent for this research might be appropriate, and how this would take place.  
N/A

6.10. What provisions are planned for subjects, or those consenting on a subject's behalf, to have special assistance, if needed, during the consent process (e.g. consent forms in Braille, or in languages other than English).  
No provisions are necessary. All parents and children speak English.

6.11. Describe any restrictions regarding the disclosure of information to research subjects (during or at the end of the study) that the sponsor has placed on investigators, including those related to the publication of results.  
N/A

7. Number of Subjects - Human Ethics Application for Behavioural Study [View Form]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1. Indicate external approvals below: A. Other Institutions:</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Please select Add to enter the name of the institution and if you have already received approval attach the approval letter.</td>
<td>Name of Institution West Point Grey Academy Board of Directors [View]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Other Jurisdiction or Country:</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Please select Add to enter the name of the jurisdiction or country and if you have already received approval attach the approval letter.</td>
<td>Name of Jurisdiction or Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Has a Request for Ethics Approval been submitted to the institution or responsible authority in the other jurisdiction or country? (Send a copy to the Research Ethics Office when approval is obtained).</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. If a Request for Approval has not been submitted, provide the reasons below:</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Does this research involve aboriginal communities or organizations; or aboriginals as an identified subject category?</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If YES, ensure that you are familiar with the guidance documents linked on the right. Also attach a copy of the research agreement with the community (if available) in Question 9.8. Please describe the community consent process. If no community consent is being sought, please justify.

7.2. A. How many subjects (including controls) will be enrolled in the entire study? (i.e. the entire study, world-wide)  
76

B. How many subjects (including controls) will be enrolled at institutions covered by this Research Ethics Approval? (i.e. only at the institutions covered by this approval)  
76

Of these, how many are controls?  
0

7.3. Are any of the following procedures or
7.4. Who will actually conduct the study and what are their qualifications to conduct this kind of research? (e.g., describe relevant training, experience, degrees, and/or courses).

None of these Methods

Ms. Sarah Fast, a certified grade 7 language arts teacher with 9 years of teaching experience, will conduct the survey. She is completing her Masters in Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia.

8. Confidentiality - Human Ethics Application for Behavioural Study [View Form]

8.1. Security of Data during the course of the study. How will data be stored? (e.g., computerized files, hard copy, videotape, audio recordings, PDA, other.) How will security of the data be maintained? (For example, study documents must be kept in a secure locked location and computer files should be password protected and encrypted, data should not be stored or downloaded onto an unsecured computer or portable lap-top, backup files should be stored appropriately). If any data or images are to be kept on the Web, what precautions have taken to prevent it being copied?

Throughout the project all surveys will be locked in Sarah Fast's school office. Any data records and analysis will be kept on her home computer and password protected.

8.2. Access to Data. Who will have access to the data? (For example, co-investigators or students). How will all of those who have access to the data be made aware of his or her responsibilities concerning privacy and confidentiality issues?

Dr. Asselin, Dr. Filenko and Ms. Fast will have access to the data. As educators and researchers at UBC they are aware of their responsibilities regarding privacy.

8.3. Protection of Personal Information. Describe how the identity of research subjects will be protected during and after the research study, including how subjects will be identified on data collection forms.

The only personal information recorded on the survey will be gender. All 76 surveys will be mixed in one envelope before the researcher sees them which will mean that the teacher will not be sure which homeroom the surveys were from. This will further eliminate the identification of a student.

8.4. Transfer of Data. Will any data that identify individuals be transferred (available) to persons or agencies outside of the University?

no

If YES, describe in detail what identifiable information is released, to whom, how the data will be transferred, how and where it will be stored and what safeguards will be used to protect the identity of subjects and the privacy of their data. Attach the data transfer agreement if applicable.

8.5. Retention and Destruction of Data. UBC policy requires that data be kept for at least 5 years within a UBC facility. If you intend to destroy the data at the end of the storage period describe how this will be done to ensure confidentiality (e.g. tapes should be demagnetized, paper copies shredded). UBC has no explicit requirement for shredding of data at the end of this period; however, destruction of the data is the best way of ensuring that confidentiality will not be breached. Please note that the responsibility for the security of the data rests with the Principal Investigator.

At the end of five years, the surveys will be shredded.

8.6. Future use of data. Are there any plans for future use of the data or data collection forms?


8.7. Feedback to subjects Are there any plans for feedback on the findings or results of the research to the subject? Provide details below.

As the novels included on the survey are novels that may be studied by the students in the future, the teacher may share with the classes which novels had been most widely read and which novels the most students wanted to read. The students may be curious about the results. The teacher will only choose to share results that will not damage the class’s positive outlook towards reading.

9. Documentation - Human Ethics Application [View Form]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Password (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1.A.</td>
<td>Protocol Examples of types of protocols are listed on the right. Click Add to enter the required information and attach the documents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.B.</td>
<td>Health Canada regulatory approval (receipt will be acknowledged)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.C.</td>
<td>FDA IND or IDE letters (receipt will be acknowledged)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.</td>
<td>Consent Forms Examples of types of consent forms are listed on the right. Click Add to enter the required information and attach the forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 1, 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.</td>
<td>Assent Forms Examples of types of assent forms are listed on the right. Click Add to enter the required information and attach the forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 1, 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4.</td>
<td>Investigator Brochures/Product Monographs (Clinical applications only) Please click Add to enter the required information and attach the documents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5.</td>
<td>Advertisement to recruit subjects Examples are listed on the right. Click Add to enter the required information and attach the documents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.</td>
<td>Questionnaire, questionnaire cover letter, tests, interview scripts, etc. Please click Add to enter the required information and attach the documents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January 18, 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7.</td>
<td>Letter of initial contact Please click Add to enter the required information and attach the forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8.A.</td>
<td>Other documents: Examples of other types of documents are listed on the right. Click Add to enter the required information and attach the documents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Fee for Service - Human Ethics Application for Behavioural Study [View Form]

| Mechanism for Submitting Fee. Please indicate which of the following method of payment will be used for this application: |
| Contact information regarding where to send the invoice. |

12. Save Application - Human Ethics Application [View Form]