

# Motivating Reading Utilizing Inquiry Based Assessments

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## Abstract

Individualized reading intervention sessions, tailored to the selected student's interests, develops a deepened growth in motivation that can benefit student engagement. Facilitating one on one intervention sessions provides an opportunity for an educator to discover a method for enhancing student engagement. Through these focused learning opportunities and the utilization of reading inventories, such as the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), inquiry based learning takes advantage of small sessions to allow for growth. Individual sessions with a selected student increase the likelihood openness and help alleviate isolation. Reading fluency and comprehension skills increase when the student develops an individualized purpose, and through this development, continued educational benefits lay the foundation for future success.

*Keywords:* Motivation, Intervention, Inquiry Based Learning, Student Engagement, Focused Learning Opportunities



## Introduction

Maintaining interest in reading has been a topic that is constantly discussed by teachers and parents. Reading with a purpose sparks motivation for the reader to continue reading once one the text is done. Unfortunately, this type of reading is often successfully done under the supervision of a teacher during a reading lesson, and not individually based on initiative afterwards. Reading fluency and comprehension, which are contributing factors for successful readers to gain confidence and motivation to read, is taught in controlled situations during the reading session as well. Deducing a student's interests is often a difficult task. But with reading interest inventories, clues to the student's interest can be identified and utilized to prepare interactive and engaging activities. Integrating the student's interests into projects, built based on the principles of inquiry based learning, will increase reading engagement. The student will then have a purpose and motivation to read. Reading techniques can contribute to support and enhance the student's reading ability to make attempts at engaging challenging texts while he makes discoveries.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to discover what strategies are effective to help increase and maintain interest in reading and whether these strategies can contribute to build interest in reading widely and benefit comprehension.

## Importance of the Study

This study will provide me, parents, and other teachers instructional strategies that will assist in increasing motivation to read as well as increase development comprehension and fluency abilities. Additionally, it will demonstrate to the student the value of their perspectives and contributions to learning.

#### **Description of Intervention**

Integrating aspects of inquiry based learning into reading instruction may provide an engaging and motivating reading experience. A reading inventory would help to focus questions and activities to the student's interests. With activities built with the student's interest at its core, the motivation to read will be encouraged. In addition to the reading interest inventory, the student will take a pretest to check reading and comprehension ability. A variety of reading materials, to include magazines, web pages, books, and reference books, will be available for the student to explore and engage with as they investigate interest based questions. As the sessions progress, the student's ability will be tracked to see if the intervention applied was affective or needs improvement.



Following analysis of the results of the reading interest inventory, a Know, Want to know, and Learned (KWL) Chart will be to utilize focus on a topic and to develop questions for the student to investigate. Making notes, identifying and reading unfamiliar words, and making connections to the text are three examples of activities that are useful skills to assist the student's comprehension and fluency. Documentation will be kept on the student's success, stagnation, or regression during the course of the research study. The hope is that the student will make progress in his comprehension and fluencies, which will contribute to an increased motivation to read. Learning will progress as a cooperative venture, moments that need facilitation of new skills will be addressed as the need presents itself.

During the course of the study, the student will have the opportunity to share his thoughts and track discoveries made. At the completion of the intervention sessions, the student will take a post test to see if the intervention had any effect with reading and comprehension. Stagnant results will be met with an adjustment of methods, such as adjustments to discussions and questioning. Discussions and questioning can invoke thoughtful consideration of the topic. Discussions can be jump started which can assist in working through confusion. Making adjustments to questions can provide the student with access to consider a perspective that may lead to new theories. Additionally, materials may have to be adjusted for appropriateness in difficulty and relevance to the activity. Documented success would be relayed to the parents in the form of achievable suggestions for the parents to engage the student at home. By involving parents, the students would continue the habits that promote reading success and increase motivation, which in turn translates into his classroom.

## **Description of Research**

Material about inquiry based learning and encouraging reading motivation leads to the belief that these skills are complementary to each other. Giving the student a purpose for reading, by providing a topic, will motivate inquiry and research as answers are sought (Inquiry – based Learning, 2004). The task will largely be student centered by placing the student's questions and ideas at the core of the investigation (Inquiry – based Learning, 2013, p. 2). Allowing students to choose their sources during their research will enhance interest in reading as they seek answers (Gambrell & Marinak, 2015). Continually modeling reading techniques relevant to the activity will encourage the student to attempt challenging text. Through shared reading experiences, the student will also be supported as they engaged in authentic reading experiences (Button & Johnson, 1997, p. 264). The cohesive element to



blend the ideas of inquiry based learning to will be based out of the notions present in how emergent curriculum works.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

With the student's affinity for hands on learning, facilitating a purpose for reading through an activity or project will encourage reading during and outside of the intervention session. Working with the student's interest, reading engagement and motivation should increase. As the student is working through queries born out of their own interest, integrating fluency and comprehension activities to assist with challenging text should yield productive results. Centering activities on topics that cause wonder and curiosity for the student should be engaging and motivating for them to persevere work through the focus questions. In the book, *Emergent Curriculum in the Primary Classroom,* Carol Wien postulates that giving students a method into the activity will provide the motivation for them to continue to engage in it. She continues by saying, "In instances where learners do not know how to begin, teachers lead by offering words, or materials or physical presence, to help the leaner take action" (Wien, 2008, p. 149). Encouraging reading motivation by working with the student's interest provides the entry point as suggested by Wien to address academic skills needed for success. The additional benefit of the intervention will be sharing useful strategies to nurture and encourage reading with the parent of the student.

The student's parents have expressed concern over the student's lack of interest in reading at home. In an attempt to encourage reading activities, they sought books that they thought would be of interest and found little response from the student. The discoveries made from the intervention sessions, contributing to this action research, can be adapted and used to assist in bridging the reading gap between school and home. By taking an active role in reading and learning with the student, the parent contributes to the staged educational experiences; tying in lessons instructed at school and reinforced at home. This collaboration would be promoting the positive habits of the mind that are being used during the intervention session and give the activity and the student's ideas value. A possible limitation may arise through time and scheduling.

Being flexible with the family's schedule will be the key for the student's participation. Keeping the sessions to twenty minutes and twice a week would be encouraging for the student. The sessions are brief and alleviate the parents' concern in that the student's academic day is not excessively extended. The activities, although brief, would be focused on the intended outcomes of the action research. At the same time, this method gives the student



room to grow through their own developing perspectives. Since the intervention sessions for this action research is extracurricular in nature, the family may exercise the option to terminate before the completion of the study. Taking into account the student's daily schedule, the intervention sessions will also have to be effective yet brief to compromise with the time expectations of the family, as well as sustain student interest during the intervention activity.

## **Operational Definitions**

During this research there will be several terms that will be referred to when describing activities and techniques used to assist in motivating the student's reading habits. This is a list of terms used in the study:

**Know, Want to know, and Learned (KWL) Chart:** A KWL Chart is used to begin discussion on a topic. The instructor can gauge student knowledge and encourage the formation of questions to investigate. Learning is also reported on the chart and progression of understanding is reviewed using this chart.

**Inquiry based learning:** Inquiry based learning will be the basis for planning the intervention activities. This involves students constructing their own knowledge through engagement methods which are facilitated through planning. Students form a question they investigate, use resources to research a solution, and decide on a form to present the information learned on the topic.

**Shared reading:** Shared reading experiences will be utilized to model and support reading strategies and efforts. During this study, the student will be supported on their quest for solutions to their questions as they engage with a variety of reading materials that will vary in difficulty level.

**Provocation questions:** Provocation question will be posed that encourage thinking, rather than asking for a specific answer known to the teacher. The instructor must be cautious as to not form the questions that require quick answers. The questions are meant to encourage the student to engage with the topic and contribute their thoughts and feelings about it (Wien, 2008, p.48).

## Literature Review

## **Motivating the Reader**

Various studies and articles have pointed towards improving reading ability and skill through nurturing motivation to read. Determining reading attitude is the first piece of documentation that studies have shown to be necessary in determining where student attitudes



and interests lie. The articles and studies frame understanding for what should occur prior, during, and following learning opportunities. Teacher's perception was just as multidimensional as the idea of student motivation to read. Teaching literacy is more than putting a book in front of a student and telling them to read out loud for twenty minutes. The instructor must be just as dedicated to model, demonstrate, facilitate, and encourage reading for the skill to emerge and grow.

## The Reading Attitude

Students invest energy and effort into activities that interest them the most. Activities in which students have prior familiarity, knowledge, and focus initiate study questions which can be explored, and possibly answered. As students engage in activities born out of their interest, they are enticed to delve deeply into the concept and persevere through challenges. Marinak states that engaged reading is an amalgamation of critical thinking skills and motivation (Marinak, 2013). Reading motivation consists of values, beliefs, and skills that the student finds important. Interest, which contributes to reading motivation, is related to comprehension and the acquisition of reading skills and strategies (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Motivation is therefore complex and multidimensional because it is influenced by the desires, values, curiosities, and interests of the students, as well as by the numerous classroom and instructional methods (Marinak, 2013).

Students recognize what their skill and abilities are in reading, and as a result perform accordingly. McGeown et. al. (2014) conducted a study that found that self-concept and reading comprehension skills are related to the student's ability to discuss understanding about text and read words. Traditionally, focusing on skills and working until they are mastered has been the trend. However, evidence found in the study has shown that reading ability and comprehension increase when students engage with text often and thoughtfully (McGeown et. al., 2014). Reading and intrinsic motivation grows when they are influenced through choice, challenge control, collaboration, constructive comprehension, and consequence (Marinak, 2013). Affecting student motivation and reading ability will have to begin with adjusting the student's self concept. Nurturing motivation and interest in learning will reflect in the student's acquisition in reading comprehension, ability, and skills.

Adjust reading attitude and why it is important. Adjusting reading attitude is a process in which the teacher must be dedicated to teaching, observing, and learning from the students and from their own practice. Adjustments must be made to make sure that planning, executing, questioning, documentation, assessment, and praise are well structured and well



placed for optimal student participation and response. Reading not only consists of having the skill and ability to read, but also to develop a personal attachment or interest in the text being read (McGeown et. al., 2014).

**Measuring interests and attitudes towards reading.** Reading interest and attitude assessment tools such as the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), developed by Dr. Allan Wigfield and Dr. John Guthrie at the University of Maryland in 1997, or the Garfield Reading Attitude Survey, assists in localizing where student's interests, perception of reading and their ability lie. The resulting information drives planning and adjustments to instruction. In a study conducted by McKenna and Kear (2014), the survey and assessment tools used provided information encouraging the instructor to facilitate different learning opportunities. These learning opportunities must be open for the student to choose and adjust according to interest and challenge level (Marinak, 2013). Giving students control over text and expressing comprehension affords a sense of ownership to the student, which increases self-perception of reading ability, comprehension, and motivation (Marinak, 2013). Building an appropriate assessment tool is then imperative. While assessing reading proficiency is important, the role of the students' attitudes towards reading cannot be ignored because it affects the process of becoming literate (McKenna & Kear, 2014).

**Determining interests.** There is significance in determining what student interests and attitudes are in reading. Choosing an appropriate assessment tool yields information that assists the teacher in facilitating positive reading experiences for children. The student's comprehension and desire to read improve as a result. According to Baker and Wigfield (1999), children with positive reading attitudes read more often. There are many interest and attitude assessment tools available, but two lend themselves well to adjustments based on the audience.

The Motivations for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) determines reading interest and attitude based on different aspects of reading motivation (Wigfield, Guthrie, & McGough, 1996). The aspects of reading motivations are grouped into eleven categories which allows for more focused interviews (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Each category consists of statements that the students use to compare to themselves. There are a total of fifty three items that are presented in a fashion similar to an interview. The domains that are measured are: reading efficacy, reading challenge, reading curiosity, reading involvement, importance of reading, reading work avoidance, and competition in reading (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).



The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey incorporates the use of familiar images of a cartoon character to visually represent the responses. The images selected were of Garfield displaying different emotional states. They were chosen because of the appeal and additional comprehensibility for younger students (McKenna & Kear, 2014). This survey consists of fewer questions than the MRQ to assist in evaluating reading interest and attitudes without overwhelming young children (McKenna &Kear, 2014). The assessment tool's questions are constructed, using the phrase how do you feel, to gauge students' feelings about reading for different situations and reasons.

**Engage students directly.** Finding ways to engage students can begin through assessment tools. Assessment tools such as surveys, interviews, or questionnaires assist the instructor to focus initial and post data collection, which can drive discussions with students. The instructor will be able to gauge the students' attitudes and interests in different subjects. The information that emerges contributes to the teacher's ability to plan how to engage with students. Information such as anecdotal notes, results from an assessment, results from analyzing class discussion, reveals a way for teachers to find the bridge to learning that is built through the creation of emotional attachments (Wein, 2008). As conceptualized by Vera Monteiro (2013) in her study, *Promoting Reading Motivation by Reading Together*, she proposes that texts that are related to what students find interesting are given value and significance by the students. She continues by stating that the text must be adjusted so that it is appropriately geared for the learning and age development of the students it targets.

With this perspective, the instructor must help students build emotional attachments to reading through text that piques student's curiosity, interest, and motivations. Instructors can support students' acquisition and utilization of reading skills that result in comprehension, fluid reading, and in some cases application of knowledge gained from text (Button & Johnson, 1997). The positive results emerge when students begin delving into learning or an activity utilizing skills and information they acquired (Wein, 2008). The intent of the assessment tools is to build emotional attachments through student interest which assist the instructor in providing an entry point to learning, or in this case reading (Wein, 2008). According to Baker and Wigfield (1999), discoveries by educational theorists have illustrated how a reader's understanding and perception of ability, internal and external motivational stimuli, and drive for success, play a significant part in their desire to invest energy and effort into an activity, regardless of the time it takes to complete it.



# **Focusing Learning Opportunities**

Focusing learning opportunities is a task that must occur both from the teacher and student's perspective. Teaching activities and techniques such as guided reading, shared reading, read alouds, and peer to peer collaborations all hinge on utilizing interesting texts. Interesting literature that affords students opportunities to engage with a challenging text presents instructional openings for teachers to conduct well planned, abbreviated, and unarranged lessons. These lessons address reading strategies and skills (Marinak, 2013). Learning opportunities can be facilitated by the teacher or initiated by the student using various methods. A few methods that can initiate a learning experience in reading are setting learning goals, engaging in discussions, choosing activities to experiment, and expressed knowledge and ideas. Collaborating on activities and projects engage students on a multitude of learning styles, granting them the opportunity to deeply conceptualize content.

Shared reading. The benefits of an effective shared reading experience are well documented. The method, which is one part of a balanced literacy program, immerses learners in genuine reading experiences using engaging texts (Button & Johnson, 1997). The experience also follows Lev Vygotsky's notions of the Zone of Proximal Development by supporting students who have limited reading experiences with a more knowledgably reader. Linda Gambrell (2011) discusses in her Seven Rules of Engagement article how student motivation increases with successful experiences in text. Among the seven rules, Gambrell includes one that that discusses how intrinsic rewards, with each positive experience, become more prevalent. For children, interesting and engaging text is relevant in their lives and has value in their learning experience. As text is read, and in many cases read repeatedly, students will gain more experiences and exposure in different skills which will eventually lead them towards reading independence (Button & Johnson, 1997). While the instructor will place focus on particular skills for the shared reading experience, the concepts are presented in context with the text being used bringing meaning and relevance to the content and the text (Button & Johnson, 1997). The significant aspect of the shared reading experience is the support students receive when reading texts that are at times above their ability level. Motivation to continue to read, discuss and share ideas based on the text encourages students to imitate that behavior with their peers.

**Collaborative experiences.** Working with knowledgeable peers assists students to share, theorize, discuss, and revise their perspectives on text with other learners. Monteiro (2013) discovered how cooperative learning assists in increasing motivation. She proposes



that students make new discoveries from arguments and discussions with their peers. The ideas learners are exposed to are catalysts that stimulate interest and curiosity. In turn, the stimulation will generate a desire and persistence to continue reading and searching for information that will contribute to discussions (Monteiro, 2013). Participating in guided reading and small learning groups sets students up for success, in that they are provided with the opportunity to share and have their perceptions challenged by peers.

**Choosing interesting text.** Choosing books based on the basis of familiarity, prior knowledge, value, and desire increases the student's motivation and interest to read and critically consider the text (Gambrell, 2011). Linda Gambrell (2011) explains that being afforded the opportunity to choose text increases the purpose and drive a student who will begin and absorb skills and strategies made available to them. The text and activities that follow, to present the opportunity to synthesize the contents of the reading, gives the student a sense of autonomy and ownership of the information they internalize and present. For struggling students, a large selection may become overwhelming. Pairing down choices, based on predetermined student interest, and allowing the struggling student to choose from a small selection, gives them the opportunity, to not only learn to choose text to read, but also expose them to a variety of texts and scaffolding. This will assist in focusing reasons for their choice. Reading goals will further assist in making the text interesting as it encourages the reader to speculate and ask questions.

## **Focused Observations and Useful Documentation**

Focused observations are an integral part of learning for both the teacher and the student. The instructor must be a careful and focused observer and listener for documentation, such as assessments, observations, and class discussion notes, to reflect learning progress. Also, becoming a keen observer increases the quality of work and responses from the students. Additionally, the information the teacher collects will assist in tracking the development of ideas, learning progress, and aid in the development of learning opportunities. For students, documentation concerning the progression of ideas assists in reevaluation and revision of thoughts and theories; which drives discussions and discoveries. In addition, the listening model presented by the instructor illustrates to students how to carefully listen to each other, thereby making the learning environment a safe and inviting place to share ideas, develop thoughts, experiment with concepts, and have discussions (Wein, 2008).

**Focus the teacher's perception of learning and pedagogy.** Learning to read is more than just rote memorization of isolated skills. Strategies taught in context during authentic



reading experience assist in modeling for children how to think as they are reading (Wall, 2014). Heather Wall (2014) discovered that the way instructors construct prompts and questions affect the process students take as they think through text. Reading experiences can quickly become exercises of skills taught out of context based on the types of questions students are presented with (Wall, 2014). She continues to discuss the significance of revising questioning techniques when she illustrates Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) Gradual Release of Responsibility Model. Hall believed that through the model, teachers can reevaluate their questioning. Students are positioned to work toward success and independence by going through struggles to understand text (Wall, 2014).

While the teacher is responsible for the direct instruction aspect of teaching, inviting students to theorize, challenge perceptions, and produce complex thoughts are also top priority. Students are then capable of teaching each other as they discuss, challenge, and revise their thinking. The teacher is sharing the teaching responsibility to probe and provoke complex notions; while at the same time supporting her students (Wein, 2008).

Making adjustments if method is not working. Accurate documentation assists both teachers and students. For teachers, it may be utilized to plan interventions that can be integrated into learning opportunities; through demonstrations or mini lessons. The documentation can also be used to guide students to new notions when they are presented and challenged during a class discussion. As the instructor observes activities, impromptu adjustments can be made through questions and prompts. Additionally, praise will have a contributing role in nurturing reading motivations based on student responses and products (Wein, 2008).

### Methodology

This action research is qualitative in nature. Through the implementation of an intervention plan, the aim of the study was to discover what actions contribute to building and strengthening reading motivation, while encouraging reading and frequent interactions with text. Preliminary intervention sessions involved oral reading activities that enabled familiarization with the student's reading strategies and skills. The data was gathered from sources such as the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), fluency checks, interview questions, and discussions. The MRQ, located in Appendix A, provides statements that are categorized in eleven sections. Each section is an attribute contributing to reading motivation in which the statements are easily comprehendible to the student.



The responses to the questionnaire are on a one to four scale where the student compares how closely the statement applies. Appendix B contains the revised responses to include a visual representation of the statements. The activities were conducted in the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples' public library children's reading room as a way to set the tone for the activity, and provide ample resources on hand. Interactions were intended to promote a collaborative discussion environment, which would allow the student to be engaged in the majority of the learning responsibility. The researcher positioned the student to discover errors and missed learning opportunities through gentle guidance and focus. To highlight errors or lead into learning opportunities, the student was asked to reread, the research reread text similar to the student, and misunderstandings based on what was read were discussed. The student's progress was recorded over the course of six weeks. Having realized what the areas of improvement were, it seemed imperative to assist and encourage the student to problem solve challenging words, ask questions, and discuss the text. These areas, if consistently addressed, would assist in improving enthusiasm to read and improve motivation to continue to read.

The MRQ revealed clues about the student's general interests in particular genres. Additional questions were asked in the reading curiosity and involvement section of the MRQ, found in Appendix A. The additional questions were intended to open a discussion to help guide the researcher towards examples of subjects and book genres the interests the student. Statements such as, favorite subjects and hobbies to read about, opened a brief discussion the student could relate to about each idea. This geared the conversation towards discovering what the student's interests were. The information gleaned from the data produced from the MRQ and the concurrent interview was used to narrow down the vast selection in the children's room to a set of four books.

The smaller selection allowed the student to choose a text that would engage his interest and encourage reading. Previewing the materials, sharing initial thoughts on the book, recording relatable prior knowledge, and interesting aspects of the book, encouraged the student to choose a book from which to begin the intervention. Having chosen a book on aircrafts, a nonfiction informational book, the student was allowed the opportunity to choose what section of the book he wanted to begin reading. Based on the preliminary preview of the book, the student added to the prior knowledge they already had. Initially he did not have any theories about what he was going to read and therefore did not have many expectations about



what he was going to learn. The student treated the book as information that was going to confirm what he already knew about aircrafts.

Following the first few sessions, the student's basic idea about aircraft's form and capabilities were revised based on the unique models presented in the text. In this situation the student's interest is piqued because the discussion of the aircraft's structure falls in with the student's interest in crafting and construction referenced in Appendix B. As the text is read, challenging terms encountered were met with encouragement by the researcher to use previously learned strategies to decode the word. While motivation was not immediate, there was a graduate increase in enthusiasm and motivation during discussion as the students showed more intentions to use decoding strategies without being prompted. A brief discussion about the decoded vocabulary word assisted in defining and providing examples of word usage in context. Words that have presented a challenge to the student were recorded in the student's reading journal, illustrated in Appendix C. Reviewing the words before rereading the sections on fresh intervention days assisted with fluency and was celebrated to bring value to the student's accomplishment.

For the student, open questions and praise were valuable contributors to the student's attitude and approach to the reading tasks. Through the MRQ the student revealed his interest exhibiting satisfactory reading ability for the approval of others. Grades and parental approval brings value to the student's perception of his skill. Open questions referenced in allowed the student to express their thinking and share prior knowledge of the topic being discussed.

## **Participants**

The participant of the study consisted of one student who was attending the local school, NSA Naples Elementary School. The school, administered by the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DODEA), is located on a naval base in Naples, Italy. From previous observations, the school houses mainly American children of military families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The study was conducted with the permission of the student's parents and outside the purview of the school. The student is a male military child of African American decent who is currently in the second grade. Based on information obtained from the parents, the student has been previously identified as academically gifted through assessments administered in previous schools. The student is currently placed in a learning environment that satisfactorily engages the student's advanced learning ability.



The parents expressed concern over the student's lack of motivation to read which affects his reading development due to lack of practice. They have been working with the school to find strategies to implement that encourage the student to read frequently and consistently, outside of being prompted or coached. Through a preliminary oral reading assessment, the researcher has established that the student possesses foundational strategies to assist with reading. However, the lack of frequency in the activity, enthusiasm, and motivation is apparent in the way the student reads to finish the task. Allowing the student to lead through his interest and then engage him in discussions will assist in building enthusiasm and motivation to read.

## **Data Collection and Instruments**

The student participated in one on one intervention sessions which began with a Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) and a reading interest interview. Condensed MRQ is shown in Appendix A with the answer choices in Appendix B. Appendix C illustrates the results of the questionnaire with branching questions that were used in a concurrent interview as the questionnaire was administered. The space in which the queries posed were placed alongside the corresponding statement that was used to lead into the interview question. The MRQ was administered orally with a visual representation of the answer choices given to the student to assist in responding to the statements. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed based on the type of response, rather than the average for each one. Doing so was a way to focus particular attention on what was said and why, rather than what percentage the student leaned for or against a particular reading attitude or category. The interview during the administration of the questionnaire was an attempt to elaborate on the statements in the MRO; bringing focus to the researcher about the student's interest. For example, in the section corresponding to Reading Curiosity on the MRQ, the student encountered a statement presenting the idea of reading about hobbies. After the word hobby was defined and examples of hobbies were shared, the student was asked to share activities that he did on his spare time and to talk about how they would be considered hobbies.

A journal, referenced in Appendix C, was used to keep track of learning for both the student and the researcher. Charts used such as the Know, Want to know, and Learned chart (KWL) referenced in Appendix G, kept track of student foundational questions and speculations about the contents of the text and new confirmations or discoveries. Challenging words were also recorded in the journal as the student decoded them. Each word was discussed, defined, and referred to frequently in discussions about the topic of the text.



The information recorded in the journal from observations and the MRQ, referenced in Appendix B, during the intervention sessions was analyzed after each session concluded to assist in planning and adjusting questions that help to focus and drive the next session. Overall, the aim is to increase enthusiasm and motivation to read. The student was assessed based on oral reading ability and the quality in the attempts to use problem solving strategies to clear misunderstanding in comprehension and decode challenging words. The quality of responses to questions assisted with comprehension and the self-perception of his ability to read fluently and utilize skills. The conclusion of the study will consist of an activity that engages the information the student learned and the text to create a summary that presents visual and textual information. The student will compare the aircrafts he discovered in the text and other sources found in the library.

## **Findings and Analysis**

## **Findings Summary**

The current action research centered on the question of the effectiveness of specific reading strategies, as well as techniques that sustained or improved interest that contributes to the improvement of reading comprehension. The data collected illustrated the usefulness of the Motivational Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) when planning and making adjustments during the intervention sessions. Additionally, the Know, Want to know, and Learned (KWL) chart assisted to focus on a chosen topic. The adjustments would extend to illustrate what affect the techniques and strategies utilized had on the reading motivation and engagement of the student. Throughout the action research, the student demonstrated subtle changes toward the conclusion of the intervention sessions.

Reading motivation intervention sessions were conducted over the course of six weeks at the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples Support Site library children's room. The student began by responding to the MRQ, found in Appendix D, as a pre-assessment. During the preassessment, the student was asked interview questions to assist in finding a focus for planning, based on the student's interest in reading genre and concerns. Based on the interview, the student's main concern was decoding new and challenging words. The preassessment aligned with the student's concern; however, it also gave insight to his reading personality. Through a brief fluency and comprehension assessment, questionnaire data was confirmed and it was realized that the student contributed little to discussion and was more inclined to answer leading questions. While planning activities, constructing questions, engaging in discussions, and acknowledging accomplishments, the researcher had to be



observant, flexible, and sensitive to the student's behavior and responses. The KWL was utilized to focus and drive instruction by allowing the student to share and record prior knowledge and questions of interest.

## **Analysis of Student Motivation**

Being aware of the student becoming complacent became an ongoing concern, which prompted adjustment in the approach to the student's reading and comprehension. When questioning was adjusted, engagement with the student when reading interest began to drop and become an act of compliance rather than participation. Occasionally, focus on reading was lost when discussions left the scope of instruction. At times, the student avoided the task, was not interested, or the task was an activity that he felt he was not proficient and remained silent. Unplanned adjustments during the intervention sessions assisted in regaining his engagement and improving reading motivation as the sessions continued. Although the improvements seemed minimal, and at times fluctuated, minor changes were sufficient to begin building the student's self-efficacy.

Adjustments, such as shared reading, model reading, research on the internet, student journaling, and collaborative discussions, were an attempt to encourage changes in reading attitude; from compliance, into a more developed interest in reading. Additionally, the intent was to develop his initiative to read for enjoyment. The student gradually became engaged and began initiating usage of reading skills that were encouraged in the first few intervention sessions. For instance, when the student began reading, errors made, such as substitutions or omissions, would cause the meaning of the sentence to be lost or corrupted. The student had a challenging time recalling enough information to use in discussions about what was read.

Early in the intervention session, a straight forward teaching approach was utilized. The student was corrected and instructed on the strategy that should be employed. For example, when encountering a word that was challenging, in the student's perception, he would be instructed to use a strategy that required him to deconstruct the word into its sounds, and blend them together as he solved smaller sections. The teacher centered strategy consists of a reading approach being modeled, and its value discussed. Additionally, examples would be used to assist in practicing the strategy. Participation slowly declined and there was a drop in self-efficacy and motivation. However, when he was asked to think of ways he would approach new words, the student would refer to techniques he had previously learned. Upon reflection, the researcher noticed that when she jumped in with corrections, the student began to distance himself from the task. It seemed as though by jumping in with the appropriate



strategy, the student did not feel that his knowledge and understanding was valuable. As the sessions progressed, the student's reaction to teaching techniques was observed. The observed sparks of engagement and motivation served as a catalyst for adjustments when engaging the student.

Adjustments that assisted in changing the student's attitude toward reading, and the corresponding activities, included collaborative discussion about the text and model reading. These two activities appeared to the student to not only level the learning field, but to also allow the student to see reading and self-correction from his perspective. Being allowed to choose the sections the he was interested in brought variety, focus, and generated interest during the intervention session. The student was frequently praised for making connections and sharing prior knowledge during discussions; as it assisted to elaborate, and at times, clarify his explanations.

Despite the adjustments, there were occasions when engagement would decrease. Persistence and being observant of the student's responses and reactions assisted in strategic revisions of planning for the session as it progressed. When reading about an F-15 jet fighter, the student was introduced to interesting capabilities of the jet fighter that were not found in the reading. Watching a short video demonstrating F-15 jets break the sound barrier, and later reading about them, helped the jet fighter stand out from other aircrafts the student was reading about. Additions, such as using visual stimuli related to the book, assisted to bringing the text to life. The dialogue born from the addition of the short video example encourages the student to use information he has read and can refer to the text as needed. When motivation and interest was waning, the researcher's role adjusted to one that was more motivational and collaborative in which information was contributed, rather than disseminated.

Building on the student's successes became essential. Allowing the student to record his challenges and successes made his accomplishments visible. Questions are also easily tracked and researched when recorded in the journal, which makes planning for future sessions inclusive and transparent to the learner. To build on his successes, it was necessary to develop a brief reading routine to begin each session as well. Beginning sessions with previously explored sections, the student reengaged with the text and prepared himself for new fluency experiences and vocabulary challenges. After the review, the student would proceed to a new section of the book. While the intervention sessions were being conducted, the student read the same book throughout the six weeks. The difficultly level of the book did not increase or decrease, as it was chosen to be at the instructional level of the student.



The purpose was to get the student reading, comfortably discussing text, and using reading strategies to problem solve challenges as they were encountered. At the final intervention session, a matching activity was conducted. The idea was for the student to fully engage in the activity and problem solve by placing the correct description to its corresponding image. The text difficulty of the descriptions on the matching activity remained consistent with the difficulty level of the text used during the intervention. However, scattered throughout the descriptions were vocabulary words in which the difficulty level was increased. The purpose for these vocabulary words was to test the student's motivation to use strategies to decode these words without prompting. The task also facilitated observations of the student's initiative to make the reading attempt, or avoid it due to the intimidation the new words may have brought.

As the sessions progressed, the student demonstrated more initiative to read using student initiated strategies and often self-corrected without prompting. Towards the conclusion of the intervention sessions, the student began to show signs of engagement in the reading tasks and discussions. Working with the student's interest, not only through a specific reading genre but also learning style, contributed to the rise in engagement and motivation. Essentially, the student felt more accomplished when he was encouraged and, at times, indirectly guided through errors. Instead of instructor highlighted errors and direction, the student took initiative to make corrections. The student generally displayed more satisfaction when he realized he correctly problem solved on his own. This satisfaction fed his motivation to continue and contribute to discussions. Motivation to read, during the intervention, gradually increased as the student became more comfortable with his problem solving ability and contribution to discussions about the text.

#### **Data Analysis**

The pre-assessment illustrated that the student was prone to comply with academic tasks to complete them, rather than engage for the sake of learning. Essentially, there was little value in the task for the student other than achieving a satisfactory grade. According to the pre-assessment data, the student's responses revealed that grades bring value and accomplishment to reading attempts. The student felt that all four questions on the MRQ, regarding the importance of grades for reading, were aligned to his perception of what brought value to reading. Competitiveness was another category in which the student related with the statements.



According to his responses on the MRQ, six out of six statements regarding competition in reading also aligned with his value system for reading. The information referencing the MRQ responses are annotated in Appendix D. This reader seeks recognition and positive reinforcement for successful reading attempts. Additionally, he feels satisfaction with the notion that he knows information that others do not. The data assisted the researcher to critically consider what is said in discussions as well as how questions are constructed.

The data from the MRQ demonstrates the importance of becoming a careful observer. While it reveals clues of the student's values and personality for reading, it also encourages the observer to be aware of reading traits so that intervention can have the appropriate affect. As the intervention was implemented, field notes were collected by both the student and the researcher. Data collected by the student consisted of words that presented a reading challenge, thoughts about the reading, prior knowledge, newly learned information, and items for further research. Questionnaire data, session reflections, and review of the student's learning data assisted the researcher to analyze the information collected.

Information from the questionnaire and interview, combined with the student's stated concerns and the researcher's reflective analysis, focused reading sessions; and began to illustrate what was occurring with the student' reading motivation and engagement. Understanding the response system for the MRQ referenced in Appendix D, and how the student had to decide where he related to, or felt distanced from, the statements, made the researcher more critical of how to facilitate reading activities and interactions with the student. It was important to improve the student's perception of how closely his self-efficacy aligned with responses related to him.

The data assisted in making subtle changes to assist the student's reading. The student's responses to the MRQ specifically provided the researcher with information on where to begin pedagogically, while the brief interview provided data on materials to gather. At the beginning of the work sessions, engagement for reading and discussion was low; subsequent sessions showed improvement with well-placed praise, assistance, and questions. During the final reading activity, referenced in Appendix F, the student did not need prompting. He engaged challenging words on his own, utilized problem solving strategies to deconstruct and reconstruct words, as well as used the text to support or correct matching errors. Allowing the student to freely discuss his ideas was a vital aspect of the intervention. Discussions contributed to increased motivation and engagement as the session progressed.



# Learning Analysis

Field notes from intervention discussions during the session, along with conversations with the student's parent, assisted with confirming information collected and served to assist with adjustments to the intervention activities. Critical reflection after the session ended and discussions with the student's parents were contributing factors to the analysis of the data collected from the intervention. Table 1 contains a summary of the data analyzed from the information gathered during the intervention sessions and subsequent reflections. Based on the initial study of the data, fluctuations in the level of motivation and engagement are evident.

However, during the weeks that the chosen book was read and discussed, the motivation was either medium or high. The student was more engaged to read the more his knowledge on the subject was engaged through discussion. In contrast, when the student was engaged through mini-lessons, decoding words and rereading for meaning and accuracy facilitated a poorly motivated response and erroneous errors were made.

Table 1. Relationship Between Activities and the Student Levels of Motivation and
Engagement

Activity	When it was	Level of	Level of
Activity	y implemented		engagement
MRQ administration, reading interview,		Medium	Medium/High
and fluency check	Week One		
Preview books with discussion	Week Two	Medium	Medium/high
Reading chosen book/Praise and	Weeks 3-5	Low/Medium	Low/medium
redirection	WEEKS 5-5		
Reading with discussions	Weeks 3-5	Medium	Medium/high
Model reading of an unrelated	Weeks 3-5	Medium	Low/Medium
branching story	weeks 5-5		
Reading: utilizing internet and	Week 4	Medium	Medium
discussion	week 4		
Discussion with writing	Weeks 3-4	Low	Low
Reading with comprehension activity	Week 6	High	High



Table 1 represents the student's response to the activities, labeled according to his level of motivation and engagement. Each level was categorized with a corresponding activity that was conducted during the intervention sessions. Motivation and engagement was defined by the student's body posture, attitude, as well as quality of initiative and participation in the activities and interactions with the researcher. Low motivation was demonstrated when the student slouched, was slow to involve himself in the activity, his voice was low, or he mumbled and frequently focused on other objects and people. Medium motivation involved more attentiveness and responsiveness, contribution to discussions, and vocal tones were at normal audible levels. Although he occasionally expressed disinterest or avoidance behaviors, he was frequently involved with the activity. High motivation was demonstrated by the student when he was initiating activities, conversations, and making notes. There was a consistent dialogue between the researcher and the student as well. His voice was more excited and loud as he shared information. The student would often use his hands to express his thoughts.

Engagement was measured in the same manner with added observations on how the student engaged with the text. For example, low engagement included superficial reading where no attempts were made to use a reading strategy or gain understanding of the content. The student would need frequent prompting and redirection. Medium engagement referred to occasional prompting and redirection. Reading fluency had improved and complied with requests towards rereading with minimal coaxing. High engagement was when the student was focused on the text, practiced appropriate reading strategies, and initiated attempts to self-correct and reread, without needing to be prompted.

Following the pre-assessment, focus areas for the intervention sessions were to be based on reading challenging words, comprehension, and contributing to discussions. To begin, during the reading intervention sessions, the student needed to choose reading material. A manageable quantity of choices made selecting a book less intimidating for the student. Additionally, reading material chosen without the student's interest as the focus would have been a challenge for the researcher to pique curiosity and sustain interest. However, based on previous observations, the student's low motivation and indecision towards the options his mother presented was noted. Her intent was to make the decision of selecting a book less intimidating. Repeating this situation with an added previewing activity would enhance the student's engagement and motivation, as referenced in Table 1, during the second week of intervention.



The situation was repeated by the researcher and revised to include the motivating aspect of the experience. The teachable moment came from relating the act of previewing and choosing books, to the student's most beloved hobby, video games. As referenced in Table 1, the activity was met with moderate motivation levels and increased engagement. From the small collection of books, the student selected a nonfiction book about aircrafts.

According to the pre-assessment data, in Appendix C, it became apparent that discussion would play a major part of the intervention experience. Table 1 noted the use of discussion during the previewing session. While discussion played a part to facilitate, the researcher had to be critical about the types of questions and statements utilized. Discussions raised the student's comfort level when sharing and contributing information about the topic being read. It also encouraged the student to utilize the reading material as evidence of his statements. Student notes became necessary and provided encouragement for the student's self-perception.

Field notes taken from the intervention sessions consisted of the researcher's reflection of the student's reading attitude, motivation, and accomplishments. For example, the vocabulary list the student built in Appendix E was a result of recording and decoding the challenging words he encountered. The list provided insight into the student's changing attitude about his ability to decode, initiative engage new words, and the frequency in the use of reading strategies without prompting. The field notes gave direction for subsequent sessions, and documenting progress in comprehension, motivation, and fluency.

Throughout the intervention sessions, a teacher centered intervention experience was abandoned, to one that was more student centered. As a result, both the student and researcher became collaborative participants; exploring the topic of aircrafts. The student began to be more inclined to integrate his background knowledge with what he learned through the text. Reading became less laborious for him as he made more concerted efforts to self-correct. Preparing for the task of reading, by practicing on previously read material, became student initiated rather than coaxed. During the last week of intervention, the same routine was initiated before the reading activity in Appendix F was initiated. As the student completed his work and self-assessed, he began to notice the value of the activities, rather than having the researcher providing an explanation.

The post-assessment revealed that there has been small progress in the student's motivation toward reading. While compliance was a concern, because initiative was contingent upon fulfilling requests for acknowledgement, levels of motivation and



engagement did increase, with persistent and repeated intervention sessions. Table 1 illustrates a pattern regarding specific activities that often included discussion. This led to the notion that providing the student rewarding reading and comprehension experiences, as he matures, will reinforce and build his reading foundation. He will also benefit from heightened engagement and motivation for reading, which will promote his initiative to read for enjoyment.

## **Conclusions and Discussion**

The effectiveness of specific reading strategies, as well as techniques, assists in improving student interest and engagement, which contributes to improvement of reading fluency and comprehension. Focusing the study on one student facilitated a close examination on the tools and teaching techniques employed when engaging the student. Gauging the student's self-efficacy in regards to perception and interest in reading was vital. Through the use of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), the ability to gather and continually utilize inventory data focuses and adjusts instruction to support in appropriately engaging the student.

The student's participation and initiative for reading and discussion improved in the short time the research was conducted.

## **Summary of Findings**

Utilizing the data to plan the sessions created structure and consistency that drove learning and assisted the student to build upon previously gained knowledge. As a result, the student gained more confidence in the use of his reading strategies and ability to contribute and maintain engagement in discussions. While the initial intervention illustrated low reading motivation and engagement in Table 1, discussions and journaling facilitated consistent progress in comprehension. This allowed for the student to steadily make reading problem solving gains and successfully solve the final reading activity.

## **Implications for Student Learning**

Through the use of individualized sessions, and the selection of a topic motivating the student, increases in comprehension show preparedness for higher levels of difficulty. Without the session tailored to individualized needs, student interest would have slowed any potential success; as displayed before the introduction of aircraft into the sessions. With a renewed interest, after focusing on a specific area, the student began to understand the value of utilizing reading strategies. Discussion to facilitate improved reading proficiency, which was required to learn more about the subject. Even though most subjects in class will not be



focused on aircrafts, the parents, interventionist, and teacher can catalog these findings and utilize them to regain engagement. Motivation in a particular subject, by showing its relevance in the particular field of interest, also benefits engagement. Setting goals and developing motivation for learning allow for the student and teacher to benefit.

# **Implications for Teacher Practice**

For future lesson development, it is important to remain cognizant of individual student motivations to provide insight. I have learned through this action research the emphasized importance of intervention, appropriate open questioning, and collaborative discussion experiences has unlimited rewards in developing an individual understanding of students. While the desired goals for each grade and subject area are the same for each student's completion, each student takes a different path to arrive at developing comprehension. For the future, subject area inventories an enhanced focus on student individualization will provide valuable information when a student needs more individualized focus.

## **Plan of Action**

Based on the findings, it is encouraged that inquiry based assessments and individual focus be utilized with determining methods to enhance subject area motivation and improvement. At the first available opportunity, these findings should be shared and made available to peers, with particular interest on novice teachers. This insight will assist educators in enhancing focus on student educational needs and illustrate learned experience to recently new teachers. Through the use of social media, follow up with the researched student and his parents is possible for periodic information updates. Added emphasis on inquiry based learning will encourage for the student to continue reading motivation and growth. For the researcher, exploration into inquiry based assessments and reading pedagogy, with particular focus given to intervention and small group instruction, will be continued through workshops provided by the local school district and Region XII. Developing differentiated instructional techniques, that encourages and strengthens reading motivation and engagement, will benefit students of all ability levels. The instructor's ability to facilitate student learning, without overwhelming or understimulating students who have specific reading needs, will enhance the teacher teaching techniques and assist with involving parents to continue improving student reading motivation and practice.



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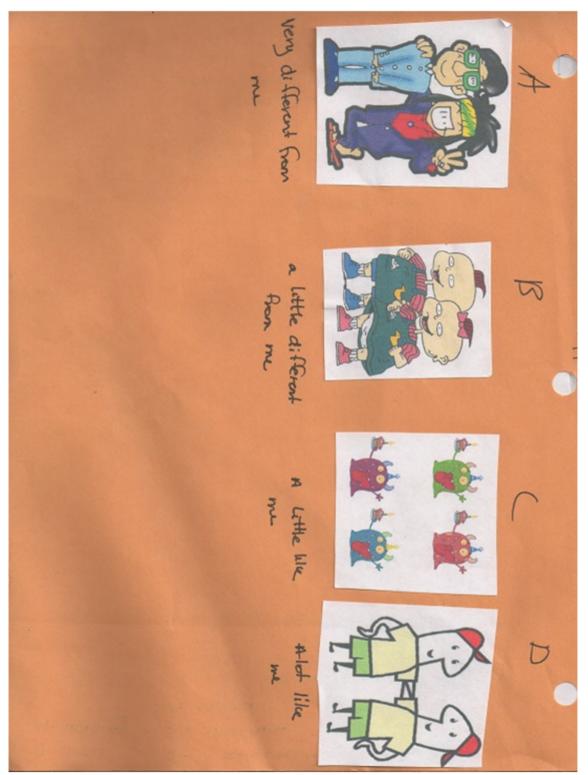
# Appendix A

Reading Efficacy (3 items)	Competition in Reading (6 items)
I don't know that I will do well in reading next	I try to get more answers right than my friends
vear	X         I like being the best at reading
I am a good reader	I like to finish my reading before other students
I learn more from reading than most students in	I like being the only one who knows an answer
the class	in something we read
Reading Challenge (5 items)	It is important for me to see my name on a list
I like hard, challenging books	of good readers
If the project is interesting, I can read difficult	I am willing to work hard to read better than my
material	friends
I like it when the questions in books make me	Recognition for Reading (5 items)
think	I like having the teacher say I read well
✗ I usually learn difficult things by reading	My friends sometimes tell me I am a good
If a book is interesting I don't care how hard it	reader
is to read	✗ I like to get compliments for my reading
Reading Curiosity (6 items)	I am happy when someone recognizes my
₭ If the teacher discusses something interesting I	reading
might read more about it	My parents often tell me what a good job I am
I have favorite subjects that I like to read about	doing in reading
I read to learn new information about topics	Reading for Grades (4 items)
that interest me	Grades are a good way to see how well you are
I read about my hobbies to learn more about	doing in reading
them	I look forward to finding out my reading grades
I like to read about new things	I read to improve my grades
I enjoy reading books about living things	My parents ask me about my reading grade
Reading Involvement (6 items)	Social Reasons for Reading (7 items)
I read stories about fantasy and make believe	I visit the library often with my family
X I like mysteries	X I often read to my brother or my sister
✗ I make pictures in my mind when I read	My friends and I like to trade things to read
✗ I feel like I make friends with people in good	I sometimes read to my parents
books	I talk to my friends about what I am reading
I read a lot of adventure stories	I like to help my friends with their schoolwork
<ul> <li>I read a lot of adventure stories</li> <li>I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book</li> </ul>	in reading
Importance of Reading (2 items)	I like to tell my family about what I am reading
It is very important to me to be a good reader	
In comparison to other activities I do, it is very	Compliance (5 items)
	<ul> <li>I do as little schoolwork as possible in reading</li> <li>I read because I have to</li> </ul>
important to me to be a good reader	
Reading Work Avoidance (4 items)	I always do my reading work exactly as the
I don't like vocabulary questions	teacher wants it
Complicated stories are no fun to read	Finishing every reading assignment is very
I don't like reading something when the words	important to me
are too difficult	X I always try to finish my reading on time
I don't like it when there are too many people in	
the story	

Condensed representation of the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire



# Appendix B



The illustrated responses for the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire



## Appendix C

Summary of results for the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

MRQ Motivations for Reading Questionaire Administered at home Leading Efficacy (3 item), and and Mixed perception Competative rate Reading Challenge (5, tems) Reasontion to High interest in reading challenge ow interest in challenges for a project \* What is your favorite subject in school? What makes that subject interesting 4 What is your favorite subject in school? What makes that subject interesting 4/10 rainiousity 16 comprehension 6 motiv to read thinks \* What are no do you do on your spore time? what makes those a childres fun Reading Involvement (le tems Rasons 5/6 for involvement 1/6 long fiction what makes mysteries fun to read? In adventure stories what are the heros like? Importance of rading (2 items) 2/2 for importance to b a good reader cading Work Avoidance (4 toms) denod low interest in Shan 2001 100 to top at allow sit ab simple plate



MCG. mineralized Matillarions for Kerning 12 milestant Competition in Reading (6. toms) MIXE LEXIN % competative reader Weading Challence Recognition for Reading (Fitim) 5/5 motivated by praise = acknowledge Reading for Grades (4 items) a collection of the provide a status of 4/4 motivated by grades ... 1 FE war as annon herter 4 Investigant. Geaching. Social Reasons for Reading (7 items) 75 - Social reading ant an - hat library wil fam a shere of not estroly on asince top - discuss + hap friends - mathematic 2/7 read to others - siblings parents aline was a solar and as 1/7 atmost low interest in sharing books 1/1 discuss with friends with Compliance (5. items) 4/5 do the work to get it done according to instructions 15



# Appendix D

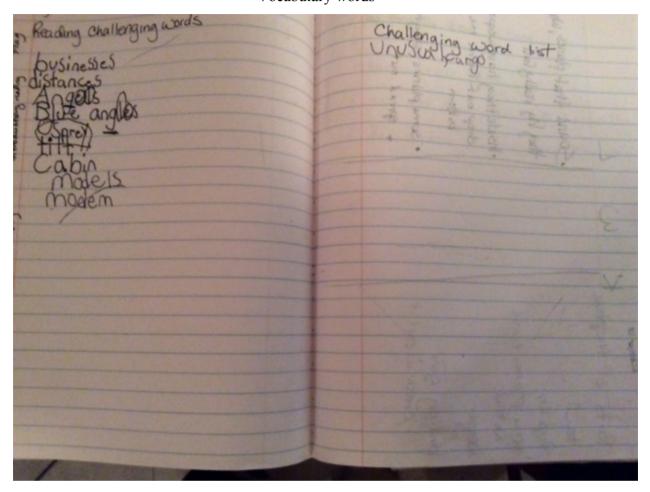
D D D D D D D D DC Sometimes ra A A C K (ruised and) Iget excited about reading horewark COG

Student Motivation for Reading Questionnaire responses



# Appendix E

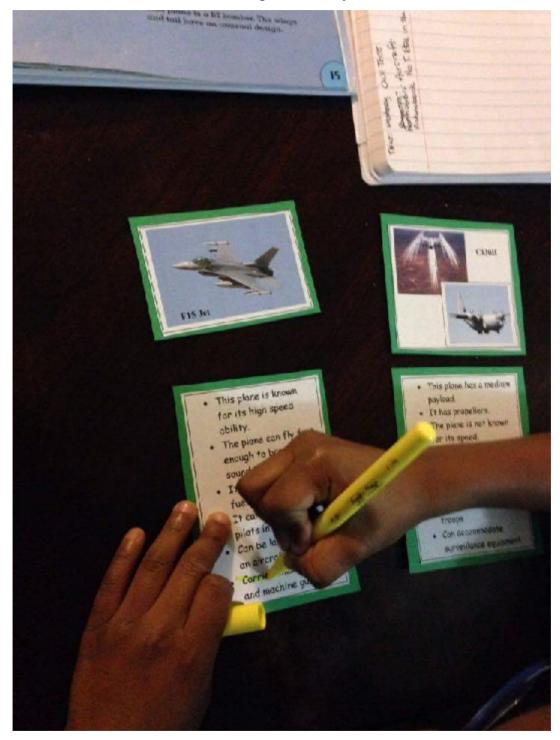
# Vocabulary words



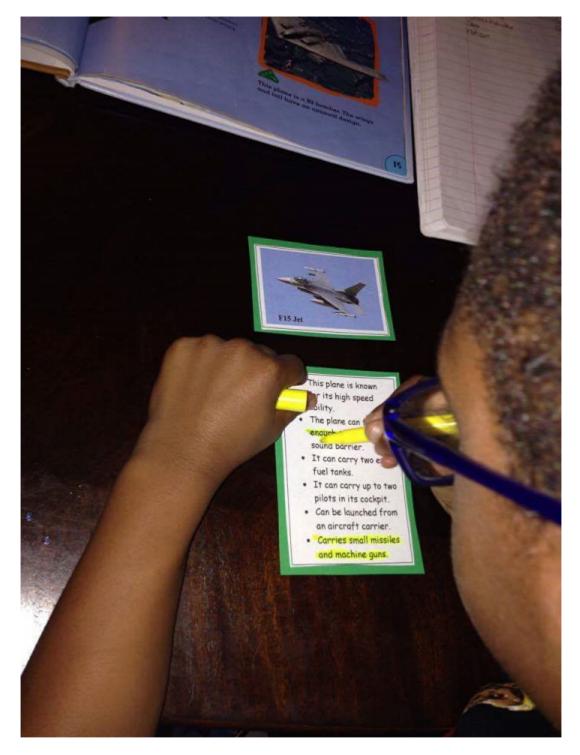


# Appendix F

# Reading card activity













# Appendix G

Tite October 28 4 Parts of the plane Sound that planes, when tail they Fly really fast Propeller some planes have ·Inside they have weapons drop out from the notail weepen bottom anding grav · some planes staytogetha - Crash would it + sporad out It soots misls carnies 20,000/100 On the Boton 100 propensity of F15 e the propenting When it goes So fast it Brek the Sond Bater · the osprey corry troops

Recorded data for the Know, Want to know, and Learned (KWL) chart