

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH PERSONAL LEARNING  
DEVICES AS IT RELATES TO READING MOTIVATION: A CASE STUDY

by

Veda Robinson Ojo

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this collective case study was to understand the experiences of middle grades students as they relate to reading motivation with personal learning devices. The guiding question was, how do middle school students describe their experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read? The sample population included a total of 15 students from grades sixth, seventh and eighth from a North Georgia middle school. The psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's self-determination relevant to reading motivation and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory in regard to efferent and aesthetic reading transactions served as the theoretical basis for the research. Data was collected from multiple sources including individual interviews, ELA journals, reports from the reading platform myON<sup>®</sup> and focus group interviews. Data analysis consisted of coding and categorizing information that was then used to conduct a cross case synthesis. The themes of tools, focus, purpose, choice, voice and nonlinear reading were extrapolated and used to inform the naturalistic generalization that technology does not encourage students to read of their own volition. Instead, middle grade students are inclined to read with devices because the tools and features allow differentiation of the reading process on many levels. The results of this study substantiated the notion that technology is best utilized within the context of well-planned engaging instruction that takes into consideration the individual needs, capabilities, and preferences of each learner.

*Keywords:* reading, motivation, personal learning devices, middle grades learners

## Dedication

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my maternal grandparents Reverend and Mrs. Pearl Lockett, Sr. and my paternal grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Robert Roberson, Sr. These individuals gave life to my parents Wanda and Robert Robinson, Jr. who raised me to believe “with God all things are possible.” Although my grandparents are not here to celebrate this milestone, their love and Godly influence will live on in the hearts and minds of their offspring for generations to come.

This work is also dedicated to my big sister cousin Geraldine Lockett Zillions who slipped from time into eternity a few months before this journey was completed. Her love and compassion for family and friends was unprecedented. The bond we shared will never be forgotten.

My final dedication is to my aunt, Dr. Ola M. Curry who loved learning and overcame insurmountable obstacles to achieve a terminal degree. Her words, “getting a doctorate is not about how much you know; but your willingness to persevere,” encouraged me to continue this journey when I became overwhelmed and decided an Education Specialist degree would suffice for me. Two weeks before my defense she lost her battle with brain cancer; however, I believe in my heart she knew I succeeded.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for blessing me to achieve this educational milestone. I am also thankful to family members who loved and supported me despite the challenges this journey presented. I am appreciative of my husband, Dr. Philip Ojo, for intermittently assuming the role of mother and father particularly when it was necessary for me to take courses on campus. I am appreciative of my parents for encouraging me and babysitting Kristen and Andrew so I could research, write, and meet deadlines. I also extend thanks to my older children Ope and Ore for lending a hand around the house and assisting when I needed to troubleshoot computer issues. Lastly, I would like to thank my brother Roderick Robinson for introducing me to online education, and my sister Valerie Scott who inspired me to take the next step of pursuing an Education Specialist degree which ultimately led to this accomplishment.

In addition to Christ and my family members, this work would not have been possible without the assistance of an awesome committee. I am thankful for my committee chair Dr. Holcomb and my committee members Dr. Beavers and Dr. Perry-Sheldon for their guidance and diligence in working with me throughout this process. I am especially grateful for Dr. Perry-Sheldon who was instrumental in helping me achieve my first degree from North Carolina Wesleyan College. Thank you, Dr. Perry-Sheldon, for supporting my initial career and educational endeavors, please know you have made an indelible impact on my life.

Finally, I offer a huge thanks to my church family who was a source of prayer and inspiration. The prayers, texts and calls of encouragement are greatly appreciated. I pray God's richest blessing upon each of you.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Technology is considered an integral element of twenty-first century teaching and learning around the world (Gustad, 2014). Many school districts have integrated its use through one-to-one or bring your own device initiatives as a means of expanding access to relevant and engaging content for technology savvy young people (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015). Some school districts have launched personal learning initiatives which equip all students with some form of technology to enhance learning through a wealth of resources and tools necessary for school success (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015). The focus of this study was understanding the experiences of middle grades students in relation to their motivation to read with technology.

Chapter One addresses the foundational elements necessary to understand the experiences of middle school students as it relates to their motivation to read with personal learning devices. First, the background section explains the historical nature of the interrelated topics of reading, technology, and motivation. Next, the impetus for conducting this study is addressed followed by an explanation of the gaps in the literature and an acknowledgement of the researcher's philosophical assumptions. The Chapter proceeds to address the purpose, research questions, and central definitions pertinent for gaining a full understanding of middle school students' experiences as it relates to their desire to read with personal learning devices. Chapter One concludes with a summary which delineates the problem, purpose and necessity of gaining an understanding of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices.

### **Background**

For years educators and policy makers have grappled over a plethora of reading related topics ranging from phonics and whole language to motivation and the question of why some

individuals are willing participants in the reading process, while others must be coerced to pick up a book (Cheung & Slavin, 2013). Even with the addition of new digital technologies, questions remain about how to address the waning interest in the once highly esteemed pastime of reading (Mills, 2010). This section addresses background information concerning the historical, social, and theoretical context for the study of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices.

### **Historical Context**

Twenty-first century technology has been celebrated for its ability to provide a plethora of informational and educational resources that appeal to a new generation of learners (Rosen, 2011). Its practicality, convenience, and ability to address multiple areas of academic concern have lead school districts, around the world, to equip individual learners with the technological tools necessary for taking a digital approach to teaching and learning (Richardson et al., 2013). While one-to-one device initiatives may seem relatively new, their use was derived from the idea of personalized learning which is rooted in the concept of self-directed learning that dates back to the sixteenth century (Haworth, 2016). Whether the device is an e-reader, tablet, cell phone or laptop, its use helps facilitate the much advocated paradigm shift from teacher driven to student centered instruction (Haworth, 2016). While some educators view this as a needed transition, others, such as reading teachers, are concerned that given the autonomy to choose from the many recreational options available with technology, students may not elect to utilize devices for academic activities which promote higher order critical thinking (Bauerlein, 2011).

Another area of concern involving personal learning devices is reading proficiency. For many years, teachers, educators and policy makers have been perplexed by the issue of “why Johnny can’t read” (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012). The answer to this

age-old question ranges from ill preparedness to lack of interest; however, researchers agree that simply knowing how to read is not enough to garner success (Laverick, 2014; Marchand-Martella, Martella, Modderman, Petersen, & Pan, 2013). In other words, even if the skill set exists for accurate execution of the reading process, studies suggest motivation remains a critical element for success with literacy related tasks (Applegate & Applegate, 2010).

Further, from a technological and motivational perspective, some have argued technology is an inherent motivator; however, others refute the claim asserting devices are only tools that are limited by the user's ability to leverage them effectively (Jacobs, 2012). As it relates to technology and motivation, the perception exists that technology's interactive nature equates to motivation; however, research indicates whereas motivation and engagement are key components of reading, they are separate entities which bear individual consideration relative to students' reading experiences. While studies acknowledge the possibility of comingling in the areas of technology, motivation and engagement, many concur there are areas of demarcation which make it possible, in some degree, to determine where one construct ends and the other begins (Unrau & Qurik, 2014).

According to research, middle school students' motivation to read is of particular importance because the inclination to read starts to wane by the end of elementary school and needs a substantial boost to accommodate the higher level of stamina and persistence necessary for grappling with the demands of content area reading (Ford-Connors, Dougherty, Robertson, Patore, 2015;). However, since the implementation of Common Core State Standards, reading experts and policy makers agree important aspects of reading, such as motivation, have not been a priority among researchers (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). The 2016 report of *What's hot and what's not in reading* identified reading motivation as a "not hot" or unprioritized topic among

reading researchers (Grote-Garcia, 2016); nevertheless, a large percentage of the same researchers concurred motivation should be a prioritized topic in reading research. Thus, a gap exists in the literature relative to current research studies on the reading motivation of middle grades students (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013). This study added “rich, thick qualitative descriptions” to an existing body of research that primarily incorporates the wide scale use of surveys to gauge motivation from a quantitative perspective. The generalizations and assertions gleaned in this study were garnered from actual experiences described by middle grades students who read with technology.

### **Social Context**

Experts concur motivation is a key component of reading; yet reading motivation begins to decrease around middle school (Laverick, 2014; Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Also, during this time explicit instruction in reading ends and students are expected to apply the reading skills learned in the primary and intermediate grades to the more complex, content specific informational textbooks with little guidance of how to successfully navigate these more advanced text structures (Vaughn et al., 2011). Unfortunately for some students, the absence of reading strategy instruction that typically embeds a motivational aspect for interactions with complex text, leads to disinterest in reading, and ultimately school since most courses include a robust reading component (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Insight about student experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to reading motivation, was necessary for providing educators, parents and policy makers with firsthand information about students’ internal and external reading motivation, as well as their experiential and aesthetic interactions with text when utilizing personal learning devices. The firsthand data collected in this study served as a basis for providing an understanding of how to better facilitate the

successful use of personal learning devices at school and home, as well as offered suggestions on bolstering the waning reading motivation of middle school students.

In addition to providing firsthand information about middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices, this study impacted the participants involved by providing an opportunity to reflect on reading habits and motivation as it relates to their experiences with personal learning devices. Since middle school learners are typically complex individuals, the reflection process also provided an opportunity to exercise metacognitive strategies which are key elements of self-improvement. In addition, this study provided students opportunities to make connections about literacy in other content areas that are typically reliant on strong reading skills (Gustad, 2014).

Finally, while there were quantitative studies which focused on primary grade students and English language learners relative to using e-readers and other forms of technology, few identified middle grades learners as the focal point and even fewer examined how devices impact reading motivation (Ciampa, 2012; Gustad, 2014;). Although quantitative studies consider measurable elements of reading and comprehension, qualitative studies were necessary to delve into a topic like motivation because it is a phenomenon that cannot be separated from its context. Considering the impact motivation has on reading, this study included implications for consideration by reading researchers, English language arts teachers, literacy coaches, and curriculum developers.

### **Theoretical Context**

The current study explored the relationship between personal learning devices and reading motivation within the context of the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's macro theory of self-determination and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory (Deci & Ryan,

2010; Larson, 2015). Deci and Ryan's (2010) theory purports the psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy are necessary constructs for fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to the theorists, fulfillment of these psychological needs is a prerequisite for participation in activities of one's own volition and those pursued to achieve a particular goal. Unlike traditional books, technology has the potential to meet the needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy on many levels. The psychological needs theory was instrumental in understanding the types of motivation demonstrated in the experiences described.

Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory posits reading is a transaction between the reader and the text that results in efferent or aesthetic reading experiences. While efferent reading is associated with extrinsic motivation, aesthetic transactions are linked to intrinsic motivation. In relation to reading motivation with technology, devices have the capacity to facilitate textual transactions that are motivational based on its interactive nature and students' prior experiences with technology. Early theorist Piaget and Vygotsky noted learning is more permanent when it can be related to existing schema patterns (Mills, 2010). Considering technology is something with which many students have interacted their entire life, the possibility exists for these schema patterns to influence reading motivation (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015).

### **Situation to Self**

As an avid reader for most of my life, I thought teaching reading would be an ideal career choice. For me, reading provided a place of escape which allowed my imagination to explore places I had only heard about or envisioned in my mind's eye. As a teen I participated in the summer reading club at the neighborhood public library and even received a trophy for reading twenty-five books during the school year. Since I was passionate about reading, I thought the



passion would be infectious and spread to others. Nevertheless, I was surprised to learn, after spending years in preparation to teach reading and language arts to middle grades students, my passion was not shared by most of the students I taught. Hence, after years of struggling to teach reading, I gave up and decided to teach family and consumer science, a subject the students love because the curriculum includes cooking and eating. However, after I relinquished my position as a reading teacher, the district instituted a one-to-one device initiative (with each student having their own digital device) which piqued my curiosity about the impact personal learning devices would have on students' willingness to read.

As an educator, it is my axiological assumption that the quest for knowledge begins early and parents play an eminent role in influencing children's attitude about school, books and reading. I believe if parents value reading in the home and establish a culture of early literacy by reading to children and modeling literacy related practices, students will enter school with an intrinsic desire to willingly participate in the reading process. Frequently when home reading was assigned, less proficient reading students complained they did not have anything at home to read. This was a signal that reading was likely not a high priority at home. On the other hand, avid readers who were likely immersed in a culture of literacy at home, questioned whether the required twenty minutes of reading time could be exceeded and if chapter books were acceptable to include on the reading log. Hence, based on my axiological assumptions, I acknowledged at onset of this study the potential to view middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices through a research lens influenced by my beliefs of parents' influential role in fostering the initial phase of early literacy which leads to a love of books and the desire to read.

From an epistemological standpoint, I believe all knowledge comes from God and there is "nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Therefore, as I examined the phenomenon of

motivation within the context of reading with personal learning devices and middle school students, I desired to gain an understanding that would fill a gap in the literature relevant to how digital technologies impact students' motivation to read (Grote-Garcia, 2016; Ortlieb, Sargent & Moreland, 2014). My ontological assumption is that meaning could be derived from the experiences students described about reading with personal learning devices and these experiences would lend themselves to understanding of the type of motivation students exhibited. It was anticipated that this knowledge would help bridge the gap in the literature that existed relative to the impact reading with devices has on students' inclination to read from a qualitative perspective.

The realities sought about middle school students' experiences with personal learning devices were a joint effort between the participants and me, which meant a social constructivist paradigm best aligned with this study (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013) the social constructivist relies on the participants' perspectives on the situation and uses open ended questions as a segue for discussions which are used to construct meaning about the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Case study research fits the constructivist paradigm because it is heavily reliant upon open ended questions which are typically addressed in an interview type setting. According to Yin (2009), the interview is the primary data collection means in case study research that allows the researcher to develop "rich, thick" contextual descriptions of the phenomenon. Lastly a social constructivist paradigm lent itself to relationship building between the research instrument and the participants. As an experienced middle grades educator, I understood the necessity of building rapport with the students before attempting the process of data collection.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem for this study was understanding how the experiences of middle grades students with technology factored into their motivation to read. Although other aspects of reading motivation have been explored (Guthrie, Klauda & Ho, 2013), a need existed to examine reading motivation within the context of digital technologies (Cassidy, Ortleib & Grote-Garcia, 2016). While there are studies which quantitatively explore the phenomena of e-readers and tablets on primary and English language learners' motivation to read (Gustad, 2014; Hess, 2014), searches for qualitative studies on motivation to read with technology in the middle grades did not yield viable results.

Research indicates students who are internally motivated to read outperform their less motivated counterparts (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014). The issue of middle school students' motivation to read with technology necessitated an understanding because motivation, which is considered a pivotal element of reading success, is believed to decline around middle school (Laverick, 2014). Hence, understanding the phenomenon of reading motivation within the context of middle school was necessary to inform multiple aspects of reading instruction with technology.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this collective case study was to understand the relationship between the use of personal learning devices and the motivation to read among middle grades students at a suburban middle school in North Georgia. For this study motivation was defined as the inclination to read (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The theories guiding the research were the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory as it relates to reading

motivation and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory regarding efferent and aesthetic reading transactions.

### **Significance of the Study**

The pervasiveness of mobile technology within the last several decades has resulted in a paradigm shift for twenty first century educators and students (Grant et al., 2015). Studies have shown mobile computing devices tend to be a source of engagement for students who have utilized technology for most of their lives (Ciampa, 2014; Rosen, 2011). These devices have the potential to revolutionize how many traditional activities are accomplished including the way in which individuals interact with text. Personal learning devices allow students to manipulate text in a manner that is otherwise impossible with traditional forms of reading material (Larson, 2015). This type of textual manipulation is thought to impact engagement and possibly even student attitudes toward reading. This research was important to teachers, parents, and literacy coaches because it enabled the researcher to gain valuable insight on why middle grades students are inclined to read with technology. The study has implications, for reading instruction, which may be used to facilitate internal motivation and promote more aesthetic reading experiences for middle grades learners. Although studies have been conducted which examine reading within the context of personal learning devices, they are primarily quantitative and focus on elementary students and English as a second language populations (Gustad, 2014; Hess, 2014; Jones & Brown, 2011). Whereas these studies were valid in their respective contexts, they did not consider the facets of motivation that vary dependent on an array of variables that are uniquely ascribed on an individual basis.

It was also important to understand middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices because the information garnered about internal and external

motivation offers insight on how technology may be leveraged to foster engaged reading experiences that have the potential to facilitate constructs consistent with intrinsic motivation. Although studies exist which examine the reading motivation of middle school students in relation to traditional print (Guthrie & Klauda, 2013) there was a need to explore this phenomenon within the context of the digital devices that are pervasively utilized both in and out of school (Cassidy et al., 2016). Additionally, the results of this study yielded motivational experiences which had implications for certain aspects of reading comprehension (Rennie, 2016).

Further, explicit instruction in reading is typically not addressed in the middle grades which means by the end of elementary school students must be prepared to make the shift from learning how to read, to reading for the purpose of learning (Braeten, Anmarkrud & Strømsø, 2013). Hence, information on reading motivation with devices was important to facilitating an understanding of the experiences which support or detract from the inclination to read complex text (Bauerlein, 2011). This research also had implications for college and career readiness programs which begin to groom middle grades students for the task of grappling with various formats of complex text. Additionally, while one might posit that the nature of the middle grades adolescents is feigned disinterest in anything which comes with directives from adults, these learners hold cell phones, and communicating with peers in high regard. This investigation provided answers to the questions of how and why technology influences students to read (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015). Lastly, since many content area teachers report feeling ill prepared to teach reading, this study added to the existing body of research by presenting some aspects of motivation which may be used to inform instructional practice and relieve some of the hesitancy about reading instruction (Hutchison, Woodward & Colwell, 2016).

Finally, this study was important because there has been a decline in the areas of Social Studies and Science as referenced by the Georgia Milestone Exam (Georgia DOE, 2016). These declines can be attributed to the depth and breadth of the reading required for Social Studies and Science. Understanding students' motivation to read with personal learning devices provided information which may be used to build reading stamina for tackling the more challenging task presented by content area reading. Additionally, since students are tested on computers, understanding student experiences with technology as it relates to reading motivation also yielded implications that may be used to better prepare students for high stakes testing.

### **Research Questions**

The Central question for this research study was, how do middle school students describe their experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read? The purpose of this collective case study was to understand the phenomenon of motivation within the context of reading with personal learning devices and middle students. This question helped generate descriptive information of the students' experiences with personal learning devices relative to reading motivation. Although the phenomenon of motivation within the context of reading and middle school students had been investigated with traditional text, a need existed to explore it within the context of digital texts (Cassidy et al., 2016; Rennie, 2016).

### **Sub Questions**

1. How do middle school students describe their internal motivation to read with personal learning devices?

According to Ciampa (2015) motivation is multifaceted and some factors which are thought to be internal are external factors of motivation. This question helped

provide insight on whether the inclination to read using personal learning devices is based on constructs consistent with internal motivation.

2. How does reading with a personal learning device influence middle school students' external motivation to read?

This question served to identify outside factors which impact student's motivation to read with personal learning devices. Research supports there are two primary classifications of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008) and there are numerous sources of external motivation; however, motivation tends to decrease when the external motivators are removed (Jones & Brown, 2011).

3. How do personal learning devices factor into students' efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?

According to the transactional reading theory, readers interact with text based on their purpose for reading and their past experiences (Giouroukas, 2014). To successfully comprehend, students need to make connections to either another text, the world, or themselves. Studies have shown students prefer digital mediums of text because of the various tools which assist with reading and facilitate making connections to the text (Hutchison & Colowell, 2016; Larson, 2015).

### **Definitions**

1. *Personal learning device* – A personal learning device is a mobile computing device such as a phone, tablet or lap top that is used to learn or acquire information especially in a school setting (Prieto, Migueláñez, & García-Peñalvo, 2013).
2. *myOn®* - A web based reading program that provides access to digital books (Puente, 2012)

3. *Motivation* - The inclination to perform a task. Motivation can be classified as internal or external (Martinez-Alba, Cruzado-Guerrero, & Pitcher, 2014)
4. *Efferent Reading* – Reading for a specific purpose (Giouroukas, 2014)
5. *GMAS*- Georgia Milestones assessment system is an end of year test given to students in elementary and middle school.
6. *Aesthetic Reading* – Reading that allows the reader to connect with the text both syntactically and experientially (Giouroukas, 2014).

### **Summary**

Chapter One presents the foundational basis for this collective case on middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. It also discusses the study's relevance and significance for filling the gap which existed in the literature relative to middle grades students reading with technology. The study was grounded in the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's macro theory of motivation and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory which asserts reading can be classified as efferent or aesthetic transactions between the reader and the text. This study examined the phenomenon of motivation in middle school students within the context of reading with personal learning devices. The collective case study design supported the collection of multiple sources of data in the form of interviews, document reviews and focus group discussions. These data sources were instrumental in identifying codes and categories which were ultimately used to generate themes. Although there are studies which examine motivation and the use of personal learning devices among elementary students and students who speak English as a second language, research which specifically addressed the population of middle school students from a qualitative perspective were minimal at best. This



investigation of the motivational experiences of middle grades student relative to reading with technology garnered information that has implications for multiple stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Chapter Two of this prospectus examines literature for a collective case study on the experiences of middle school students with personal learning devices as it relates to reading motivation. The study will be grounded in Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory in reference to reading with technology, as well as Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory as it relates to basic psychological needs for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In addition to the literature which supports the theoretical framework, this review explores related literature on reading, technology and motivation. The chapter concludes with a summary that delineates the contributions the proposed study will make to the existing body of knowledge on middle school students' motivation to read with technology.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In an effort to provide better access to technology, many school districts have instituted personal learning initiatives in which students are either provided a mobile computing device or asked to supply their own. These devices are thought to increase engagement and provide students with a wealth of educational resources. According to Downes and Bishop (2015), one to one device initiatives have been increasingly instituted at the middle school level where students and teachers deem them purposeful and beneficial to the learning process. While personal learning devices are purposeful and beneficial to learning, their uses change the way in which students interact and complete learning activities. Perhaps the most daunting of these changes comes in the area of reading and language arts classes where traditional books, paper and pencil are abandoned for their digital counterparts consisting of e-readers and word processors.

While it has been established that technology has resulted in a paradigm shift for teaching and learning, the question ensues of how it impacts student motivation to perform tasks which were previously approached using traditional tools and materials. In particular, this study examines students' experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read within the context of Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. This section of the literature review examines these theories and conveys their relatedness to the study of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices.

### **Transactional Reading Theory**

The transactional reading theory was developed by Louise Rosenblatt (1988) and essentially purports that reading is not an isolated act but rather an interactive one which requires the reader to transact with the text syntactically and experientially to create meaning (Ivey, 2014; Rosenblatt, 1988). According to Rosenblatt (1988, p.4), "every reading act is an event, a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular configuration of marks on a page." Sometimes referred to as the reader response theory, the transactional reading theory has implications for reading with traditional and nontraditional texts (Larson, 2010). Based on the constructs of the transactional reading theory, readers interact with text either efferently or aesthetically, and these interactions may be conscious or unconscious efforts on the part of the reader (Rosenblatt, 1988). Both efferent and aesthetic transactions with text are thought to engage the reader in the process of reading in a manner that is consistent with motivation (Hooper & Herath, 2014). Efferent reading transactions tend to be largely associated with external motivation while aesthetic textual transactions are most frequently linked to internal motivation (Meyers, 2014). According to Rosenblatt (1988), efferent and aesthetic reading can

be described as occupying each end of a continuum with some reading transactions falling somewhere in the middle. It should also be noted that the same text may occupy a different end of the continuum based on the reader and his or her individual reading transaction. For example, some people may read a scientific text with a specific purpose in mind, while others may have prior experience and make connections with the subject in a manner that classifies their textual transaction as aesthetic (Rosenblatt, 1988).

The act of efferent reading refers to reading for a specific purpose such as to internalize information for a test or even to find out the correct dosage of a certain medication. Since, efferent reading is thought to be carried out with a specific rationale in mind, it can be asserted that this is the type of reading with which adolescents are engaged during school hours. Studies conducted with adults and English speakers of other languages, indicated their online reading was typically done in conjunction with occupational tasks; hence, it can be asserted most online reading by the adults, in these studies, could be classified as efferent (Hooper & Herath, 2014; Meyers, 2014). Further, as it relates to motivation, respondents in the aforementioned study were likely externally motivated to complete the referenced reading transaction for reasons related to their particular job or career.

While efferent reading transactions are carried out with a particular purpose in mind, aesthetic reading transactions involve the readers' emotions and experiences with the text (Rosenblatt, 1988). As a reader interacts with the text, meaning is constructed based on past experiences or feelings generated from the text; invariably aesthetic textual transactions are typically associated with literary type genres (Rosenblatt, 1988). As it relates to middle school students and aesthetic reading, studies indicate that students who have positive attitudes and

experiences with reading are more likely to experience aesthetic reading transactions; whereas their counterparts are likely to have an efferent transaction even if the text is literary in nature.

Further along the lines of efferent and aesthetic reading, the reading transaction can occur in online as well as offline formats. Larson's (2010) study with digital reading and response found that Rosenblatt's theory of transactional reading was applicable to reading with nonlinear text in the sense that students have the potential to alter the text as they utilize available digital tools. According to Hess (2014), electronic textual manipulation is thought to positively impact engagement and ultimately increase motivation. The exorbitant amount of time students spend using technology outside of school, is indicative of the types of aesthetic encounters they have reading in nonlinear text formats (Rosen, 2011). Furthermore, Larson (2013) also observed that sixth grade students reading with e-books and audio seemed to be motivated and engaged after they customized their digital devices by adjusting font sizes, using highlighters and even audio to meet literacy demands.

Additionally, as it relates to transactional reading, teachers have utilized guided reading lessons which were aimed at developing the necessary schema for making connections to the text. In instances in which students lacked the necessary background, teachers facilitated activities which were geared toward establishing a foundational knowledge base essential to supporting the constructs of transactional reading; however, research indicates that such supports could potentially serve to undermine the basic psychological need of autonomy (Hiemstra, 1994). With the shift from offline textual formats to online text, an understanding of the phenomenon of students' reading experiences with personal learning devices presents an opportunity to discuss how personal learning devices have the potential to facilitate the acquisition of background knowledge as a technique for maintaining the psychological autonomy

needed for self-determination and motivation. Thus, it can be plausibly asserted that given the extensive background adolescents have with technology and the constructs of efferent and aesthetic reading, Rosenblatt's transactional theory can be used to understand the phenomenon of middle school students' experiences reading with personal learning devices (Jacobs, 2013).

### **Self Determination Theory**

To further understand middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices, the psychological needs aspect of Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory will also serve as a theoretical basis for this study. Motivation can be referred to as the drive necessary to complete a particular task (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The self-determination theory is a macro theory which encompasses five mini theories of motivation. The first mini theory deals with cognitive evaluation and is concerned with intrinsic motivation; the second mini theory is organismic integration which focuses upon external motivation. The third mini theory, causality orientation is concerned with peoples' individual tendencies to be drawn to certain environments as well as the way in which individuals control behaviors differently. The fourth mini theory is goal contents which is concerned with motivation and wellness. The fifth mini theory is referred to as the basic psychological needs theory and this mini theory stresses the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness in both internal and external motivation. Unlike reading print materials, reading with technology offers resources and tools that can assist with competence, relatedness and autonomy. Since researchers concur that autonomy, competence and relatedness are foundational elements of engaged reading, this study will focus upon the psychological needs aspect of the self-determination theory (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012; McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang & Meyer, 2012). Unlike reading print materials, reading

with technology offers resources and tools that can assist with competence, relatedness and autonomy.

Within the context of the self-determination theory, motivation can be classified as internal or external (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Internal motivation is defined as the inclination to perform a particular activity that stems from one's natural interests and desires, and external motivation refers to the inclination to complete a task based upon some type of reward that can be garnered from its completion (Deci & Ryan, 1988). Rewards for external motivation do not have to be tangible; if there is an attitude of "what's in it for me" associated with the activity the motivation can be termed external. As it relates to transactional reading, internal motivation is typically associated with aesthetic reading experiences.

The proposed study will consider whether middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices qualifies as internal or external. Since it has been postulated, that given the nature of adolescents, most reading transactions for them fall within the category of efferent reading, it can be further surmised that students' inclination to read and possibly be attributed to external motivating factors (Hess, 2014). Although the rewards or external motivators may not be tangible, such as grades or rewards for reading, the "what's in it for me?" question can be answered by analyzing the purpose of the reading task and invariably the motivation behind the reading transaction (Conradi et al., 2013).

In addition to considering internal and external motivating factors, competence, relatedness and autonomy will also be explored in the context of the psychological needs segment of the self-determination theory and their relationship to middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. Within the framework of the psychological needs aspect of the self-determination theory, competence refers to whether the reader has the

ability to carry out the reading task (Deci & Ryan, 1988). Studies have shown that students with substantial deficits in reading skills either avoid the task or develop coping mechanisms which serve to get them through the task usually with minimal comprehension (McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths, & Stothard, 2015). In addition to competence, a reader must also find the task relevant; the task must connect in some way to something the reader deems important or of value (Deci & Ryan, 1988). The final criterion for meeting the psychological needs component of the self-determination theory for reading motivation is autonomy, or the need to feel that one has some control of what is read (Deci & Ryan, 1988). This aspect of the self-determination theory has not only been proven relevant to motivation but also other areas of effective instructional practice at the middle grades level. Hence, competence, relatedness and autonomy serve to evoke both internal and external motivation. In situations in which all three psychological needs are met, internal motivation is thought to be the final result; however, in instances in which one or more of the psychological needs are not met, the reading transaction is likely executed due to some form of external motivation.

This theory is appropriate for understanding the experience of middle school students as it relates to their motivation to read with personal learning devices because studies indicate a strong correlation between motivation, reading values and students' ability to engage in and carry out the reading process (McGeown et al., 2015).

### **Related Literature**

This review of the literature, in reference to middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices, begins with a discussion of varied aspects of reading which range from a general description of reading to how motivation is thought to impact comprehension and attitudes about reading in middle school. The review proceeds with an examination of various



facets of technology and their role in modern day schools. The section concludes with a summation of the literature on both reading and technology, and how existing literature on these topics will guide the proposed research study.

## **Reading**

By virtue of definition, reading is considered the process of deriving meaning from written text, and most would agree that it is an essential task which permeates almost every aspect of society in some form (Barron, 2016). The acquisition of reading skills is so essential that early literacy strategists encourage parents to begin fostering a culture of literacy in a child's life during pregnancy (Steiner & Cassano, 2017). Before and during much of the twentieth century, reading was not only regarded as an essential life skill, but also a source of pleasure and enjoyment for many. Nevertheless, over the years reading habits have changed to reflect the preferences, motivations, and structure of a technologically driven twenty-first century society. Hence, many questions have emerged relative to literacy and what counts as reading especially amid the plethora of formats in which reading materials are made available in today's society (Barron, 2016).

In addition to questions about literacy and what counts as reading, educators, policy makers, parents and community stake holders continue to wrangle over other literacy related issues (Cassidy, Ortlieb & Grote-Garcia, 2016; Mc Kenna, Conradi, Jang & Meyer, 2012). One such issue is centered around insuring that every individual has a knowledge base capable of supporting a life time of reading regardless of its format or genre. However, based upon multiple data sources, students continue to emerge from primary and middle schools without the reading skills necessary to foster success at the next level (Goldman, 2012; Wendt, 2013). Whereas there are many contributing factors to the reading dilemma, motivation, as it relates to one's desire to

read has been identified as a key component, especially among adolescents and teens (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012; Putman & Walker, 2010). Regardless of an individual's ability or inability to carry out the reading process, a certain level of motivation is necessary for experiencing the level of achievement that promotes continued success (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012).

**Reading deficits.** Reading deficits are thought to be the cause of many students reluctance toward reading (Melekoglu & Wilkerson, 2013) Reading shortfalls may be attributed to student personality issues, home situations, early experiences with reading and even school climate (Clemens, Ragan,& Widales-Benitez, 2016). In some way each of these factors relate to an element of motivation within the self-determination theory. Students who experience personality issues such as anxiety, frustration and aggression may not be motivated to actively participate in the reading process (2016). Things such as parents' unconcern about reading progress tend to negatively impact a child's inclination to read. Research also suggests that when parents foster a culture of literacy in the home by reading aloud, asking questions about books, discussing pictures as well as providing a diversified choice of reading materials, it sets a strong foundation for students to be successful readers (Steiner, 2014). While some students from impoverished backgrounds overcome the obstacles presented by a home culture that does not support literacy, others experience challenges which adversely impacts their drive to read which can impact reading achievement (Loera, Rueda & Nakamoto, 2011). A study conducted by Steiner (2014) found that students with involved parents scored significantly higher than students in the control group, who were from families with less involved parents, on the Concepts of Print assessment. As for school culture, it is very important that a school's culture

promote reading in ways which stimulate the interest of a child by providing not only a variety of books and materials, but also an atmosphere that is bright, cheery and relaxing.

In recent years concerns have surfaced over how the internet impacts reading behaviors and potentially contributes to reading deficits (Hooper & Herath, 2014). A study conducted by Hooper and Herath (2014) addressed these concerns and found significant differences in how individuals read online and offline. This study found that overall, online reading negatively impacted concentration, and comprehension as evidenced by low rates of recall by the respondents (2014). This is thought to be attributed to the presence of hyperlinks in electronic texts which can potentially draw one's attention in many different directions. The study also indicated that online reading was typically done during the day for the purpose of work, while offline reading occurred during the evening for recreational purposes. As for motivation, the researchers observed that external motivating factors tended to be the driving force behind online reading while internal motivating factors were associated with offline reading. Since the study was conducted with adults it is likely that these findings will be counterintuitive as relates to middle school students who likely spend more time at school engaged in offline reading.

Generally speaking, the research on technology and reading deficits tends to favor technology as a tool for assisting students with reading difficulties; however, a meta-analysis of the studies conducted over the last few years indicates that the improvement rates are minimal (Cheung & Slavin, 2013). Cheung and Slavin (2013) also noted that interventions which incorporate small group settings to work with younger children tend to be most effective. Thus, it can be asserted that while technology may serve to motivate students to read, there is limited evidence to support its effectiveness on decreasing reading deficits.

**Reading in middle school.** Educators and reading researchers acknowledge a culture in middle school that is not supportive of reading (Larson, 2015). According to the Center for Education Statistics (2016), only about thirty-five percent of eighth grade students met or exceeded proficiency levels on national reading assessments. Consistent with low measures of achievement, many middle school students' attitudes toward reading aligns with the motivational characteristics of dormant and developing readers (Miller, 2009). This may be due, in part, to the fact that upon entering middle school, students are expected to be able to read and reading instruction is not offered (Ford-Connors, Dougherty, Robertson & Paratore, 2015). Based upon the expectations of Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by forty-two states, the reading proficiency level of students entering sixth grade should facilitate successful interaction with grade level appropriate, complex text; however, most beginning sixth grade students have not reached the level of proficiency necessary for navigating complex texts (2015). Goldman (2012) indicates that many middle school students do not have the skills necessary for reading content area materials, yet the focus of content area teachers is to teach their content, and not the reading skills necessary to successfully interact with the content. Unfortunately, without sufficient motivational scaffolds, the tendency exists for students to become discouraged, especially amid reading tasks which are more challenging than those at the elementary level. Even students who have attained a level of proficiency consistent with making continued progress, must experience the motivation necessary for grappling with text of increased difficulty (Bauerlein, 2011). Hence, regardless of reading attainment, motivation is vitally essential for success with literacy related tasks at the middle school level.

Under Common Core State Standards for middle grades, Reading is not a separate class, but rather an embedded entity of Social Studies and Science. According to Monahan (2013),

content area reading, in middle school, necessitates understanding the organizational structure of disciplinary knowledge; nevertheless, most middle grades content area teachers do not explicitly teach comprehension strategies relative to their discipline. Some teachers report that when they attempt to focus upon reading or writing strategies in content areas classes, students want to know why they are learning about reading in science classes or writing in their social studies classes (Goldman, 2012). The perception seems to exist that reading and writing only belong in certain classes; however, a study conducted by Zhang et al. (2010) found that internet-based science lessons, which were assigned to sixth grade students, necessitated teacher guidance to avoid “fragmented, cursory, opportunistic” online reading. The study concluded if students are to be successful with activities which require utilizing the internet, they must be taught specific strategies for reading online. As it relates to middle school students’ motivation to read online, the results of Zhang’s et al. (2010) study, support the competence aspect of the self-determination theory from the perspective that students need the proper skills and strategies in order to feel secure in their ability to successfully transact with text in multiple modes of discourse. Understanding the experiences of middle school students with personal learning devices as it relates to reading motivation has the potential offer insight on how students view reading outside the context of Reading and Language Arts classes.

Another area of consideration for reading in middle school is the type of reading material. The shift from narrative text, which is commonly used for initial reading instruction, to the expository text used in core content classes requires students to use different schema patterns for reading. If these patterns are not learned or developed, the potential exists to impact reading motivation (Goldman, Snow & Vaughn, 2016). Studies conducted by three independent research groups in reference to strategy instruction for content area reading revealed three common

themes based on the assumption that students need formal reading instruction beyond primary school to successfully perform all the tasks associated with reading expository text for the purpose of learning. The three themes for supporting adolescent literacy which emerged from all three studies included actively and purposefully engaging students in the reading process, allowing students to socially interact through a variety of participation structures and building students prior knowledge on vocabulary and new concepts (2016). Invariably, all three of these themes can be applied to the self-determination theory of reading.

In addition to being expected to read for learning in middle school, many middle school students are experiencing a challenging time in their development which is also reflected in their reading motivation. Changes in their physiology tend to have them caught between the world of childhood and adulthood with most students not fitting comfortably on either end of the spectrum. Hence, when it comes to performing tasks like reading there is typically a fair amount of coaxing involved. Research indicates that fewer than ten percent of students in middle school read for enjoyment (Smith & Day, 2013). Many acknowledge they must be compelled to read by either their parents or teachers. On the other hand, students seem to share the same types of excitement over the latest trend in smartphones and other digital technology. Statistics from the United States Department of Education indicated that 84% of individuals three and over use the internet and about that same percentage of middle school students own cell phones or other forms of mobile technology which are utilized to perform a plethora of tasks (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). The question ensues of how to generate the same level of enthusiasm to the point in which students voluntarily read to build their stamina with the same persistence and drive that is exerted toward learning the intricacies of a new smart phone or the

latest video game. The answer to the aforementioned question can potentially be addressed by understanding students' experiences as they relate to reading with personal learning devices

**Types of readers and motivation.** Literacy experts Miller & Anderson (2009) adapted a type of classification system for categorizing readers based on their attitudes toward reading. With their system, avid readers are referred to as underground readers, students who are capable of reading but only read to pass a test were noted as dormant readers and developing readers are those who have demonstrated significantly less proficiency than their peers. While other classifications of readers exist (literate, alliterate, and struggling) Miller (2009) deems those terms derogatory. This study will utilize Miller's classification system: underground, dormant and developing to refer to the types of readers as it relates to motivation.

Furthermore, Miller (2009) also asserts that every child has the potential to become a reader if the correct support systems are in place. In this generation of technology, it is important to specify which supports are necessary to build a culture of reading and literacy that succinctly enriches and establishes reading skills that are essential for middle school as well as other educational endeavors. Understanding students' motivation to read as it relates to digital devices, has the potential to address questions which could give educators an edge about the scaffolds which facilitate reading success.

Additionally, as it relates to types of readers, Lepper and Malone's taxonomy of motivation offers support for the basic psychological needs assertion of the self-determination theory in terms of autonomy, competence and relevance (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The taxonomy of motivation framework has been used to understand the motivation which accompanies the critical thinking and problem solving for success with gaming; however, the characteristics Lepper and Malone identified can also be applied to reading with technology. As evidenced by

their possession of the characteristics thought to comprise internal motivation, it can be surmised that all of the underground readers' basic motivational needs are fulfilled. Nevertheless, whereas dormant readers have the competence necessary for reading, their failure to acknowledge its relevance beyond school impacts relatedness; hence, their lack of autonomy and relevance is thought impact motivation. Unlike their counterparts, developing readers typically lack confidence in their ability to read which tends to influence the level of autonomy and relevance associated with the task. Although studies have attempted to measure missing motivational elements quantitatively, research has not been identified which considers the perspective of students in reference to their experience reading with personal learning devices.

**Reading and motivation.** Motivation to read can be facilitated by internal desires (intrinsic motivation) or external factors (extrinsic) to accomplish a reading task. More specifically, internal motivation to read occurs when reading is done because the individual deems it rewarding within itself. According to Schaffner et al. (2013), internal motivation can be even further classified as object or activity specific. Object specific internal motivation stems from an individual's desire to read because of the subject matter; while, activity specific internal motivation occurs due to the positive experiences of reading a text. Research indicates that students who are intrinsically motivated, read more and outperform their peers (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). As it relates to middle grades students, their motivation to read begins to decrease around the end of elementary school (Ford-Connors et al., 2015).

Since motivation is considered a key aspect of reading success, many initiatives have been geared toward fostering a sense of motivation. Programs like Accelerated Reader, Read to Succeed and Book It are all aimed at encouraging dormant and developing readers through the use of rewards and incentives for reading. However, researchers agree that internal and external



elements of motivation are multifaceted (Deci & Ryan, 2008). For example, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be further classified as autonomous and controlled (2008). According to Deci and Ryan (2008) autonomous motivation refers to intrinsic motivation as well as the types of extrinsic motivation which are a part of one's self or value system; however, controlled motivation is used to reference motivators which come from outside sources. Both autonomous and controlled motivation can be used to understand reading experiences in more depth, and since reading is a cognitive process, most of what facilitates its understanding, as it relates to motivation, must come from the individual who is performing the act.

Understanding reading motivation is essential for not only success in English or Language Arts, but also other areas of academia. Research supports that students who are motivated to read perform well in school and outperform their peers (Reiss, 2012). Thus, whether internal or external, autonomous or controlled, understanding middle grade students' motivation to read with technology, has the potential to unveil pedagogical implications for supporting the constructs of motivation, which are essential to 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy success.

**Reading comprehension and motivation.** Studies have identified a link between motivation and student achievement as it relates to reading. Baker and Wigfield (1999) noted a positive correlation between students' internal motivation and long-term achievement in reading. Although reading comprehension is also dependent upon the cognitive abilities of decoding, word recognition and fluency, motivational constructs give students the persistence to continue reading despite potential obstacles (Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Students who are internally motivated to read, read more and research indicates that more exposure to text is positively correlated with increasing cognitive abilities which ultimately equates to better comprehension.

As it relates to external motivation and reading comprehension, research indicates that cognitive abilities impact rates of comprehension. If students are proficient readers, external sources of motivation positively contribute to comprehension; however, if students are developing readers, external motivation is negatively associated with comprehension (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). In other words, students who are cognitively equipped to read, comprehend even if the motivational sources are external; but, students who experience challenges with reading may become frustrated, and lose interest which negatively impacts comprehension (1999). Schafner, Schiefele, & Ulferts (2013) even discourage the use of external motivators when encouraging students who do not frequently read because they were shown to negatively impact comprehension and potentially neutralize internal motivation.

**Factors that influence reading motivation.** Student choice, access, self-efficacy and collaboration are factors which are thought to positively influence reading motivation (Anderson & Miller, 2009). Lepper and Malone (1987) identified challenge, curiosity, control, cooperation, competition and recognition as stimulants for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Hence, digital literacy is a topic that bears consideration because without it students' motivation may fall prey to the frustrations that accompany being inadequately prepared to accomplish a job. According to Rosen (2011) it should not be assumed that students have the necessary skills to successfully navigate technology. Whereas students use technology to complete a plethora of tasks outside of school, the tools needed for successful school interactions may not be viable for completing school related tasks.

Other factors thought to influence reading motivation include the frequency of reading exposure as well as the perceived views of teachers and parents about reading (Edmunds &

Bauserman, 2006). Although these perceptions are more prevalent among younger readers, these views of reading tend to follow a child as they progress through school (2006).

**Reading attitudes and motivation.** Research indicates that recreational reading is probably considered one of the most significant casualties of the digital age (Merga, 2014). Although children are spending time engaged in the reading process, their reading is largely overlooked because it includes nontraditional print sources such as text messages, email and websites. Research confirms that children who read books outside of school are typically better readers because they are exposed to things like vocabulary and text structures (Merga, 2014). With such an overall decline in reading, schools have the daunting tasks of building reading stamina for demanding reading task which are associated with end of year testing and post-secondary school. Thus, it is likely that poor attitudes about reading are likely associated with decreased levels of motivation.

Reading researchers agree that teachers seem to be perplexed with how to involve middle school students in reading. Conradi et al. (2013) surmise that the key to understanding what motivates adolescents to read lies in understanding the attitudes students have toward reading. While highly proficient readers tend to perform better in school, declines in reading motivation cannot solely be attributed to lack of proficiency. In the study “Measuring adolescents’ attitude toward reading” researchers designed a survey to examine the attitudes students have about what they read as well as how they read (Conradi et al., 2013). What middle school students read has been the focus of many studies and thought to have a bearing on autonomy as it relates to psychological needs; how students read is also an important factor for consideration. With the influx of technology, the variations of textual mediums give students a plethora of materials from which to choose when transacting with text both in and out of school; hence, it serves to reason

that literacy within the scope of digital technologies also bears consideration (Conradi et al. 2013). The survey of adolescent reading attitudes addressed academic and recreational reading with both print and digital mediums. As it relates to the study of the experiences of middle school students reading with personal learning devices, the aforementioned survey of adolescent reading attitudes could potentially provide insight that would be beneficial to parents, teachers and literacy coaches.

## **Technology**

**Technology and middle school students.** Twenty-first century adolescents are engrossed in a culture of technology which permeates many aspects of their lives. The latest in tablet and smart phone technology, offers innumerable applications and programs to perform a variety of literacy tasks (Bishop & Downes, 2015). Proponents of these devices, even tout their potential to exponentially motivate and engage learners. For many adolescents, gaming and other technologically based activities have taken precedence over pleasure reading, and while one might surmise that these activities require reading, opponents question the devices' capacity to motivate students beyond lower level cognitive activities. Even motivational theories posit that autonomy, competence and relevance work together to foster motivation. Hence, since many middle school students lack the competence, relatedness and even autonomy necessary for fostering levels of motivation consistent with reading success, parents and educators are still charged with the task of keeping students motivated to complete more than surface level reading that is required for games and other technologically based tasks (Downes & Bishop, 2015). Moreover, since adolescents are attracted to technology and spend a lot time of personal time using it, educators would be well served to understand students' experiences with it from a motivational perspective as it relates to reading.

Although technology is not new to education, the portability and emergence of web 2.0 technologies have changed the ways teachers incorporate technology in instruction. Since many school districts have instituted personal learning initiatives which require all students to have a personal computing device, it is worth exploring how the students view their experiences with the devices as it relates to reading motivation.

**Web 2.0 technologies and reading.** The emergence of web 2.0 technologies has changed the way in which individuals interact with text from both a reading and writing perspective. With the ease of interaction, web content from wikis, blogs and social media, afford opportunities for real time engagement that have profound implications for teaching, learning and motivation (Martinez-Alba, Cruzado-Guerrero, & Pitcher, 2014). Researchers Martinez-Alba et al., (2014) conducted a qualitative study which investigated how Latino undergraduate students were motivated to read using technology. The study found that students felt more engaged when reading and writing on interactive websites. Although the participants in the study were undergraduates, the study mentioned that even adolescents were motivated to read with technology as evidenced in a prior research studies (Pitcher et al., 2010). Glogsters and other technology not only motivated undergraduate English learner students to read, but also accelerated learning for these students.

Hew and Cheung (2013) reviewed many Web 2.0 technologies and concluded that while there is not significant evidence to support their link to achievement, the evidence does support how the dynamics of teaching and instruction are changing with its use. While this tends to support Jacobs' (2013) view that technology is just a tool, it has implications for the motivational potential of this tool if it used in a manner that supports the constructs of internal and external motivation. For example, a research study conducted by Ivey (2014) delved into the social side

of engaged reading for young adolescents and found that when students were socially engaged in the reading process it led to motivation. Since Web 2.0 technologies offer a range of social engagement platforms, their use could possibly motivate adolescents to engage more in reading.

Additionally, student choice and autonomy are other ways Web 2.0 technologies can be used to promote engagement. When given the opportunity to make their own book selections and share their experience, students who had never read a book in its entirety reported they were reading, sharing their experiences with their friends and eagerly anticipating the next literary encounter (Ivey, 2014). Although the study did not use technology as its reading or responding source, students were engaged and motivated to read. When one considers adding a technological aspect to the experience such as a blog or wiki, the question arises of how motivation is impacted. Hence, by understanding adolescents' experiences with personal learning devices as it relates reading motivation, the potential exists to add to an existing body of knowledge as it relates to web 2.0 technologies and engaging students from a social perspective.

**Technology and motivation.** While the research with interactive web sites, as in the aforementioned case of Glogster, supports the notion that technology motivates students to read and learn, researchers warn that student engagement with technology is not synonymous with motivation (Unrau & Quirk, 2014). While students may be motivated to read and write as it relates to social media, that same motivation could potentially wane when students are asked to use technology to complete a school assignment which they deem less appealing. There is also the argument that technology is inherently motivating (Jacobs, 2013); nevertheless, research shows that without proper pedagogy to accompany the use of technology, students may become bored which could lead to increased incidents of inappropriate behavior (Brueck & Lenhart, 2015; Jacobs, 2013; Mills, 2010).

Although technology may not be an inherent motivator, there are instances in which it has been used to heighten motivation for reading classic printed text. For instance, John Day (2010), a high school English teacher, used technology to transform his classroom from one that students dreaded, to one in which students were eager to attend. The article “Of Mice and Media” explains how Day used technology to pique students’ curiosity and evoke an unprecedented level of engagement in reading Steinbeck’s classic novel. The students became involved in technology enhanced collaboration and reported making important aesthetic connections. Day’s (2010) example supports Brueck and Lenhart’s (2015) view that using technology and content knowledge frameworks together to build learning activities facilitates motivation. Hence, while technology can be utilized to encourage motivation, especially as it relates to reading, simply placing a device in a student’s hand is not enough to foster the engagement necessary for motivation.

**Technology and engagement.** Mobile technology such as e-readers, tablets and phones have revolutionized an era formerly dominated by print and stationary technology (Rosen, 2011). For many individuals technological devices are the preferred mode of reading, entertainment and communication. When defined as participation in a particular activity, studies indicate that technologically based activities elicit engagement (Unrau & Quirk, 2014). This can be further substantiated by the many tools and applications that promote student involvement in a myriad of tasks ranging from gaming to communicating or studying for exams. Research findings support that students use technology to engage in numerous activities both at home and in school (Lenhart & Brueck, 2015). Studies also support that students who use technology demonstrate a level of engagement which leads to academic success (Chen, Lambert & Guidry, 2010). As it relates to technology and motivation to read, engagement is very critical because it the key

element which is thought to stimulate motivation. In the proposed study which seeks to understand the motivation of individuals to read with technology, engagement cannot be overlooked. Studies seem to agree that while technology does not serve as motivation, it produces levels of engagement which supports motivation.

**Guided reading and technology.** Guided reading is a practice that is primarily considered for use with elementary students; however, research has shown that guided reading can be used with middle school students to increase comprehension (Bonilla, 2011). By grouping students together with similar deficits, teachers collect data and target problematic areas of comprehension. Usually the process entails an introduction of the text by the teacher who introduces potentially challenging concepts and vocabulary. Afterwards students read the text independently before reconvening to discuss and answer comprehension questions. Since middle school students typically do not have the same schedule as elementary, short texts are recommended for guiding reading. According to Morgan et al. (2013) the use of technology with guided reading not only makes it possible for teachers to examine data and make determinations about students' needs, but students are also able to monitor reading progress both at home and in school. Using the flipped classroom model, in which students view the direct instruction portion of the lesson at home, allows teachers to more effectively attend to the needs of individual students and determine what instruction will be most helpful. Further, since both fiction and nonfiction texts can be used with guided reading, technology can be used to facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and new concepts. Technology which can support the growth in comprehension may increase a student's self-confidence. This supports the competence aspect of the self-determination theory.



**Technology and Reading Workshop.** Meyer (2010) touts reading workshop as a successful approach to reading that fosters comprehension and improves student attitudes about reading. While there is no set process for a reading workshop there are three major parts that include a read aloud by the teacher or a mini lesson, independent reading time, and reading response (2010). Although the read aloud may seem like an elementary practice, its purpose is to model fluency and generate student interest for the purpose of motivating students to read a variety of genres. The mini lesson aspect gives students direct guidance on incorporating an array of strategies appropriate for navigating varied text. A primary focus of the initial mini lesson focuses on making the different connections (text to self, text to world, or text to text) a reader should experience while reading. Further, since reading and writing are reciprocal processes the response portion focuses on some type of writing task which is not a traditional comprehension task, an example is written book notes which can be shared with the class or a peer. Although the same book may be used for the whole class it is advisable to allow students to use self-selected text. If reading workshop is implemented with fidelity research indicates that students become motivated to read more. It is also important to note that students must be given opportunities to discuss what they are reading because the collaboration piece is important (Meyer, 2010). Reading workshop purports that collaborative reading workshop session “scaffolds students to deeper levels of thinking and engagement with texts.” Research has shown that when students are allowed to self-select texts for reading workshop it increases their motivation to read (2010). According to Mayer (2010), allowing students to read and discuss topics of interest, brings out the type of discussions that foster improved reading and writing. Further discussions help with writers block as students begin to realize they have a voice which

is capable of viable expression. The proposed qualitative study will be implemented with students participating in a reading workshop. The study should give insights into this method.

Reading workshop can be carried out with both print and digital book formats. Since reading workshop is thought to work well because of the autonomy students are given to make their own book selections, digital book formats have the potential to further increase autonomy by offering more titles than any one teacher can house in a classroom library or media specialist can catalogue in an onsite media center. One of the issues teachers experience with reading workshop is providing students with access to a variety of print materials. Lotta Larson (2007) began thinking about a way to manipulate reading workshop in such a way that preservice teachers are able to capitalize on the strengths of reading workshop in an electronic format. The electronic format may even prove to be a better option for some readers because studies have shown electronic mediums of text increase proficiency for some struggling readers (Conradi et al., 2013).

Another aspect of reading workshop that works well with technology is the discussion component. Since students don't really consider texting and conversing in chat rooms dreaded forms of communication, they are more likely to willingly participate in discussions about their reading (Larson, 2008). With digital platforms students potentially have the option of communicating about their text with individuals outside the classroom (Ivey, 2014). Regardless, of the format, students who are motivated to read and encouraged to participate in oral and written discussion relative to the reading tend to outperform their peers in many aspects of academia (Ivey, 2014; Zhang et al., 2010).

Lotta Larson (2008) asserts that using electronic reading workshop should be a competence that all preservice teachers are required to demonstrate. Amid the changes in

literacy and instructional technology, students should be expected to know and understand how to adjust traditional literacies to facilitate the effective use of digital ones. A comparison of traditional reading workshop and electronic reading workshop revealed changes not only to the types of text, but also the types of activities which accompany both. While one educator noted reader reluctance with traditional reading workshop particularly among students who were not as motivated to read as others, Larson (2010) experienced success when utilizing the strategy with sixth grade students. The students were excited about the reading material and even more excited about the opportunity to select a project which could be created with the use of technology.

**Technology and multimodal instruction.** “Multimodal can be defined as two or more discourses of representation which includes, visual, audio, gestural and spatial” (Mills, 2010). Research advocates that multimodal instruction has the potential to meet students where they are in reference to learning styles and differentiation. As it relates to reading and technology, multimodal strategies allow students to personalize learning in a manner that is best suited to their instructional needs. When students have the autonomy to set their preferences, especially as it relates to reading, this serves as a positive motivating factor. Multimodal strategies are thought to address concepts through multiple modes of discourse including viewing, speaking and writing. Technological devices help to make multimodal instruction a reality in its truest since because they have the capabilities to perform tasks in ways which typically cannot be achieved in a traditional classroom that utilizes traditional resources. By capitalizing upon the basic precepts of the self-determination theory, multimodal strategies have been shown to significantly increase motivation levels of reluctant learners, which is a key factor in academic success (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009).

**myON® digital reading platform.** myON® is a digital reading environment designed for students in prekindergarten through eighth grade. The system uses a Lexile framework to gauge reading comprehension (Ortlieb, Sargent & Morgan, 2014). Students are given a test to determine their Lexile and the system suggests books which are on their level. The books have graphics and students have access to highlighters, dictionaries and a text to speech reading feature. After students have read five book within their Lexile range and demonstrated successful comprehension, they are reevaluated to find out whether their Lexile has improved. The program has been credited with helping to improve reading comprehension. In this study on the motivation of middle school to read with personal learning devices, myON® reports will be examined to look for patterns in students' reading which are linked to motivation and students will be asked interview questions about how reading with myON® compares to reading traditional text from a motivational aspect.

**Electronic Reading Devices.** Electronic reading devices are used to read books in digital formats. They are available under many brand names and typically have price points to fit a range of budgets. As school districts explore viable options for increasing the availability of technology and reducing the cost of textbooks and accompanying ancillary materials, digital reading devices have become more prevalent in schools (Downes & Bishop, 2015). Features such as built in dictionaries, adjustable font sizes and text-to-speech options, offer a wide range of possibilities to students who need large print or have issues with decoding or word recognition (Larson, 2010). Although studies (Gustad 2014;Hess, 2014; Milman, Carlson-Bancroft, Boogart, 2014; Larson, 2010) have been conducted which explore the impact of electronic reading devices with primary grade students and English language learners, more research which takes into the

account the experiences of middle grades learners as it relates to their motivation to read with personal learning devices needs to be conducted.

A mixed method study conducted by Merga (2014) examined adolescents' engagement with electronic books as well as the relevance of traditional books. The study concluded that while most of the respondents preferred using electronic devices for other tasks, most preferred reading using a printed book. Even students who were classified as avid readers indicated that while they like Kindles and other forms of e-readers, they rarely used their devices for the purpose of downloading or reading books (2014). Merga acknowledges that more research needs to be conducted on topic of adolescent interactions with electronic books. Hence, it can be asserted that while adolescent students have smart phones and other types of electronic devices, the novelty of these devices is not enough to evoke frequent transactions with text.

Lotta Larson (2009) conducted a study in which her second grade students read e-books and responded to the readings using digital response journals to communicate with other students about how they felt about the books they selected. This type of autonomy and communication in reading evokes a level of engagement that is consistent with the motivation necessary to foster a positive culture of reading. According to Larson (2009) students were very excited about viewing the messaging they created with the online message board. Additionally, Hess (2014) conducted a study to ascertain the impact of electronic books (first generation Nooks) on the motivation and achievement levels of first grade students. This quantitative study used the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and found there was a four point difference between the control and the experimental group along the lines of motivation when reading with an electronic device; hence it was concluded that e-readers positively impact motivation. In a qualitative case study, Lotta Larson (2010) examined e-book reading and response and found that the majority of

second graders, who participated in the study, enjoyed reading on the tablet devices. Further, a study conducted with students in preschool to fourth grade examined the use of iPads in multiple content areas (Milman, Carlson-Bancroft, Boogart, 2014). Although the results were inconclusive in reference to the iPad's impact on achievement, the majority of the respondents indicated that the iPads fostered engagement which in turn boosted students' efforts and participation in the subject matter.

A study conducted by Gustad (2014) examined the impact of technology on literacy motivation for fourth grade English language learners. The study acknowledges that the role motivation plays in literacy acquisition is critical as it has implications for reading speed as well as overall implications for successful interactions with text. As it relates to English language learners, traditional print bound text has the potential to lessen motivation because often they do not meet the psychological needs of relevance and autonomy. On the other hand, reading with technology provides multiple modes of discourse that authenticate the learning process and add meaning and relevance to text which may otherwise be deemed boring and uninteresting (Gustad, 2014). An example given in the study is how the internet can be used to generate an audience for meaningful reader response. With specific consideration given to podcasts, the study concluded that technology exponentially increased motivation for English language learner participants in this study (2014). As evidenced by the results of the motivation to read profile and their improved attitudes about reading aloud, the students in this study experienced a shift in engagement when utilizing technological tools for reading tasks.

Further along the lines of digital reading devices, a study conducted by Ciampa (2012) examined the impact of online storybooks with first grade students. The study found that students were motivated to read with the e-book format as evidenced by their return visits to the

site even after the study was finished. The author acknowledged that students initially required a lot of teacher directed supports; nevertheless, as the program progressed, students were able to take responsibility for their own learning and manipulate the site with ease despite their age.

A more recent mixed methods study examined the impact of digital readers on the motivation, attitudes and comprehension of fifth grade students during guided reading (Long & Szabo, 2015). This study found that there was not a statistical difference from the pretest to the post-test scores of students who used technology when compared to those who read with traditional books. As for attitudes, students reading with traditional text demonstrated a statistically significant increase in attitude while students reading with e-readers showed a small decline in reading attitude. In terms of motivation, there was not a statistical difference in motivation for students reading with e-readers when compared to those students who were not. From a qualitative perspective, the researchers noted that students in both groups indicated it was important for them to interact with their teachers during guided reading groups for a number of reasons.

Based on the available research of reading with technology, most studies reported increases in student motivation. Although the studies do not classify the motivation as intrinsic or extrinsic, it can be surmised that the motivation is likely the result of utilizing the device to complete a task which essentially equates to external motivation. Additionally, while all the aforementioned studies focused upon motivation as it relates to student experiences reading with technology, only one of the studies included participants who were representative of middle grades learners. Although one may surmise that the results of these studies could possibly be generalized to adolescent learners, this is not the case due to the complex nature of adolescent students in general. The proposed study will observe student engagement and motivation in the

natural classroom setting and will engage them in discussing their experiences when reading with digital learning devices.

### **Summary**

Reading motivation at the middle school level has implications for success in other content areas because students who are intrinsically motivated to read perform better in school. Understanding the phenomenon of student experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to reading motivation could have profound implications for encouraging interaction with multiple modes of textual discourse.

Chapter Two of this prospectus has presented the literature relevant to a study which seeks to understand the experiences of middle students with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read. The study will be grounded in Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory as it relates to basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness for reading motivation. As it relates to reading, this theory says that internal and external motivation to read are based on students ability to perform the task, control the reading material and have a sense of relatedness in the form of social interaction. The study will also have a foundational basis in Rosenblatt's transaction theory which purports that reading is a transaction between the text and the reader. Efferent and aesthetic reading transactions will be examined in the context of how they coincide with students' reading motivation in relation to digital text. Since middle school students are complex individuals these theories should help this researcher understand their experiences with personal learning devices with respect to motivation from an experiential and psychological standpoint.



In addition to discussing the theoretical basis for the study, Chapter Two also reviewed studies related to reading, technology and motivation. These studies expressed the importance of understanding the motivational factors which impact a generation that seems to be inundated with technology (Rosen, 2011). They also provided information relative to understanding reading and the intricate nature of motivation in terms of reading with print and electronic mediums. Not only is motivation thought to be intrinsic and extrinsic, it can also be classified as autonomous or compulsory based upon the type of motivator (Deci & Ryan, 2008). While intrinsic motivation is thought to have implications for learning and general school success, external motivation cannot be overlooked because it is used most often by middle school students who are engaged with technology both in and out of school.

As it relates to the experiences of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices, few studies have been identified which explore the phenomenon within the context of middle school students and technology from a qualitative aspect; however, studies have been conducted which quantitatively measure motivation based various versions of reading motivation surveys. Nevertheless, studies which focus upon primary grade students' use of e-readers and iPads, as well as English language learners using digital texts have indicated increased levels of engagement which ultimately equated to increased levels of motivation. Understanding middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices will empower this researcher to make a shift from teacher driven instruction to student driven instruction. Additionally, understanding middle students' motivation to read with personal learning devices will give other educators information to consider as they embark upon pedagogical decision making that is intended to positively impact student motivation and ultimately achievement.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

Studies have shown motivation is a critical aspect of reading comprehension; however, the inclination to read, for many students, begins to decline around the beginning of middle school (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Whereas students experience a lack of interest in reading, many demonstrate an unprecedented fascination with technology ranging from smartphone applications to latest in gadgets powered by artificial intelligence. Since today's pre-teens are motivated to use technology for a wealth of activities the question ensues of how technology impacts students desire to read. The purpose of this collective was to gain an understanding of how phones, tablets and computers factor into middle school students' motivation to read. It is important because reading proficiency is a critical element for success in school and life in general.

Chapter Three of this dissertation delineates the methods used for a qualitative research study that addressed the motivation experiences of middle school students relevant to reading with technology. The chapter discusses the design as well as the rationale for its selection. Additionally, the procedures for data collection, analysis, participant selection, the researcher's role, as well as plans for ethical considerations and trustworthiness are outlined.

### **Design**

The study of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices was examined through a qualitative research lens. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in context to make meaning and interpretations based on what people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study is classified qualitative because it utilized an interpretive philosophical framework of social constructivism to garner an understanding of reading

motivation within the context of personal learning devices and middle school students (Creswell, 2013). In accordance with my ontological view that “multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others,” a qualitative approach facilitated an understanding of the reality middle school students have about their motivation to read with personal learning devices. Through firsthand data collection, from multiple sources, an understanding was derived about the motivational constructs that incline students to read with technology (Creswell, 2013, p.20). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative studies incorporate multiple methods of data collection and analysis to facilitate an understanding of each participant’s story within the context of the phenomenon. This study used the participants’ experiences to provide a complex, yet holistic image of the phenomenon of reading motivation with personal learning devices (2013). This type of multifaceted examination of data was important because it opened opportunities to better understand the participants’ experience with the phenomenon (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Lastly, a collective case study approach was chosen because, “the evidence from multiple cases is often more compelling and robust” (Yin, 2009, p.57). The stories of multiple participants provided many different perspectives on reading motivation with technology, and ultimately disclosed the level of data necessary for a “rich and thick” description of how the use of technology impacts students’ motivation to read (Creswell, 2013).

### **Research Questions**

To understand middle school students’ motivation to read with personal learning devices, research questions were devised as a guide to address the various constructs of motivation. This section discusses the central research question and its importance as well as the sub-questions which were formulated to focus in more detail on the phenomenon of motivation.

**Central Question**

How do middle school students describe their experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read?

**Sub-Questions (SQ)**

SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read?

SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?

SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?

**Setting**

The study included students who attended a North Georgia middle school. The school had a population of approximately 1,100 students in grades 6-8 with approximately 84% of the student body qualifying for free and reduced meals. Due to the large number of students at or below the poverty level, the school was designated a Title I school which means it received additional funding from the federal government to support instructional programs. The school is also part of a charter school district which has a school governance council that exercises some autonomy with decision making at the local level. Although the school was not considered a failing school by state standards, many students demonstrated deficits in the areas of Language Arts and Math as indicated by the 2016 administration of the Georgia Milestones test (Georgia State Longitudinal Data System, 2016). The school leadership structure consists of a principal and one assistant principal for each grade level. There is also a dean of student discipline, as well as a dean of instruction and parental involvement. All of the aforementioned individuals comprise the school's leadership team which also includes department chairs, instructional coaches and counselors.

The school was selected based on its implementation of a one-to-one digital device initiative in the spring semester of the 2017 school year. The site was also chosen for its demographics, location and potential to provide an ample number of participants to conduct the investigation. Other selection criteria included Language Arts classes which participate in a Reading workshop that encompasses twenty days of reading. In past years, teachers complained about this initiative because many students did not demonstrate an interest in reading. It was anticipated the information garnered from this study would be useful in making meaningful adjustments to the twenty days of reading protocol.

### **Participants**

This collective case study utilized maximum variation as a sampling method to select individuals for participation. Maximum variation sampling allowed consideration of multiple perspectives relevant to students' motivation to read with devices. This was important because different perspectives were necessary to formulate naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2013). Five students, ranging in age from 11 – 14, were selected from sixth, seventh and eighth grade for a total of fifteen participants. The students represented varying ability levels as evidenced by Lexile scores that ranged from 550 to 1175 and End of Grade testing measures which ranged from beginning to distinguished learner. Students who fit into Miller's (2009) classification system of underground (gifted, avid readers), dormant (students who can read but do not view reading as worthwhile beyond school) and developing readers (students for whom reading poses a challenge) were the targeted population. The planning phases of the study included a screening process based on Lexiles level and GMAS categories; however, due to privacy laws it was not possible to access students test cores without prior parental permission; therefore, teachers in each grade level were given color coded flyers (based on Lexile bands) to disseminate to

students. When the students returned the flyers, parents were contacted using the information collected on the interest flyer. Participants were compensated for their time with small tokens of appreciation such as snacks and other trinkets during meetings and interviews. At the conclusion of the study each participant was given a twenty-five dollar American Express gift card as a thank you for their participation.

### **Procedures**

An application for research with human subjects was submitted to Liberty University's review board for approval. After receiving IRB approval, an application was submitted to the school district's research department for permission to conduct at the selected school. After receiving approval from the school district, color coded flyers based on Lexile bands were disseminated to English Language Arts teachers for distribution to their students. As students returned the flyers, parents were contacted to verify that their child was permitted to participate. After parental contacts were made, a meeting was held with the parents and guardians to explain the study and answer any questions. At the conclusion of the meeting, parents were given a consent form to sign and students signed assent forms (see Appendices A and B for parental and student consent forms). Once the participants were identified, they were asked to take a reading habits survey (see Appendix D for the survey questions) about how much they read and their general attitude about reading. Candidate selection was based on the reading habits as indicated by responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire, Lexile scores from the Spring administration of the Georgia Milestones assessment and teacher determinations of the students' oral communication skills as well as the level of responsibility demonstrated in terms of following classroom expectations. These criteria were used to select five students (four females and one male) who fell in the dormant, developing and underground reading categories in grades sixth,

seventh and eighth for a total of fifteen participants (Miller, 2009). One alternate student was selected from each grade level in the event that a participant was unable to complete the study pool to be composed of four students from each grade to serve in the event that a need arises to replace a participant.

Prior to conducting individual interviews, the participants participated in team building activities to establish a rapport with them. After the team building activities, individual interviews were scheduled and conducted until all students had been interviewed. According to Merriam (1988) data collection and analysis should occur simultaneously in qualitative research; hence, the interviews were audio recorded and notations made as necessary for each question. After the interview data was collected and analyzed, artifacts such as myON® (a program students use to read digital books) reports and reading response logs which are used to record reflections of reading done with traditional texts were examined. Finally, two student were selected from each grade level to participate in the focus group discussion which was audio recorded.

After data collection concluded, a cross case synthesis was conducted to identify patterns related to motivation across cases (Yin, 2009). The data was transcribed coded, categorized, and compared across cases to identify common themes. Once common themes were extrapolated naturalistic generalizations were developed and the findings reported in narrative form.

### **Researcher's Role**

In this study the researcher served as the sole investigator which entailed obtaining approval, identifying participant, collecting and analyzing data from various informational sources which served to understand middle schools students motivation to read with electronic devices. As a twenty-nine year veteran educator, most of my career has been spent teaching

Language Arts and Reading to middle school students. While some students I taught enjoyed reading, most were not avid readers. I attribute students disinterest in books and reading to reading not being prioritized in home environments. I surmise an appreciation for books and reading begins at home well before formal school instruction. This mindset is further corroborated by two of my four children who were read to early and have a strong appreciation for reading and books. Therefore, as the researcher for this study I acknowledged the preconceived notions I have about the impact of early literacy and made an effort to remain objective during data collection and analysis.

Additionally, in this case study, my role was to collect and analyze the data. Since I was an educator in the research setting, I had some historical links to students from past reading classes. Students whom I previously taught were not included in the research. Hence, as the researcher it was necessary to gain the students trust so that they felt comfortable opening up and talking. Building a base of trust was an important element for encouraging students to discuss their true feelings about their motivation to read. Since motivation is a phenomena which must be examined within the context of an individual, it was incumbent upon the researcher to create a safe space for participants to express themselves without feeling the need to impress anyone or fear reprisal in some form for anything discussed.

### **Data Collection**

Case study research requires multiple forms of data to assist with triangulation and categorical analysis (Creswell, 2013). According to Merriam (1988) triangulation helps researchers take advantage of the strengths of each data collection method while also mitigating the weaknesses of that method. The three data collection methods incorporated in this study were individual interviews, focus groups and student work artifacts in the form of reading logs, which



were used to record reflections from traditional text, and myOn® reports that contained information about students reading with digital text. All data collected was kept on password protected electronic devices and the actual names of the participants were changed to further protect their identity.

In qualitative research, the interview is deemed the most important data source because it is through this process that open ended questions, which provide information about the phenomenon, are addressed (Yin, 2009). For this study, two interview formats, individual and group, were utilized to gather data about the phenomenon of middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. Since middle school students are characteristically social, group interview sessions were selected because of the peer interaction element and its ability to bring out discussion points which may not have surfaced during individual interview sessions.

Additionally, as it relates to individual and focus group interviews, sessions were conducted after school on days which the sweep bus (a bus for students who remain at school for afterschool activities) ran to accommodate students who needed transportation after the session. Interviews were conducted in a pre-reserved area of the school media center and lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes with no more than two interviews conducted on a particular day. Students were given a snack prior to starting the interview as a way of helping to keep the interviewees focused on the session rather than upcoming opportunities to eat after a long day of school. Both individual as well as focus group interviews were audio recorded, and notes and memos were made during the sessions that served as an initial form of data analysis. All interview data collected was kept in a secure location and students were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Using both individual and group interview sessions revealed pertinent

information for understanding the phenomenon of motivation within the context of middle school students reading with personal learning devices.

In addition to individual and focus group interviews, documents in the form of reading logs (used to reflect upon reading with traditional text) and myOn® reports were examined to gain insight on efferent and aesthetic reading and constructs consistent with intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation. According to Yin (2009) documents should be a part of every data collection plan as a form of corroboration and augmentation for other data sources. Student reading logs and reflection journals were reviewed after individual and focus group interviews were completed. For reading and reflection logs which were on paper, copies were made for analysis; however, electronic notebooks were shared electronically. The students' names were removed from all documents and replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identity.

## **Interviews**

According to Yin (2009) interviews are an essential component of case study research. They should be conducted in a systematic fashion which resembles guided conversations (Yin, 2009). For this study, the interviews were focused and take place over a shorter period of time to avoid the participants becoming frustrated or distracted. These intensive interviews (2009) followed an established line of questioning with probing and follow up questions for clarification as necessary (Yin, 2009). Although the interviews were recorded, the researcher took notes and made memos while actively listening. The interview questions are aligned to the research questions in Appendix E.

### **Interview Questions**

1. Describe any reading routines you have, as well as the books you are most interested in reading.

2. Describe how you feel when you are asked to read.
3. Describe your strengths and challenges in the area of reading.
4. Discuss your most memorable moment in the area of reading.
5. How has using your tablet changed how you approach assignments that include a reading component?
6. Describe the similarities and differences between reading with a personal learning device and reading a printed book.
7. Discuss your preferred method of reading, and explain why this is your preference.
8. Explain how receiving rewards would impact your motivation to read.
9. How would access to wide variety of books affect your desire to read?
10. What part of reading workshop do you dislike? Explain your answer.

The purpose of questions 1 – 4 was to have the participants reflect upon themselves as readers and their attitude toward reading. Research indicates that students' self-efficacy about the reading process impacts motivation (Jacobs, 2012; Miller, 2009). In other words, students who view reading in a positive light likely experience success with the reading process. These questions allowed the researcher to understand students' past experiences with reading.

Interview questions 5 – 7 were aimed at understanding students' experiences of reading with personal learning devices. Studies indicate that students perform a wealth of activities with technology both in and out of school (Larson, 2015; Rosen, 2011). Additionally, numerous studies have shown that primary grade and ELL students are motivated to read with technology (Ciampa, 2012; Gustad, 2014; Hess, 2014; Larson, 2015). These questions provided a context for understanding the scope of students' use of personal learning for the purpose of reading.

The goal of interview questions 8 – 10 was to assist with understanding the source of students' motivation to read. Motivation to read can either be intrinsic or extrinsic and the source of motivation potentially impacts success in reading and other areas of academia (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). These questions were also helpful understanding the role of autonomy and socialization as motivational factors. Ivey (2014) purports that when students are given the autonomy to select what they read and socially connect with peers it fosters the engagement necessary for enhanced motivation.

### **Document Review**

Documents served as another data source for the study. Artifacts examined included interactive student notebook entries, reading workshop journals as well as myOn® reports. Copies were made of the interactive study notebooks to examine trends and make comparisons with other data collected from the participants. For security measures, all identifying information was removed and the documents were housed in a secure location. The form in Appendix C was used to make on notations about the documents reviewed.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups served as another data collection source. According to Yin (2009) focus groups can be utilized to gain insight on a particular aspect of a study. Generally, focus groups generate more discussions than individual interviews because people may identify with what others are saying or something said which may cause someone to reflect in a different way to offer additional information (Kitzinger, 1995). The group discussions focused upon the participants' experiences of reading with personal learning devices from a motivational perspective particularly as it related to external motivational factors in terms of competence and relatedness. The groups were audio recorded to give the researcher an opportunity to consider

nonverbal cues as well as verbal cues from the participants. All participants were asked to keep the information shared in the group confidential. The alignment of the focus group questions to the research question is located in Appendix F.

### **Focus Group Questions**

1. Describe your experiences with reading as it relates to your successes and challenges.
2. If you could change something about yourself as a reader what would it be and why?
3. Discuss your experience reading with a personal learning device as it relates to your motivation to read.
4. Describe any features of a personal device which impacts your motivation to read.
5. Explain the reasons for which you read.
6. Describe the aspects of reading workshop which are most and least appealing to you.
7. Explain how you feel about book talks as they relate to your motivation to read.

The intent of focus questions one and two was to gain an understanding of the group's perceptions of themselves as readers since self-efficacy is thought to influence motivation (Miller, 2009). The third and fourth questions addressed the primary research question as it relates to how reading with a personal learning device impacts motivation (Larson, 2015). The fourth and fifth questions assisted with understanding whether the group's motivation to read was based on internal or external motivational factors (Ryan and Deci, 2010). The sixth and seventh questions helped to understand the role of autonomy and socialization as they relate to reading motivation (Ivey, 2010).

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis for this study took place as data was collected in the form notes and memos and continued as the researcher reviewed interview data and the documents that were collected. This section outlines the specific steps taken to understand the information collected. Initial data collection is described as well as the establishment of a case study database. The section continues with a discussion of how codes were extracted to form categories and how the categories were utilized to devise themes. The section is concluded with a description of the narrative format used to disseminate the information garnered from the analytical evaluation of all the data sources.

### **Initial Data Analysis**

According to Merriam (1988), case study analysis involves several levels of examination and interpretation. The first level should occur as the researcher is collecting data; therefore, during interviews and document analysis, memo and observer notes were made about initial observations. This level of analysis allowed me to later reflect on issues noted within the setting and relate them to the self-determination and transactional reading theories, as well as the constructs of internal and external motivation. Although notes and memos will initially written in the margin of the raw interview data, a journal was used to record reflections and separate biases (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Merriam (1988) asserts data that have been analyzed during collection are more relevant and streamlined which gives the researcher an edge when transitioning to more intense data analysis.

### **Case Study Database**

After the initial of phase of analysis, a case study data base was established that included transcribed interview responses, information from myON<sup>®</sup> reports, and reading logs. The

information was compiled topically in charts which could be easily searched using key words (Yin, 2009). Since this was a collective study that included fifteen participants, the data was voluminous. Storing the data electronically helped with identifying the occurrences of repeated or related words and phrases that were ultimately used to devise the categories from which themes were ultimately extracted. Charts, tables and other organizational tools such as colored font and highlighters were also incorporated to note recurring patterns within the data. The data was initially grouped by questions and responses based on their alignment to the research question (see Appendices E and F), and as recurring information surfaced, the information was restructured, with more tables and charts added as needed. The case study database provided the necessary structure for synthesizing information across cases.

### **Categorical Aggregation**

The third level of the analytical process was categorical aggregation in which the information from the database was coded to develop categories for theme development. Structural coding which is a method that involves identifying important elements of the study based on concepts was used to code interview responses as well as data contained in the reports and reading logs (Saldana, 2015). Structural coding was selected because it is particularly appropriate for qualitative studies which incorporate multiple participants (Saldana, 2015). For this study, the concepts were derived based on the constructs of the self-determination theory, internal and external motivation as well as efferent and aesthetic reading. The basic categories that emerged from structurally coding the data were organized in an outline that was used for theme development (Merriam, 1988).

## **Theme Development**

After the data was categorically aggregated, cross case analysis was used to look for recurrences across cases as a basis for collapsing and combining ideas (Creswell, 2013). The categories which evolved from coding served as the basis for further synthesizing the information across cases based on applicable literature related to the self-determination theory in regard to reading, constructs of internal and external motivation as well as efferent and aesthetic reading. After the categories were reduced, refined and further synthesized to develop a manageable data set, themes were developed which served as the basis for formulating naturalistic generalizations which explain the motivational experiences of middle school student reading with technology.

## **Case Representation**

The final phase of analysis was to report the cases and their findings in narrative form (Creswell, 2013). The final report includes a narrative description of the cases as well as the themes which emerged. According to Glaser (2002), an informed person does not want to simply be told what he or she already knows; therefore, the report also includes naturalistic generalizations which focus on ways the information about reading motivation can be used to inform middle grades reading instruction which incorporates technology.

## **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a critical element of qualitative research. For this study, several steps were taken to ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of the information presented. This section delineates how triangulation with multiple forms of data, member checking, peer debriefing and journaling were used to address the areas of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The goal of the researcher was to conduct a quality study



which could be replicated and expanded considering future generations and the evolution of new technologies which continue to permeate teaching and learning. The following explains how specific areas of trustworthiness were addressed.

### **Credibility**

A qualitative case study seeks to answer the question of validity in terms of whether the researcher measures what is really intended (Merriam, 1988). This study sought to understand the experiences of middle grades student relative to their motivation to read with technology. As a means of addressing credibility, multiple sources of data were incorporated. Interviews, document analysis and focus groups comprised the informational sources used to understand how technology factors into students' reading motivation. This type of triangulation helped ensure the data collected and the assertions made realistically described the phenomenon. Related literature was also helpful in determining whether themes and generalizations were appropriately aligned to prior research on the topic. Lastly, member checks with participants served to further validate the results of the study.

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

As it relates to dependability and confirmability raw data sources were audio recorded which allowed the researcher to refer to the original data source for clarity on an as needed basis. The researcher also included detailed descriptions of the stories and experiences to better facilitate replication of the study and accurate analysis across cases. Additionally, although the researcher made every effort to remain a neutral instrument in the research process, potential biases from years of teaching reading were clarified at the onset of the study. Peer debriefing in which the researcher consulted with an experienced colleague about reading motivation was also

incorporated. This helped the researcher maintain neutrality and confirmed the plausibility of generalizations and assumptions.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which a study's findings are generalizable (Merriam, 1988). This study incorporated descriptive techniques and a cross case synthesis as a basis for formulating naturalistic generalizations that can be applied to other situations (1988). According to Creswell (2013) rich, thick descriptions help with the transferability of the study. The findings of this study may be applied in other areas of research relative to students' motivation to read with technology.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in an ethical manner from beginning to end. The first ethical consideration involved obtaining IRB approval from Liberty University before any phase of the research was conducted. In addition to receiving approval from Liberty approval from the school district's research department was also obtained. All guidelines for conducting research and obtaining student information were strictly adhered. Additionally, all participants were notified their participation was solely voluntary. Students were also made aware of the option to leave the study at any time for any reason. Students who agreed to participate in the study were assigned pseudonyms and their information was kept on a password protected device. Finally, written consent and assent was obtained from parents and students before any data was collected.

### **Summary**

Chapter three outlined the procedures, data collection, analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations used in this collective case study that examined the issue of students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. This qualitative case study approach allowed

the researcher to examine and analyze multiple sources of data including interviews, documents and focus groups. The cross case synthesis facilitated the emergence of themes which led to naturalistic generalizations that describe how phones, tablet and computers factor into students' motivation to read of their own volition.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

Reading is an essential aspect of educational success; however, research has shown that reading motivation begins to decrease in middle school (Li & Wu, 2017; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008). The purpose of this collective case study was to understand middle school students' motivational experiences relative to reading with electronics such as computers, phones and tablets. Chapter Four delineates the findings of this study obtained through individual and focus group interviews, surveys and document analysis. A narrative description (using pseudonyms) of the participants is given, followed by a discussion of the themes developed and the research questions to which they were aligned.

### **Participants**

Participants for this study were selected from a North Georgia middle school. Permission was granted by the district to work with the students; however, due to privacy laws designed to protect minors a prior screening of potential candidates could not be conducted. In lieu of an initial candidate screening process, teachers were asked to disseminate color coded flyers to potential candidates based upon the students' Lexile level range. There was a total of fifteen students from grades sixth, seventh, and eighth selected to participate in the study. Each student completed a reading habits survey, participated in an individual interview and two students from each grade level were selected to participate in a focus group discussion. In addition to the reading habits survey and myON<sup>®</sup> reports, information from student reading journals was also included in the data collection process. The participants comprised a range of reading levels; however, eleven of the fifteen participants were female. The following chart gives an overview

of the participants, and is followed by a narrative description, which uses pseudonyms, of each participant.

Table 1. *Participants*

Name	Grade	Focus Group	Lexile	GMAS	ELA Class
<b>Shonda</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>		1100	Exemplary	TAG
<b>Briana</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>		925	Proficient	On Level
<b>Ashley</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	950	Proficient	On Level
<b>Kendrick</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>		775	Developing	On Level
<b>Marley</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	850	Developing	On Level
<b>Anthony</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	875	Proficient	On Level
<b>Jasmine</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>		1050	Exemplary	TAG
<b>Kayla</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>		975	Proficient	On Level
<b>Stephanie</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	1000	Proficient	On Level
<b>Candace</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>		1025	Developing	On Level
<b>Cierra</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	1200	Proficient	On Level
<b>Crystal</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>		1125	Proficient	Advanced
<b>London</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>		1100	Proficient	On Level
<b>Rhonda</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>		1250	Exemplary	TAG
<b>Brenden</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	Yes	1150	Proficient	Advanced

### **Shonda**

Shonda, a sixth grade, African American female student, is an only child who lives in a single parent home. During the interview she fidgeted a lot and played with a tissue box and paper clip on the table which gave the impression she has a lot of energy and likes to remain

active. Although she appeared to be bored or distracted, her responses were succinct, and indicated she is a gifted child and avid reader.

Shonda's Lexile is 1100 which is rather impressive for a sixth grade student. She is enrolled in multiple talented and gifted courses and earns excellent grades. Shonda scored in the exemplary range on the GMAS for English Language Arts in fifth grade which is not surprising because of the advanced nature of her reading and writing abilities. The informal writing in her journal was on topic and the ideas expressed indicated a strong command of vocabulary, mechanics, grammar and sentence structure.

She enjoys many types of books, but her favorites are mysteries. Although she reads on her computer and tablet, her preference is a traditional book. She stated, "There is nothing better than sitting down with a good book and actually being able to turn the pages." While reading with technology is not her preference, she remarked one of the advantages of reading on a device is, "If I don't know a word then I can get help pronouncing it without having to ask someone." Although she uses myON<sup>®</sup> at school and has access to many more books electronically, she would rather go to the school or public library to check out books. She enjoys reading workshop because it gives her an opportunity to select books which she likes to read and discuss them with other people. Shonda perceives herself as a very good reader and her strength is reading comprehension; however, she tends to abandon books which fail to capture her interest. She enjoys using her computer to complete schoolwork because she has all the necessary tools for success. Finally, Shonda acknowledged rewards would not likely impact her motivation to read because reading is one of her favorite activities; therefore, with or without rewards she would read because she enjoys it.

**Brianna**

Brianna is an African American sixth grade student who lives with her father and grandmother. During the interview she was composed and soft spoken. For some of the questions she requested further clarification and used sufficient wait time before offering a response. She needed to be assured that the goal was to get her honest thoughts and feelings about reading with technology and her responses would not be categorized as correct or incorrect. After the first three questions and some nonverbal listening cues, she relaxed and began to respond more confidently.

Each week Brianna's grandmother takes her to the public library to check out books. She stated, "My grandma makes me and my cousin get books and write summaries of what we read." She indicated she doesn't mind her grandmother's reading requirement because she knows reading is important; nevertheless, she wishes she could just tell her grandmother about what she read instead of writing it down in a summary. Her favorite types of books are realistic fiction, and she stated, "I like to read about everyday life drama." At school she doesn't mind reading the stories in Language Arts class but doesn't like reading the books for Social Studies and Science class because in her words, "they are too boring."

Brianna's Lexile is 925 which is appropriate for her grade level. She is enrolled in an level ELA class and scored in the proficient range on GMAS testing for fifth grade. The writing in her journal lacked details; however, the responses were legible and on topic. She perceives herself as an above average reader, "I read better than ok but not the best." Brianna admits she needs to practice building her reading stamina because, "When I read for more than, umm...about fifteen minutes I want to do something else."

Reading for school assignments and to fulfill her grandmother's requirement that she and her cousin read are the primary reasons that Brianna reads. Her preference is to read traditional books. Since the Science and Social Studies textbooks are electronic, she is compelled to read electronically for those courses; however, she would rather have a traditional book. She remarked, "I know I would have to carry two big books around, but I still would rather have the book than try to read it from a screen." When asked about the audio feature of reading electronically Brianna responded, "When the sound is on I start thinking about other things and not really paying attention." Whereas she doesn't like reading books on her device, she enjoys reading text messages on her phone as well as information her friends post on social media.

Getting rewards for reading would likely increase her interest in reading; she commented, "I liked getting the accelerated reader prizes in elementary school, but they don't have it anymore in middle school." She also likes the read aloud aspect of reading workshop but much to her chagrin, the teacher, like her grandmother, requires her to write about the book when her preference is to discuss it with peers.

### **Ashley**

Ashley is a female, African American, sixth grade student who lives with her mother and two younger siblings. She is an average student who scored in the proficient range for GMAS testing in fifth grade. Her participation in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program after school means she is at school Monday through Thursday until seven o'clock completing homework assignments and working on various STEM related enrichment activities. During the homework portion of STEM, students are encouraged to read if they don't have homework or complete it before the allotted time for homework is over. Ashley confirmed she uses her device to read during this time because she doesn't have a lot of



homework and prefers to spend the little time, she has at home doing something fun before going to bed rather than reading.

During the interview Ashley exuded an aura of confidence and answered questions with little hesitation. She is aware of her strengths and challenges in the area of reading and described them in detail. She struggles with comprehension but attributes this to taking short cuts and a desire to quickly finish. She acknowledged, “when I take my time, I can understand what I’m reading better.” Whereas Ashley’s grade level appropriate Lexile of 950 is not indicative of a student with comprehension challenges, the propensity to rush and quickly finish was observed in the short, incomplete responses written in her journal.

As for reading with technology Ashley remarked, “I would rather read on my phone or computer.” She likes reading with devices because they allow her to read with sound which she loves, “When I don’t understand something, I can hear it again and that’s better than trying to reread it by myself.” She primarily reads on her device at school and finds it helpful to Google concepts she doesn’t understand. Her favorite part of reading workshop is the read aloud portion that the teacher does; she stated, “I wish all books had sound because I really don’t like reading schoolbooks and novels.” Ashley scored in the proficient range for GMAS testing in fifth grade and she is enrolled in an on level ELA class.

Ashley was selected to participate in the focus group in which she recalled how she struggled with reading in elementary school but continued to try and ultimately received an award for the strides and accomplishments she made over the course of the year. She stated, “I remember when I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and got an award for improving my reading. I was very proud of myself.”

**Kendrick**

Kendrick is a sixth grade African American male student who resides with both parents and his older sister. Kendrick enjoys playing games on his gaming system at home as well as on the cell phone his parents purchased once he reached middle school. Although he answered all the questions, for many of them he requested further clarification before furrowing his brows and offering a response. The nonchalance of his attitude gave the impression he would rather be doing something else; nevertheless, he remained on task and completed the interview without any observed frustration over the questions that he needed more clarification and wait time to answer.

Kendrick communicated he usually reads as he is transported to and from school because the use of devices is not permitted on the bus. He commented, "I want to get on my phone, but I don't want to get it took so I just read comic books or magazines." If he has to read, his preference is to read books with lots of action. His Lexile of 775 is significantly below grade level; however, he is aware of the deficits he has specifically in the areas of fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. He prefers to read with other people because there is usually someone to assist if he is unsure of a word or doesn't comprehend what he is reading. He stated, "I know how to figure out words when I read but reading fluently is hard." He doesn't like reading on his device because of the technical difficulties he encounters, "I would just rather have a regular book and not worry about my computer not working." Kendrick also mentioned when he reads on his device he tends to get distracted and wants to play games instead of read.

Reading is not his best subject, and he scored in the developing range for GMAS testing. Besides the reading he does on the way to school, he only reads if it is necessary to complete an assignment for school. When he has free time, he likes to spend it playing with either his gaming

system or phone. For Kendrick reading is not a priority and using a device for reading does not have any bearing on his inclination to read outside of school.

### **Marley**

Marley is an African American sixth grade female student who lives with both parents and two younger siblings. She is a soft spoken, slightly timid young lady who recently relocated to the Georgia area from New York. Although she has adjusted well to the move, she sometimes misses her friends and family in New York and is very glad she has a device which she uses to regularly communicate with them.

She is a good student and whenever she finishes assignments before time is called, she pulls out a book to read. Her parent takes her to the public library, and she reads at home. She stated, "I read a lot but don't really like to read books on my tablet and phone, I would rather turn the pages myself." She likes myON<sup>®</sup> but admits that she uses the audio feature and doesn't really read along but rather listens to the recording.

Although her preference is reading a traditional book which she is able to annotate especially for school assignments, according to Marley, electronic books have their advantages because of the many tools which are available. She feels e-books are better than traditional books that are checked out from the library because you can highlight and make notes in it like it's yours. Marley likes reading workshop because she can select what she reads; however, she wishes there were more of the books she liked to read available in the classroom library. Receiving rewards would make her read more, she remarked "I sure would like get rewarded for doing something that easy." Her strength in reading is her interest in trying to become a better reader, she stated "my mom knows that sometimes it's hard for me to understand what I read so she puts me in these programs to help me read better." She believes having access to a variety of

book and receiving rewards for reading would make her want to read more. Marley scored in the developing range on GMAS in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and her Lexile is 850.

### **Anthony**

Anthony is an African American male, seventh grade student who lives with both parents and three other siblings. He was very close to his grandmother, who passed a few years ago, and he attributes her influence to helping him understand the importance of reading and going to school. His Lexile is 875 and he is enrolled in an on-level ELA class. During the interview he was very eager to answer the questions and gave detailed responses.

He scored in the proficient range on GMAS for ELA. He prefers reading on his device because, "Regular books don't have the extra stuff to use like my computer." Anthony's reading routine is to read using myON<sup>®</sup> when he finishes his work at school and read his Bible before going to bed because his grandma used to read the Bible with him at night before she passed away. At school he reads on his computer; however, at home he reads the Bible using an app on his phone. He stated, "I don't really like regular books because, "it gets boring looking at the pages and I get a headache trying to read them."

Anthony perceives himself as an "alright" reader and he is particularly successful with breaking apart unknown words to figure out how to pronounce them; nevertheless, he doesn't comprehend well because he is easily distracted. His online activity at school is monitored which prevents him from getting off task on his device during school hours, he mentioned something as simple as glancing at the pictures around the room or at another person's screen is enough to take his mind off his reading and cause him to lose focus. He remarked, "I would rather do assignments that have a reading part on my device because the computer has things that can help me understand what to do better."

Anthony's myON report indicated that he reads with audio one hundred percent of the time which aligns with his stated preference of reading with technology because he finds the tools useful. As evidenced by the sparsely written responses which minimally addressed the prompt, he does not put much time or effort into his writing.

When asked about how having access to a variety of books and receiving rewards for reading would impact his desire to read, Anthony responded it would make him want to read more. He liked reading in elementary school because he could get prizes for reading with Accelerated Reader. Although he would prefer spending time on his video game or going outside to play sports, he acknowledged reading is important, and he needs to read more.

### **Jasmine**

Jasmine is a seventh grade African American student who smiled a lot during the interview and seemed to have a bubbly personality. She lives with both parents and a younger sibling. Her mother is a school improvement coach, so education is very important in their household. Based on her reading habits survey responses, she believes reading is important; however, it is not something she especially enjoys. She only reads of her own volition if there is absolutely nothing else to do.

Jasmine is currently enrolled in a gifted Language Arts class. Her Lexile is 1050 and she scored in the exemplary range on the GMAS in sixth grade. Jasmine's preferred genres are adventure stories and mysteries, but she stressed that she only reads, "if I am bored and have absolutely nothing else to do." Her journal entries were well written and demonstrated a strong command of grammar and mechanics. She likes reading workshop but would rather demonstrate her understanding of the book she has to read creatively instead of writing about or even discussing it.

As for her preference of reading traditionally or electronically she replied, “It doesn’t matter whether I read a regular book or read on my phone or computer because it’s all reading and I have to do the same thing no matter what.” She comprehends well and has received medals for reading achievement; however, she admits reading is not something she enjoys. She understands that reading is a necessary part of life and school success, but even if she had access to a variety of books or received rewards for reading it would not increase her desire to read. She uses her device to complete assignments for school; nevertheless, she would rather spread out her arts supplies and find a way to incorporate them into her work rather than using computer software to complete projects and assignments.

### **Kayla**

Kayla is a seventh grade student who lives with her mother and younger siblings. She participates in the STEM program afterschool where she does her homework during the allotted time and reads if she completes her assignments before the designated timeframe is over. Her only other reading routine is to read after she finishes her assignments as directed by the teacher.

Kayla’s preference is to read with technology because, “it has things I can use that other books don’t have.” She likes reading with myON<sup>®</sup> because she can select her own book and it has audio and illustrations; but she only uses myON<sup>®</sup> at school. Staying focused and maintaining comprehension are areas with which Kayla struggles when trying to read both traditionally and electronically. In fact, Kayla’s myON<sup>®</sup> reports indicated there were several books open but incomplete and she confessed, “I like reading on myON<sup>®</sup> but, I have trouble staying focused.” She does not like to read books on her phone and tablet but rather text messages, and various social media posts. If she has an assignment to complete which has a reading component, she prefers completing the assignment on her computer to take advantage of

various reading tools including audio and the online dictionary to assist with understanding the definitions of words she doesn't know.

Kayla reported that having access to a variety of books and receiving rewards for reading would increase her motivation to read. She stated, "In elementary school, I loved Accelerated Reader because I got points, I could use to get different prizes." Kayla scored at the proficiency level in all areas on the GMAS in sixth grade and her Lexile is 975.

### **Stephanie**

Stephanie is an African American female student who lives with both parents and a much younger sibling. She is in seventh grade and proudly reported, "I do well in Reading, I get A's." She also stated, "I like reading and I read for fun." She reads at home and at school; in fact, her mother requires that she spend quality time reading on the weekend and over the summer months.

When asked about her reading preference, she expressed that both traditional and digital books have qualities that she likes. For example, she likes using the various features that come with digital books, but also likes the feel of having a traditional book in her hand, especially if it is something she really likes. At school she takes advantage of myON<sup>®</sup> because there are a variety of books and she likes to see the changes in her Lexile level especially when there is a competition for which she can earn prizes. She feels reading with the audio lets her read the book faster which means she is able to read more books on the computer than with a traditional book.

Stephanie indicated she would be inclined to read more if she received rewards, she stated, "They [rewards] would make me read and grow more, who wouldn't like getting paid for

something they already like to do?” Her Lexile is 1000 and although she scored in the proficient range on GMAS for sixth grade, her score was very close to exemplary.

### **Candace**

Candace is an African American female student who lives with her mother an older brother and a much younger sister. She has to care for her younger sister a lot because her mother and older brother both have jobs that require some evening and weekend work. Candace is very tall and one might deduce from her height that she is interested in sports particularly basketball, however, she is not interested in sports and does not read of her own volition.

Candace reads as part of a set routine established by her parent and she stated, “I do my chores and then I sit down to the table and my mom makes me read out loud to her when she’s home.” Although her mother allows her to select the book, which she usually gets when the teacher takes her to the media center at school, she would prefer to be involved in something that is more fun than reading like talking to her cousin who is also a seventh grader at another local school or Facetiming family who lives in Seattle if “the time is right” referring to the three hour time difference.

When asked about her preference for reading, Candace indicated she prefers reading on her device but knows there are many distractions which prevent her from staying focused on her reading, she stated, “if I get on my device, I want to go to KIK, Instagram other stuff.” Although she really does not like to read because she sometimes has challenges with comprehension, her mother has emphasized that reading is important. Her mother often helps her at home with reading by asking her to explain what she has read or assisting her with deciphering words that are difficult. Her Lexile is 1025 and she scored in the developing range for sixth grade GMAS testing. Candace considers herself an “okay” reader but feels reading with audio helps to



increase her comprehension. The prospect of receiving rewards for reading would make her want to read more.

### **Cierra**

Cierra is an eighth grade student who resides with both parents as well as two older siblings and two younger siblings. She is very athletic and has won awards for track and field. Cierra was also one of the first girls to play touch football in recreational league sports for her community. Although she stays busy with sports, she does not allow extracurricular activities to interfere with getting her education. Reading is something she does not mind doing; however, she reiterated, “I only read when it is required for school or when I have absolutely nothing else to do.”

Cierra perceives herself as a good reader, she stated, “I am a fluent reader and I comprehend well, but I am not good with figuring out hard words.” When she encounters a word she doesn’t know, she attempts to pronounce it phonetically if there isn’t a device available; but, if she has access to her phone or computer, she puts it in Google to get the pronunciation. Her most memorable moment in the area of reading was when her Lexile level, “soared from eighth grade to eleventh grade.” She indicated, “I was so proud of myself; I couldn’t wait to show my mom the report.”

When asked about her reading preference she replied, “Technology!” as if it should be the obvious choice for anyone. She prefers reading with technology because, “I can press a button and have things read to me.” She further indicated reading with audio allows her to pay attention to what she is reading. In her opinion, even if a book has boring subject matter technology makes it more interesting.

She acknowledges that she would probably read more if she were offered incentives. She likes myOn<sup>®</sup> because it has audio and pictures for many of the books. Cierra believes that reading is important which is why she is grateful that she has technology to do the reading for her. Her Lexile is 1200 and she scored in the upper proficiency range on GMAS testing for seventh grade.

### **Crystal**

Crystal is an eighth grade African American female student who lives with her mother and siblings. As evidenced by her advanced class placements and good grades, she works hard and believes it is important to read and get a good education. Although she primarily reads for school assignments, occasionally she reads in her free time. She stated, "I like to read books about true events and things that happened in history." She admits that if she doesn't find a book interesting, she is prone to abandon it. Her Lexile is 1125 and she is enrolled in a ninth grade ELA class.

Crystal perceives herself as a good reader, and her strengths include strong comprehension skills as well as the ability to decipher the meaning of words she doesn't know by using context clues and her knowledge of prefixes, suffixes and base words. She wants to go to college and hopes she can get a scholarship because her mother doesn't make a lot of money. She received accolades for reading in elementary school and has earned A's and B's throughout middle school.

When asked about advantages of reading with technology, Crystal admitted that the tools are helpful; however, she prefers reading with a traditional book because she is able to "keep up better" and monitor her comprehension as she reads. For her, flipping through pages is easier than pressing the back button to try to find what she is looking for in an electronic book. She

feels that having access to a wide range of books would not only encourage her to read more, but also give her an opportunity to experience more genres. She would definitely be open to the prospect of receiving rewards for reading because, “it’s not hard and you get something in return.” Her only caveat to reading for rewards is, “the book can’t be boring because I won’t finish it even if I’m going to get something back.”

### **London**

London is an eighth grade student who lives with one sibling and both parents. She has an older brother who is away for his first year of college. Her parents require that she and her brother read for thirty minutes each day. On the weekends they participate in sports, so they are not required to read because they are very busy with activities. London likes to read action books because they make her want to keep reading.

London perceives herself as a good reader as long she doesn’t get distracted. She knows how to decode words, but she sometimes struggles with comprehension when she is disinterested in the subject matter she must read. She would read for rewards but only if she could select her own books because even the prospect of rewards would not be enough to keep her reading a book that is “too boring.”

Her preference is to read a traditional book because reading with technology slows her down, “I don’t like reading with technology because, I like to read at my own pace and sometimes it becomes too much with having to make sure you’re clicking the right spot to the turn pages.” She also indicated that she gets distracted when she reads with technology, “there are too many things that take my attention away when I read with technology.” Her Lexile is 1100 and she is enrolled in an on-level ELA class She is on the honor roll and scored in the upper proficient range on GMAS for seventh grade.

**Rhonda**

Rhonda is an eighth grade student who is enrolled in talented and gifted Language Arts classes. She lives with her parents and siblings and does not have any reading routines aside from the reading she must do for homework. Rhonda is a very conscientious student and tries to make sure she completes her assignments in a timely manner and plan ample time to study for tests because she does not perform well if she is unprepared. During the interview Rhonda exuded an aura of confidence and it was apparent there was a level of maturity not commonly observed in most teens. She mentioned although she knows high school will be hard, she is excited about going because in four more years it will be time for college.

As it relates to her perception as a reader, Rhonda stated, “I am a good reader, and I can make different types of connections to help me read better.” When asked to elaborate on connections while reading, she indicated, “In elementary school, we learned how to put what we were reading together with things we already know about.” Her device is sometimes helpful with this because she can Google things of which she does not have prior knowledge.

Rhonda indicated that ELA is her best subject and she has received different types of awards for her achievement in reading. Her Lexile is 1250 and she scored in the exemplary range on GMAS in ELA. She prefers reading on her device because it gives her access to more books, she indicated “my device gives me a lot of options and I don’t have to go to the real library to get the books or worry about taking them back before the due date.” She doesn’t really use the tools which are available on her device for reading but likes having them in case she needs to look up something or hear how to pronounce a word she doesn’t know. She believes she is a good reader but recognizes there is always room for improvement.

**Brenden**

Brenden is an eighth grade African American male student enrolled in an advanced Language Arts class. He lives with his mother and siblings and participates in the school AVID (Advanced Via Individual Determination) program. His AVID participation throughout middle school has helped him stay on track and realize his desire to pursue higher educations. He does not have an aversion to reading; but, it is not something he does outside of school unless it is a requirement.

Since Brenden is already planning for college, he understands that he has to read more, “because college is hard, and I don’t want to get there and mess up.” When he reads with his device, he uses the tools to help him mark the text which is something his teacher strongly encourages the students in class to do. He participated in the focus group discussion and expressed an appreciation for the device he uses for school because he finds it helpful for completing assignments and helping him do things like look for summer work. His Lexile is 1150 and he scored in the proficient range on the GMAS in seventh grade.

The fifteen participants provided a myriad of insight on their experiences reading with technology. Although the ethnicities were not varied, the students comprised a range of reading abilities, personalities, family structures and reading routines. The following section specifically outlines how the information was used to understand the students motivation to read with technology.

**Results**

Case study research allows the researcher to investigate a phenomenon within its context (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The phenomenon for this case study was reading motivation within the context of technology and middle grades students. In an effort to understand middle school

students' motivation to read with technology, interviews were conducted and documents reviewed as primary sources for exploring the phenomenon. This section discusses theme development and their alignment to the research questions.

### **Theme Development**

The purpose of this collective case study is to understand the experiences of middle of middle school students as it relates to their motivation to read with technology. After collecting data from multiple sources which included interviews, reading logs, MyON<sup>®</sup> reports, and a reading habits survey, the information was “sifted through, combined, reduced and interpreted” (Merrriam, 1988, p. 121). The data were transcribed, coded, categorized and themes developed based upon commonalties within the groups of codes and categories. The themes were correlated to the research questions they addressed and ultimately used to formulate naturalistic generalizations which were used as a basis to delineate how the results align with existing research on reading motivation with technology that are outlined in Chapter Five. The following information describes the data sources and how they were utilized to develop the themes identified for this study.

**Individual interviews.** According to Yin (2014) interviews are an important element of case study research. The data from this study included information from fifteen personal interviews conducted with middle school students in grades sixth through eighth. These individual interviews along with a focus group interview served as primary sources of data for the phenomenon of reading motivation with personal learning devices. Since the participants were children, a series of team building activities were conducted to help establish a rapport between the students and the interviewer as well as their schoolmates with whom they may not have been familiar. During the interview process students were asked a series of questions in

reference to their motivation to read with personal learning devices (See Appendix E) .

Although the interviews were audio recorded on password protected devices, written notations were made and follow-up questions were addressed as raw data was informally analyzed with memos during each interview session. The information was transcribed and in member checking was conducted with the participants to ensure the accuracy of transcription and data analysis. The interview responses were entered into tables created in Word on a password protected device.

**Focus Groups.** Focus group interviews were a second data source in which two students from each grade level were selected to answer a series of questions about reading with technology. The purpose of these interviews was to draw upon some of the shared experiences of students in the group related to reading with technology. Initially it was a challenge getting students to speak in the group; however, they eventually relaxed and started to give their input. The interview was recorded, and notations and memos were made as the students answered responded to the questions (See Appendix F).

**Document Reviews.** Document reviews served as a third data source for assisting with understanding the experiences of middle school students in terms of their motivation to read with technology. The documents collected and analyzed included myON reports and the reading log section of students' ELA journal. These documents provided insight on students reading habits and thought processes during independent reading and reading workshop.

myON, an electronic reading platform, offers digital books based on students' Lexile Level and interest. The report for this program includes information about the books students access, the time spent reading each book, the percentage of time spent reading with audio as well as the scores from any tests that are taken on the books read. These reports were especially

helpful in corroborating the tools students used when reading with technology as well as the types of books and genre's students most frequently read

In addition to myON reports, document reviews were conducted on the reading log portion of the students' journals from ELA class. Since these documents contain the students thoughts and reactions to independent and collaborative reading done in the classroom during the portion of the lesson designated for independent reading and the writing component of reading workshop, they offered insight on efferent and aesthetic reading. The reading logs provided insight on why a particular book was selected for reading as well as the type of connection students made with the book.

**Case Study Database.** Once data were collected, a case study database was established using the information garnered from all data sources. The interviews were transcribed and ultimately organized by questions and responses using tables in Microsoft Word. Information specific to students' motivation to read with technology was extracted from reading logs and myON reports and merged with interview data based on the context of its relevance to the interview. For example, if students indicated they found reading with audio helpful, the percentage of time they spent using audio on myON was noted beside their interview response as well as how well they performed on tests for books read with audio.

**Coding and Categorizing.** The first aspect of data analysis involved reviewing the notes and memos made during data collection. After an initial review of the information was conducted, each interview was reviewed for words and phrases which were related to internal and external motivation as well as those which were indicators of aesthetic and efferent reading. Tables were created in Microsoft Word to serve as the data base for the information collected. In an effort to physically manipulate the information, index cards and sentence strip holders were



utilized as an organizational tool. Selected words and phrases from interviewees were placed on index cards and large sentence strip holders were used to group exact or similar words and phrases. The same process was followed using the myON<sup>®</sup> reports and reading logs.

**Theme Development.** The notes for each case were reviewed again and addendums were made to the index cards for each category. As the information was reviewed across cases, tally marks were placed on the index cards to indicate an exact phrase and the participant's quote was written on the card to signify a similar match. Similar recurring information was grouped together, and themes were developed based on the pattern signified with respect to students' motivation to read with technology. The following table outlines the recurring codes, occurrences and their assigned theme.

Table 2. *Codes and Themes*

Code	Occurrences	Theme
can't focus	4	
get distracted	3	
don't pay attention	7	Focus
distracts me	3	
helps me pay attention	5	
want to get on other stuff	1	
want to play games	2	

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like highlighter	12	
use highlighter	3	
like notes and highlighting	8	
love audio	18	Tools
read with audio	18	
like to read by myself	1	
don't like audio	1	
make words bigger	2	
does the reading	1	
doesn't seem like a book	3	
helps with connections	2	
pronounces words/how to say	4	
to do work	14	
teacher tells us to	12	
grandmother/mom makes me	4	
for schoolwork	7	Purpose
read to get prizes	14	
read for rewards	14	
liked AR	10	
Book IT -	6	
Read to Succeed	4	

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good with vocabulary	10	
need help with vocabulary	3	
some words are hard	6	
can't figure out words	3	
can comprehend	10	Perception of Ability
understand my reading	9	
it's hard to understand	4	
hard books	13	
good reader	5	
I read ok	10	
More good books in class/library	9	Availability of books
Can't find books / different kinds	5	
Read more /more types/different genres	10	
Like myON/ lots of books/variety	13	
Read text messages	15	
Put stuff/Post online	15	Nonlinear Reading
Follow people on tick toc, Instagram, KIK	11	
Look at clothes/Read information/ get clues for games	12	
Like to pick my own	11	

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Want to read other things	4	
Wish we could read more stories	2	
Teacher tells us what to read	3	Choice and Voice
Like action/drama	6	
Don't like to read boring books	10	

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**Focus.** A recurring theme throughout the individual and focus group interviews was focus. Students at every grade level discussed some aspect of how technology impacted their ability to pay attention with over half of them reporting technology impeded their ability to remain focused on text. This was especially the case when students used the devices for completing school related tasks with a reading component. Students acknowledged wanting to visit social media and gaming sites as well as browse the web in general to look for the latest games or clothing items.

Students who identified technology as an impediment to remaining attentive while reading identified gaming and social media sites as the primary culprit for diversion in attention and this was particularly the case when devices were used to complete school assignments with a reading component. Although gaming sites are blocked at school, the students stated they knew a way to get around it, "if the teacher is not watching." One student commented, "I can pay attention to my reading more if I have a regular book." Whereas off task behavior seemed to be regulated or addressed at school, when students were at home many admitted they succumb to the urge to do something other than read on the device even if they have an assignment on which they should be working. Candace remarked, "I want to get on something else when I'm reading on my computer." Kayla stated, "It's hard to pay attention when I'm using my device to read."

Whereas the majority of students interviewed reported not being able to pay attention, or feeling inclined to visit other sites while reading with technology, approximately one third of the students interviewed credited technology with allowing them to better focus on text especially when they incorporated features such as annotating, highlighting and audio. Students expressed an appreciation for being able to pronounce unknown words and find their meanings without needing to ask someone or consult reference material. Ashley responded, “I use the highlighter and notes when I am reading on my computer, and it helps me keep my mind on what I am reading.” Cierra remarked “I can pay attention to what I’m reading when I read along with sound books.” Unlike their peers who are distracted by technology, these students use various features to assist with staying on task while reading.

Whether focus was enhanced or impaired while reading with technology, students were aware of the benefits and limitations of reading with technology as well as how they factored into their motivation to read. Based on interview and survey data most students were inclined to read with technology regardless of any distractions identified because there are many accessories which allow the reading experience to be personalized.

**Tools.** Many students expressed using the available tools were a source of motivation when reading with devices. For example, Marley commented technology is better than reading a book that comes from the library because, “I can highlight in it and make notes, but if I get a book from the library or if I have a book from school, I have to use stickies if I want to highlight or make notes.” Several students communicated an appreciation for the notetaking and highlighting tools and cited their usefulness as one of the reasons for their inclination to read with technology.

While students are motivated to read with technology because of the availability highlighting and annotation features, the most popular tool was audio. The ability to read along with a narrator or allow a narrator to read the book is one of the most popular features for reading with technology. Only two students did not express a desire to take advantage of the audio feature when reading with technology; Brianna remarked, “I don’t like to read with audio it is distracting.” London stated, “I like to read for myself, I don’t like to turn on sound even if I have it.” The remaining thirteen students who read with technology couldn’t say enough about their appreciation for audio. Cierra stated, “Who doesn’t like reading with audio? It does all the reading for you.” The tone in her voice and expression on her face indicated she deemed it almost absurd for anyone not to take advantage of audio.

Tools such as highlighters, dictionaries and audio proved to be valuable assets for most students while reading with technology. Their availability makes reading a more palatable experience for students who are not encouraged to read, by offering them the opportunity to navigate the reading process independently and in many instances more successfully. Several students confirmed that without tools, reading on a device would be the same as reading a traditional text which is a task most students were not willing to do of their own volition.

**Purpose for reading.** Students expressed various reasons for their motivation to read with technology. The individual interviews of four students revealed they read at home as a requirement instituted by their parent or guardian. Brianna remarked, “My grandmother takes me and my cousin go to the library and makes us get books to read. When we finish reading them, we have to write a report.” Candace commented that each day after school her mother makes her sit down at the kitchen table to read. Students who did not have a reading requirement at home remarked they only read with technology when required to do so by either the school or

their teachers. Several students voiced, “I only read when I have to, or when there is absolutely nothing else to do.” Jasmine very adamant about reading of her own volition only if other options were not available. She stated, “For me reading is a last resort and I don’t like doing it.” Shonda was the only student indicated that she reads regularly because it is something she enjoys. She also remarked that her preference is to read using a traditional book rather than with an electronic device.

While most students read only when required, they acknowledged if given rewards they would read. Many students remarked they enjoyed participating in accelerated reader programs in elementary school. They liked reading the books because they were eligible to receive prizes. A few students mentioned they were also motivated by the Read to Succeed program offered by Six Flags and the Book It program offered by Pizza Hut; however, at the middle school level, these programs are only offered to sixth grade students.

**Perceptions as readers.** Reading with devices heightened students’ awareness of their reading abilities which also factored into how they perceived themselves as readers. Based on focus group interview responses, journal entries and myON<sup>®</sup> reports, some technology-based reading programs allow students to keep track of their reading progress. During the focus group interview a few students commented they liked reading with myON<sup>®</sup> because there is an indicator which allows them to see fluctuations in their Lexile levels. Students explained that although they don’t necessarily like to read, they like getting good grades on the myON<sup>®</sup> quizzes and seeing how their levels are impacted. Brendon recounted that he was able to keep up with his reading Lexile during a school wide reading initiative called “Lexile Level Up,” which was designed to help students increase their Lexile Levels. Brendon remarked, “Aw, man I can see how much my Lexile goes up every time I read a book and finish the test on myON<sup>®</sup>.”

Sometimes my score might go down, but I knew what I needed to do to bring it back up.” For students like Brenden, technology made them aware of their progress as readers and served as a source of motivation to achieve goals relative to improving their ability to read.

When asked about perceptions as readers in terms of strengths and challenges, the students asserted technology helps improve reading skills because there are many tools which can be used to assist with vocabulary or to clarify confusing concepts. One student remarked, “If I don’t know how to pronounce something, I can use my device to help me figure out how to pronounce the word, and after I know how to pronounce it, I can understand what I am reading.” In the focus group a student commented that audio novels make it seem like you are watching television which sparked a discussion about how reading with a computer helps with reading challenging material such as textbooks. One student expressed, “I don’t know how they did it in the old days because if I didn’t have my computer to help me with doing my work, my grades wouldn’t be so good.”

Overall, the students perceived themselves as fair to excellent readers. Those students who fell in the range of fair to very good were typically most motivated to read with technology while students in the very good to excellent range were not as motivated as their peers to read with a device. The more avid readers of the group were not enticed by the novelties of audio or other tools available on electronic books. Their preference was a traditional book which provides a level of comfort and normalcy which for them the novelty of electronic books pales in comparison.

**Availability of reading materials.** Many students communicated they would be inclined to read if they had access to a variety of reading materials and were given the option to select their reading material. Students commented they felt limited by the school media center because



books such as graphic novels, Dork Diaries and the like never seem to be available; nevertheless, with their devices students have access to the county's digital library, SOIRA, which has a plethora of books. Students indicated although there is sometimes a waiting list for the more popular books, the electronic library gives them more options than the media center. One student remarked, "When my teacher tells me to take out something to read, I like to get on myON<sup>®</sup> because it has lots of books for me to pick and I don't have to worry about not getting a book I pick out to read."

**Nonlinear Reading.** Students expressed they are motivated to read nonlinear text such as text messages, web pages and various types of social media posts with their devices. According to the reading habits survey approximately eighty-five percent of students interviewed primarily read linear texts such as fiction and nonfiction books on their devices only if it is required to complete a school assignment. One student remarked, "I don't read books on my phone and tablet, but I read stuff on KIK or what people write about the videos on TicTock." Another student remarked, "I don't like reading books on my phone and computer, because it doesn't feel right. But I do post things and read what my friends post on Facebook." Another student responded "I like to read text messages on my phone better than talking on it. Me and my friends start group chats and send each other messages." The students' comments indicate they are motivated to read in nonlinear electronic formats as a form of socialization as opposed to doing linear reading of books on the devices for school or pleasure.

**Choice and Voice.** Every student indicated that they would love to be given a preference in what they read during school hours. Whereas most of the time they are allowed to select the books they read for sustained silent reading, they do not have much of a choice about assigned reading in most classes. One student remarked, "my teacher lets us pick out books for reading

workshop but we are only allowed to choose books from the bin and it's not a lot to pick from.” Other students expressed an appreciation for myON<sup>®</sup> because the reading platform suggests books based on the results of a reading interest inventory. “I like myON<sup>®</sup> because I can choose the books I want read and read with sound. When my teacher tells us to read, I always get on that.” The information from myON<sup>®</sup> reports showed students accessed the platform at different times during the day which means their use of the program is not limited to ELA classes.

In addition to exercising choice in their reading materials students indicated they are motivated to read electronically when they are given the opportunity to discuss their reading with peers. Brenden, a student in an advanced ELA class, discussed how his teacher puts their discussion question into a group chat in TEAMS. He remarked, “It's fun reading what people post and giving my response to their posts. I liked that better than just writing down the answer to the question on a sheet of paper.” Kendrick commented he likes to read with other students because he can get help from them if he needs it. This corroborates the idea that middle grade students are social and motivated to do activities which have a component that allows them to interact with their peers.

### **Research Question Responses**

This section addresses the research questions in reference to the experiences of middle school students as they relate to reading with technology. The responses synthesize the information obtained in individual and focus group interviews, as well as myON<sup>®</sup> reports and journal entries. The central research question of, “How do middle school students describe their motivation to read with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read” is first addressed followed by two sub questions which delve more specifically into motivation as well as efferent and aesthetic reading with technology.

**Research Question.** How do middle school students describe their experiences with personal learning devices as it relates to their motivation to read?

As it relates to their inclination to read with technology, the students of this study described varied experiences. Information obtained from multiple data sources revealed tools and features which assist with reading were a primary factor in students' inclination to read with technology; however, experiences relative to focus, purpose, perception, availability, nonlinear reading as well as choice and voice were also described and thought to have a bearing on the students' motivation to read with devices.

Technology has a plethora of tools and features which can be used to enhance the reading experience. As indicated by interviews and myON<sup>®</sup> reports, the most popular motivator for reading with technology was tools especially audio. Students indicated features such as the built-in dictionary, highlighter and notes were helpful while reading and even allowed them to treat a book as if it were their own. Additionally, many students could not say enough about their appreciation for the audio feature which take reading to another level by allowing students to listen and read along with a narrator. During the focus group discussion one student compared reading with audio to watching a movie or television program. For many students, the tools facilitate comprehension and allow assignments which have a reading component to be completed with relative ease.

In addition to the useful tools, students described motivational experiences related to focus. It was conveyed that technology serves as both an enhancement and deterrent to students' focus depending upon the student. Some students reported an inclination to read with technology because the built-in features which assist with unknown words and unfamiliar content have the potential to improve comprehension. Ashley remarked she sometimes

experiences problems with comprehension so she likes reading on her computer because, “I can use things like Google and the dictionary to help me when I don’t understand things I read about.” Conversely as it relates to focus and the inclination to read with technology, London expressed, “there are too many things that take my attention away from what I am reading.” In London’s case she is not motivated to read with technology because she knows the tendency exists to become distracted with something else or not pay attention to what she should be reading. Although students expressed that technology challenges their ability to remain focused during reading, for many it is still their preferred mode of reading.

While it seems, students enjoy using devices for texting, gaming and tasks which require nonlinear reading, their motivation to read with technology generally stems from requirements instituted by parents and teachers. Ashley stated, “I read on my device at school, but when I’m at home I like to get on my phone to play games and see what my friends are doing on KIK or Instagram.” Kayla also acknowledged that she only reads on her device for school, she stated, “The only reading I do on my phone or computer at home is text messages and sometimes Instagram.” Hence, as it relates to purpose, most students do not read with technology of their own volition but rather to fulfill requirements that are mandated by teachers and parents.

Finally, the students’ perceptions as readers appeared to be a factor in their desire to read with technology. Students who identified deficits in reading were more inclined to read with technology and take advantage of such things as dictionaries and audio, while students who perceived themselves as more proficient readers regarded technology as a distraction and consequently were not as inclined to use it for reading. Students who expressed they were good readers or had confidence in their ability to read stated they preferred using a traditional book for reading.

The following sub-questions more specifically address the constructs of motivation as well as efferent and aesthetic reading in terms of students' motivation to read with technology.

**Sub-question1.** How do middle school students describe their internal motivation to read with personal learning devices?

Internal motivation is referred to as the innate desire to perform an activity or task. Based on students' responses to the interview questions aligned with internal motivation, reading with technology does not appear to impact internal motivation to read. Most of the students interviewed were inclined to read with technology because of the embedded elements that in some form facilitate comprehension or allow assignments to be completed with relative ease when compared to utilizing a traditional text. Comments such as "I only use my computer to read if there is nothing else to do" and "I use my computer to read for work I have to do for school" substantiate the idea that students are not reading with devices because they are willingly inclined to read. The student who expressed a love for books and reading stated, "There is nothing like sitting down with a book and being able to turn the pages." This student seemed to fulfill the criteria for intrinsic motivation; however, she does not like reading with her computer. She expressly stated, "I like to get regular books from either the school or public library." Hence, considering most of the students who prefer technology for reading do not read of their own volition, it can be deduced that reading with technology does not have a bearing on middle school students' internal motivation to read.

**Sub-question2.** How does reading with a personal learning device influence middle school students' external motivation to read?

External motivation refers to outside factors which influence an individual to perform a particular activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Based on the data collected, students are externally

motivated to read with technology because of the various tools and the accessibility it provides to a wide range of reading materials.

Several students acknowledged a preference for using technology to read because the digital tools allow them to actively interact with text. For example, the highlighter and note taking features allow students to seamlessly annotate the text while reading. An eighth grade student in advanced ELA remarked,

“When it comes to marking the text, reading on the computer is the best, when I was in sixth grade we had a class set of books, so we had to use sticky notes and we couldn’t highlight unless we had our own book.”

In addition to the to the annotation features, thirteen of the fifteen students interviewed used the audio feature. According to information obtained from myON<sup>®</sup> reports students read with the audio activated ninety-eight to one hundred percent of the time. One student remarked, “Although I don’t really like reading that much, if I can hear the book that’s better for me.”

Another external motivating factor for reading with technology is accessibility to a variety of books and other reading materials. With the exception of one, the students acknowledged they would read more if access was given to a variety of reading materials. myON<sup>®</sup> reports indicated that students read a variety of books across several genres, and rarely were two students reading the same book. Several students expressed they liked MyON<sup>®</sup> because it gave them interesting reading options. Unlike the books in the school media center the books on MyON<sup>®</sup> are always available so students do not have to worry about selecting a book and finding out later it is unavailable. “One student remarked, “I hate when I go to the library and they don’t have the book I picked out.” While the specific book may not be available in a traditional book, there is a greater

likelihood that book is available in an electronic format. Thus, the use of technology gives students more book options from which they can select.

Based on the responses given, students are extrinsically motivated to read with technology because of the many assets which expand their reading options and facilitate an understanding of the text. Although one student expressed reading is the same regardless of the medium, most students agreed that reading with technology has advantages and for this reason they felt more inclined to read using technology than with a traditional text.

**Sub-question3.** How do personal learning devices factor into students' efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?

Efferent and aesthetic reading experiences are derivatives of Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reading Theory which maintains that "every reading act is an event, a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular configuration of marks on a page" (Rosenblatt, 1988, p. 4). Efferent reading is done with a specific purpose or goal in mind while aesthetic reading involves the readers' emotions and experiences with the text (Rosenblatt, 1988). As a reader interacts with the text, meaning is constructed based on past experiences or feelings generated from the reading. Typically, efferent reading is associated with external motivation, and aesthetic reading is associated with internal motivation. As it relates to how personal learning devices factor into students efferent and aesthetic reading experiences, the themes of tools and purpose for reading address students efferent and aesthetic reading experiences. Tools and purpose for reading address students' efferent experiences reading with technology because these items are related to the students' inclination to reading which in most instances is to complete a particular task. Data revealed students read with devices primarily to fulfill requirements instituted by teachers and parents. Since only one student fit the category of

transacting aesthetically with text but prefers to read using a traditional text, the results of this study indicate technology does not factor into students aesthetic reading experiences. However, based on the themes of purpose and tools technology has a bearing on students' efferent reading experiences.

### **Summary**

Chapter four outlined the results of data sources used in this collective case study and aligns them to the research question, "How do middle school students describe their experiences reading with personal learning as it relates to reading motivation?" The students described varying experiences for reading with technology which were associated with the themes focus, purpose, perception, availability, nonlinear reading as well as choice and voice. While students enjoy using their devices for gaming, reading text messages and posts on social media sites, the theme of purpose indicates students primarily read with devices to complete assignments which are required for school. Almost half of the participants interviewed indicated a preference for reading with a traditional book because they feel their focus is negatively impacted when utilizing a device for reading. Nevertheless, most the students concur that tools especially audio are an added benefit of reading electronically, and many take advantage of these tools to annotate text, define unknown words and expand background knowledge on various reading topics. Hence, since available tools as well as parental and teacher requirements are a major factor in motivating students to read with technology, it can be deduced that reading with devices impacts extrinsic motivation and efferent reading experiences. However, in contrast, it was not evidenced that reading with technology had any bearing on students intrinsic motivation and aesthetic reading experiences because students were not reading with the devices of their own



volition but rather to fulfill requirements of parents and teachers or to take advantage of the available features.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this collective case study is to understand the motivational experiences of middle school students who read with personal learning devices. Chapter Five summarizes the research findings and discusses how they compare with theoretical and empirical research on middle school students' motivation to read with technology. The Chapter further describes theoretical and empirical implications along with the limitations and delimitations of middle school students' motivation to read with technology. This section concludes with recommendations for future research and a summation of the entire study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this collective case study is to understand how technology impacts middle school students' motivation to read. The perspectives of fifteen North Georgia middle school students were captured and analyzed as a basis for understanding how phones, tablets and computers factor into reading motivation. Personal interviews, a focus group interview session, a reading habits survey, reports from the reading platform myON<sup>®</sup> and reading journals were used to garner insight on reading motivation when using technology. Conversations and supplemental data that evolved around book variety, multiple platforms of expression, reading preferences, reading rationales, and off task reading behaviors served as a basis for extracting the themes tools, focus, purpose, choice, voice and nonlinear reading. These themes served as key components for understanding how student experiences factor into their motivation to read with technology. The following paragraphs are a summation of answers to the central research question and sub-questions used to guide this study.

The central research question “How do middle school students describe their motivation to read with personal learning devices?” provided an overarching perspective on students’ motivation to read with technology. Based on the theme of tools, many students derive motivation to read with devices from built in features which improve focus and enhance the overall reading experience. Other motivators described include platforms and applications that offer choice, voice and opportunities for nonlinear reading. For many students reading with technology promotes a level of textual interaction which exceeds reading with a traditional text. Audio, built in dictionaries, notes, highlighters and Google offer mechanisms for active engagement and plausible segues for comprehension. Even students who are easily distracted by entertainment apps and games attest to improved focus when reading with devices. Additionally, technology grants students the opportunity to self-monitor and maneuver text with minimal assistance from adults. This builds confidence in reading and fosters a sense of independence that is unattainable when reading a traditional book. Although most students seldom read outside school of their own volition, many prefer to use technology for the ease of accessibility it provides to resources that assist with reading.

In addition to receiving motivation from easily accessible tools, students are motivated to read with devices for nonlinear literary tasks such as reading web pages, social media posts, gaming information, and text messages. Although students enjoy using technology for a plethora of activities unrelated to school and reading, its use does not encourage students to read of their own volition. Students use devices to complete assigned reading given by parents and teachers; however, the mere availability of a device for reading does not encourage motivation to read for sheer enjoyment. Hence, the motivational experiences students described for reading with technology support the constructs of extrinsic motivation and efferent reading but are not

consistent with internal motivation and aesthetic reading. These observations are further delineated in the sub questions which specifically address intrinsic and extrinsic motivation along with efferent and aesthetic textual interactions.

The first sub-question, “How do middle school students describe their internal motivation to read with personal learning devices?” assisted in understanding whether students demonstrate an innate desire to read with technology because reading is deemed a rewarding experience. Students who described experiences consistent with intrinsic motivation to read did not express a preference for reading with technology. Intrinsically motivated students preferred to read books with pages that could be physically manipulated. Although students like the rewards given for reading, those who value reading do not read expressly for rewards. Hence, it was determined technology is not a factor in facilitating constructs which are consistent with intrinsic reading motivation.

The second sub-question, “How does reading with a personal learning device influence middle school students’ external motivation to read?” was designed to identify outside factors described in the students’ experiences which impact their motivation to read with devices. It was determined students’ extrinsic motivation to read with devices is impacted by the platforms and features which enhance the reading experience. The themes of tools, choice and voice and purpose for reading were used to make this determination and are further outlined in the following paragraphs.

The data from myON<sup>®</sup> reports, interviews and reading journals indicate tools are a major factor in students’ inclination to read with technology. Many students take advantage of audio, dictionaries, highlighting and notetaking features. These tools are particularly helpful with textbook reading; however, students enjoy using them for novel and magazine reading as well.

Most students consider the features invaluable enhancements to the reading process with some crediting them for exponential growth and development in reading.

Another extrinsic motivating factor is accessibility to a variety of reading materials which assists with fulfilling reading requirements established by parents and teachers. The reading platform myON<sup>®</sup> was preferential because selected books are always available and there is the option of reading along with audio. Reports from myON<sup>©</sup> substantiate students use audio to read a variety of books which further supports the notion of technology as an extrinsic source of reading motivation. As evidenced by several students, reading is not an activity of choice, but rather a means to an end. The personalized textual interactions made possible with technology extrinsically motivates students to use it for a variety of necessary reading related tasks.

The final subquestion, “How do personal learning devices impact students efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?” was aimed at understanding how various textual interactions as described in Rosenblatt’s transactional reading theory factor into students’ motivation when reading with technology. According to Rosenblatt’s transactional reading theory, efferent reading transactions are typically associated with external motivation and occur when readers have a specific purpose or goal set for reading. Aesthetic reading transactions are associated with internal reading motivation and occur when the reader connects emotionally with the text. Based on the acknowledgement that most students read to fulfill the requirements of teachers and parents, technology is not a factor in aesthetic reading transactions.

Whereas aesthetic reading transactions are not impacted by technology, efferent reading transactions are enhanced by a variety of resources which provide access to text in multiple formats. Students efferently interact with text via technology to complete task for almost every

subject. Available tools and resources encourage active engagement and make efferent transactions less challenging especially for reluctant readers.

Overall, students are motivated to read with devices for school related activities but do not access them specifically for leisurely reading. For many, the tools and resources provide invaluable help for completing assignments with a reading component. Although devices are a key source of extrinsic reading motivation and efferent transactions, their use does not foster innate desires to read or emotional connections with text.

### **Discussion**

Advancements in technology provide twenty first century learners with a wealth of resources available at their fingertips. Students willingly access phones, computers and tablets for games, socialization with friends, movies, and a plethora of other activities. Whereas students willingly leverage technology for engagement in some activities, it bears understanding whether the use of technology also motivates students to read of their own volition. Researchers concur motivation is a multifaceted construct which is reliant on multiple variables; however, few studies address the role of technology in reading motivation (Conradi, 2014; Mckenna et al. 2012; Sheifele et al., 2012). Considering the pervasiveness of technology in today's schools and the importance of reading for academic success there is a need to address reading motivation within the context of technology (Long & Szabo, 2016). The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how technology factors into middle school students' reading motivation. The following discussion addresses how the results of this study compare theoretically and empirically with existing literature on the topic middle school students' motivation to reading with technology.

## **Theoretical Literature**

The theoretical basis for this study was the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory. These theories were instrumental in facilitating an understanding of students intrinsic and extrinsic motivational experiences and how they factor into efferent and aesthetic textual transactions while utilizing technology. Both theories have been used in the exploration of reading motivation within the context of technology (Larson, 2010; Li & Wu, 2017; Long & Szabo, 2016). These theories are valid from the perspective that utilizing devices to read has the potential to meet Deci and Ryan's psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy while also providing textual interactions which are consistent with Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic reading experiences.

**Self-determination theory.** According to the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's (2008) self-determination theory of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational constructs require competence, relatedness and autonomy. These qualities were observed in every participant regardless of the motivational construct indicated by their experience. The following paragraphs outline how the use of technology factors into fostering the psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy as well as how these psychological needs impact intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation in the literature and this study.

The first attribute competence, the ability to perform an activity, was demonstrated in the varying levels of reading proficiency students used to navigate text. Students with lower reading proficiency, as evidenced by their Lexiles, used technology as scaffolds to address deficits in competence. These students also relied more on reading with audio than their more proficient peers who used notes, highlighters and built-in dictionaries to assist with comprehension. Similarly, Miranda, Rossi, Johnson and McKenzie (2011) noted the use of technological tools for

reading improves the confidence and reading abilities of struggling readers. Tech savvy students use tools and features to compensate for perceived deficits and ultimately improve in key areas of comprehension and vocabulary. More importantly, Dalton and Picton (2015) noted technology allows less proficient readers opportunities to use scaffolds and supports without fear or embarrassment. In this study, one student remarked he prefers reading with a group during reading workshop because he has support with reading if necessary; however, studies have found technology provides struggling readers with scaffolds that increase comprehension and occasionally interest in reading (Dierking, 2015; Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2017; Jansen, 2018). Students' ability to successfully navigate text with little or no assistance from peers and adults attributes to improved perceptions of competence (Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2017).

In addition to allowing successful navigation of text, research signifies increases in comprehension for struggling students using electronic devices and universal design (Gonzalez & Johnson, 2012). The improvement in comprehension was attributed to enhanced levels of engagement when reading electronically. Comparably myON© reports generated for this study also indicate increases in the Lexile levels of some students. Two students reported they were excited to see how much their reading improved during the schoolwide initiative "Lexile Level Up." Based on the students' reports and feedback in the focus groups, they credited improvements in their Lexiles to features within myON© (audio, notes, highlighters) that support increased reading engagement and comprehension.

The second characteristic of the self-determination theory, relatedness, refers to an individual's ability to relate or connect with an activity based on interactions with others. As it concerns reading motivation, students are more likely to engage in reading activities when relevant connections can be made with the subject matter, peers or teachers. As indicated on the



reading habits survey, every student felt reading is an important and relevant aspect of success in school and life in general. This assertion was also true for Lasley, Sosebee and Cox (2017) who reported the use of e-readers allows students to create relatable reading experiences within the context of existing familiarity with digital devices. Additionally, Lotta Larson's (2015) contention that technology supports relatedness, by providing opportunities for connectivity with peers, further substantiates the capability of devices to foster a sense of relatedness in readers. Students in this study and others confirm technology-based reader response activities promote connectivity among peers and help expand critical thinking (Hutchison & Colwell, 2014; Larson, 2015).

Although many students in this study as well as a study conducted by Dierkson (2015) communicated, they are not particularly fond of reading, devices allow them to connect with reading on a different level. Whereas one student declared it's all reading regardless of the format, others were appreciative of the textual variations available through technology. Most students found reading with technology very relatable and even critical to their educational success.

The third construct of the self-determination theory, autonomy, refers to volition and psychological freedom when carrying out an activity (De Naeghel et al., 2016). In addition to fostering the needs of competence and relatedness when reading, technology offers students the freedom to select from a plethora of books which are customizable based on individual preferences. Larson (2010) discovered when students were given the option to use customizable features such as dictionaries, adjustable font, and audio enhancements (a favorite of many students) even struggling readers were able to successfully navigate a text. The students in this study also exercised their autonomy by customizing the reading experience through audio, built

in dictionaries, note taking tools and highlighters. Students expressed that tools are differentiating elements, for reading with technology, that set it apart from reading a traditional text.

In addition to providing students with the autonomy to customize the reading experience, electronic devices increase the variety of texts to which students have access (Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2017). Several studies have found students are motivated to read when given the opportunity to select reading material (Dierkson, 2015; Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2017; Larson, 2010; Union & Green, 2015). As observed in the theme choice and voice students indicate they would read more if given access to a variety of genres and books. Hess (2014) noted students requested access to more books when given a device with preloaded book titles. Additionally, research conducted by Dierking (2015) asserts electronic books offer choices for reading and allow students to experience privacy in the sense that everyone's book looks the same which eliminates any stigma that may accompany reading books considerably below grade level. Furthermore, as noted in the theme of purpose in this study, students primarily read to fulfill the requirements of parents and teachers and these mandates are more palatable when there is the autonomy to independently choose a book to read. Through a variety of customizable tools and features that facilitate engagement with the text, electronic devices give students choice and voice in their reading; therefore, the results of this study and prior research studies corroborate the notion reading with technology supports the psychological need of autonomy.

Hence, from the perspective of the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory this study along with the literature substantiates the assertion that meeting the needs of competence, related and autonomy is a positive source of extrinsic motivation to read. Students expressed they read with technology for the tools and features which facilitate

positive interaction with text as well as for the apps and platforms which provide access to a large selection of books. Many students attest that these features differentiate the reading experience when fulfilling requirements of parents and teachers.

**Transactional reading theory.** In addition to providing a platform that meets students psychological needs, this study found reading with technology factors into students' efferent reading experiences; however, it was not shown to be a contributing factor in aesthetic reading experiences. According to Rosenblatt (1988), reading is a transaction between the reader and the text with some transactions classified as efferent and others aesthetic. Efferent reading transactions are typically associated with extrinsic motivation because there is a set purpose for the interaction; conversely, aesthetic interactions are associated with intrinsic motivation because the reader connects with the text syntactically and emotionally. The following paragraphs outline how the results of this study align with existing research on the principles of efferent and aesthetic reading.

Based on the data collected, this study suggests students are inclined to read with technology primarily for the customizable features, and the access it provides to a variety of text. This was also observed in studies conducted by Larson (2010) as well as Picton and Dalton (2015); both studies surmised features such as audio, built in dictionaries and highlighters provide readers with the necessary tools for enhanced engagement with text. From a motivational perspective the use of electronic devices for the use of available tools and features aligns with the construct of efferent reading. In this study and others students were not inclined to read with devices as a source of enjoyment but rather because the customizable features and platforms offer more reading choices and the opportunity to actively engage in text (Dalton, 2014; Dierking, 2015; Hess, 2014; Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2018).

Students who demonstrated characteristics consistent with aesthetic reading experiences and intrinsic motivation indicated a preference for reading with a traditional book. This aligned with a study conducted by Loh and Sun (2018) which found student preferences for reading electronically varied based upon the purpose. For example, students preferred to read long books in print format; however, for a quick search of information their preference was to access and read the information electronically. Another study surmised more proficient readers preferred the hard copy of a text rather than its digital counterpart (Evans, 2017). Thus, in these instances, technology was not a contributing factor in intrinsic motivation and aesthetic textual transactions. The student in this study (Shonda) who discussed experiences consistent with aesthetic transactions also expressed a preference for a traditional text. Hence, whereas technology is shown to factor into students efferent reading, it is not a factor in aesthetic textual transactions.

Consistent with the guiding principles of the psychological needs and transactional reading theories, students in the literature and this study described experiences which confirm technology provides a general framework for meeting the basic psychological needs for extrinsic motivation and efferent reading transactions. Nevertheless, based on the experiences described, technology does not promote intrinsic motivation or aesthetic reading transactions which supports Jacobs (2012) assertion that the mere use of technology is not an inherent motivator.

### **Empirical Research**

This qualitative case study examined middle students' motivation to read with technology a topic for which there is limited qualitative research (Dalton, 2014; Louick et al., 2016).

Whereas there are quantitative studies which primarily incorporate surveys that are administered in group settings and cross referenced with reading achievement data, experts concur there needs

to be more qualitative research which takes into account “student voices” on the concept of motivation (Louick et al., 2016 p. 260). The following sections addresses how the results of this study compare with existing research on the construct of motivation as it relates to middle school students’ motivation to read with technology.

**Tools and audio.** The use of tools and audio when reading with technology were described as key motivational elements among students in this study as well as others (Dalton, 2014; Larson, 2010; Lasley, Sosebee & Cox, 2017). When reading with technology, students take advantage of highlighters, dictionaries, notes and audio to enhance the reading experience. The students’ motivational experiences with tools and audio were corroborated in two studies with electronic readers, one conducted by Larson (2010;2015) and another study conducted by Miranda, Rossi, Johnson and McKenzie (2011). The students in Larson’s study expressed reading with technology was especially helpful in deciphering unknown words which ultimately contributed to increases in comprehension and reading stamina. The same was true for Miranda et al. (2011) which identified significant gains in The Motivation to Read profile for the male students. Several students in this study concurred with Larson’s participants as it relates to using available features. Students expressed appreciation for the ability to change font sizes, define unknown words with the built-in dictionary and even sit back, relax and have someone else do the reading as noted in Cierra’s statement, “I like to read on a device because I can press a button and have things read to me.”

**Reading preference.** The novelty and features of reading with technology may suggest it is the preferred mode of reading for all students; however, research supports there are still students who prefer reading with a traditional book (Conradi, 2014; Evans, 2017). A student in Evan’s (2017) study of high school students’ experiences of reading with technology remarked,

“I find it uncomfortable reading on online.” In another study which focused on adolescent reading preferences a student expressed a similar sentiment, “I prefer using a printed book because I like the feel of holding a book and turning pages” (Loh & Sun, 2018). Preferences for reading a traditional book were also expressed in this study with at least one student from each grade level indicating a desire for reading with a traditional text because “there is nothing like sitting down with a good book and being able to turn the pages” (Shonda).

**Choice and voice.** An additional finding from previous research corroborated by this study is how reading digitally gives students more options for reading which factors into the autonomy aspect of motivation. More than half of all school libraries offer e-books which make a variety of genres and titles available students (School Library Journal, 2013). Students in this study expressed appreciation for online libraries and reading platforms like SOIRA and myON<sup>®</sup> because materials can be checked out without the worry of returning them to the library or the disappointment of the media center not having a preselected book. This is especially true since more popular books leave the shelf and may not be returned in a timely manner. Electronic reading materials not only give students access to fiction and nonfiction, but everything in between.

In addition, the personalization features which students deem beneficial are an added benefit to accessing material online. One student commented she would like to have access to more books in the classroom library; however, digital texts offer numerous possibilities for students to access books because they are not bound to a particular location or the available resources of a certain teacher. Additionally, students expressed they are fond of digital books because they can almost be treated like their own book in terms of highlighting and annotating the text. This is especially true for textbooks which unlike novels are too expensive for middle

school students to purchase their own copy; however, unlike their traditional counterparts, digital textbooks allow students to annotate and interact with them like they would their own personal copy of the book.

**Focus.** Whereas digital books provide useful tools and give students options, there tends to be an issue of students remaining focused on the reading material. Focus related issues were observed in this study as well as the literature. Almost every participant addressed some aspect of focus in their interviews. Some students communicated the use of technology helps them maintain focus, as noted by Ashley's comment, "Reading on my tablet and phone helps me pay attention." Nevertheless, most students admitted the use of technology poses a distraction because the temptation exists to engage in off task activities like gaming and social media. The same concern was communicated in the literature with researchers posing questions such as "Too dumb for complex text?" and "E-books a personalized learning experience or digital distraction?" (Bauerlein, 2012; Dobler, 2015). These articles voice apprehension about students' ability to maintain the level of concentration necessary for interacting with complex text amid the distractions presented by reading with technology. This study noted while students recognize the potential for distraction, many acknowledge the benefits of reading with technology outweighs the risk of digression.

Whether deemed an aid or deterrent to focus, participants substantiated Dobler's (2015) assertion that users of technology for reading must "remain in the moment" in terms of understanding their limitations and knowing when comprehension is lost. Almost all the students who expressed issues with focus were aware of challenges presented by reading with technology and adjusted accordingly. For some students this meant turning on audio to have something reread or a word pronounced, and for others it meant turning audio off and intently

focusing on the text. Although several students said they only read for school or because their parents require it, many admitted the use of technology helps them self-monitor and understand more of what they read.

**Technology as an inherent motivator.** The final area addressed in this study as well as the research is technology as an inherent motivator. Every student interviewed expressed enjoyment for using some aspect of technology. Whether it was for Mine Craft, Fort Night, texting, or social media each student discussed an enjoyable activity that was unrelated to school. The fact that students enjoy using technology for other activities has led some to classify it as an inherent motivator. Jacobs (2013) and Conradi (2014) both contradict this perception. Students of this study substantiate the assertion that technology is not an inherent motivator. One student remarked, “it doesn’t matter if it’s a regular book or on the computer, it’s all reading.” Although students attest to more engaged reading with technology, this does not translate to an innate desire to read. Hence, based on the data, technology presents opportunities for student involvement with text; however, increased engagement is not synonymous with intrinsic motivation. Thus, the use of technology is not enough to spawn the desire to read of one’s own volition.

### **Implications**

The students of this study discussed various experiences which describe their motivation to read with technology. It was essentially determined students are inclined to read with devices because of tools and platforms which increase engagement and improve comprehension. These findings have theoretical, empirical, and practical implications for educators, policy makers and other stake holders. This section discusses the implications based on the motivational experiences described for reading with technology.



## **Theoretical**

This study was based on the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory and Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory. The psychological needs aspect of the self-determination theory purports motivation occurs when the psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy are met. Rosenblatt's transactional reading theory asserts reading is a transaction between the text and the reader with transactions qualifying as either efferent or aesthetic. Efferent transactions occur when there is a specific purpose for the reading while aesthetic transactions are textual interactions which are based on emotional connections between the reader and the text.

According to the psychological needs aspect of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (1985), competence, relatedness and autonomy are constructs which support both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Whereas multiple data sources indicate technology fulfills these basic psychological needs, this study found students experiences did not convey qualities consistent with intrinsic reading motivation. This study supports the notion that technology addresses students' psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy as well as supports efferent textual transactions. This implies students who lack confidence in their reading abilities may leverage the use technology to access audio and other tools, to assist with reading, without the fear or embarrassment that is sometimes experienced by less proficient readers. This study shows utilizing technology to address issues relevant to comprehension leads to increased perceptions of competence. In addition to improved perceptions of competence, various applications and reading platforms support autonomy and relatedness by offering students choice and voice for book selection and reader response.

Whereas the use of technology supports competence, relatedness and autonomy when reading, its use was not shown to foster intrinsic motivation to read. Students who exhibited qualities consistent with intrinsic motivation expressed a preference for reading with a traditional book. As indicated by the theme of purpose, many students primarily read to fulfill the requirements of teachers and parents; therefore, it was surmised meeting psychological needs alone is not sufficient for fostering the reading motivation observed in students who described intrinsic motivational experiences. Conradi (2014) suggests along with incorporating technology to meet students' psychological needs that teachers also use it to target specific areas of student interest. Delving deeper into students' interests may provide a segue to facilitate experiences that ultimately result in intrinsic reading motivation and aesthetic textual transactions.

Since research shows a positive correlation between intrinsic reading motivation and academic achievement, it bears further understanding how to move from theory to practice in fostering students' intrinsic motivation to read (Dalton, 2014). Conradi (2014) suggests teachers and parents model positive reading behaviors and use technology to foster improved reading self-concepts to promote reading experiences consistent with intrinsic reading motivation and aesthetic textual interactions. De Naeghel et al. (2014) posits the support of parents, educators and even peers play a role in assisting students with developing intrinsic reading motivation. Although students are intrinsically motivated to use technology for gaming, browsing web sites and participating in social media, the mere use of a device does not encourage students to read of their own volition. This implies technology alone cannot foster an innate desire to engage in an undesirable task; however, with a concerted effort from all stakeholders children can learn to appreciate the value reading adds to every aspect of life.

## **Empirical**

There is limited research on the construct of reading motivation with technology from the perspective of middle school students and much of what exists is from a quantitative perspective that incorporates tabulated results from motivation to read surveys. This study added to the existing body of research by approaching the phenomenon of students' motivation to read with technology through a qualitative lens. The following paragraphs address the empirical implications of available research on middle school students' motivation to read with technology.

**Technology as an inherent motivator.** Reports indicate students spend an average of nine hours per day using technology to watch movies, play games, communicate on social media and read for school related tasks (Rideout, 2015). This implies students are motivated, of their own volition, to use technology for recreational purposes; however, reading does not evoke the same level of response. This suggests it is not the mechanism used for activities, but rather the actual activities which elicit motivation. The findings from this study support this idea because Shonda, the only student who recounted experiences consistent with intrinsic motivational constructs of reading indicated a strong preference for reading with a traditional book. While some students expressed, they did not have an aversion to reading, most were not interested in reading for enjoyment. Hence it cannot be assumed that the mere use of technology for reading will encourage or promote an intrinsic desire to read.

**Technology and reading engagement.** Although it cannot be assumed technology is an inherent motivator, it has many features which foster engaged reading. Students use built in dictionaries to define unknown words, highlighters to mark text, notes to make annotations, and audio to hear text read aloud. Brenden expressed an affinity to the many ways his teacher used

technology to create varied opportunities for reader response. According to research, reading engagement has the potential to foster degrees of motivation and levels of achievement which promote positive textual interactions (Guo, et al., 2015; Miranda, Johnson & Rossi-Williams, 2012). Rather than relying on the use of technology alone to promote reading motivation it is incumbent upon educators to integrate the use of technology as an integral component of lessons which build on competence, relatedness and autonomy by giving students reading options and opportunities for social interactions that are the building blocks of internal motivational constructs (Conradi, 2014). With the appropriate blend of technology and human intervention, it is possible to foster intrinsic reading motivation in students who do not fully understand the value of reading beyond doing it to appease a parent or teacher.

**Reading validation.** Several students in this study commented they do not like to read; nevertheless, they read text messages, web pages and social media posts without hesitation. This implies that students do not consider the informal reading done on devices as really reading (Conradi, 2014). However, to improve students' self-concepts all types of reading should be acknowledged as reading (2014). According to research, reading is a social activity that is enhanced when individuals share their experiences (Street, 2014). It is likely students enjoy reading texts and posts on social media because of its interactive and social nature. This suggests an opportunity for educators to capitalize on the types of reading students enjoy by offering shared reading experiences with peers to promote positive perceptions about all reading and writing.

**Tools and features.** Many students expressed they read with technology because it helps them to, "work smarter rather than harder." This implies educators should make certain that students are equipped to take full advantage of the features included with the technology

utilized for reading. Sometimes the assumption is made that today's students are digital natives; so, they know and understand everything about effectively using the tools and features included on the devices they use. While some students may be adept with obtaining optimal usage from the amenities, others may only have surface level knowledge on how to fully incorporate the available tools. Thus, it is incumbent upon educators to assist students with incorporating various technological features rather than placing them on auto pilot with the assumption they will figure it out.

**Choice and voice.** This study indicated some students prefer reading with a traditional text. This preference was indicated by the student who read of her own volition as well as two other students. Hence, these students should be given access to text which coincides with their reading preference. This implication is supported by other researchers who also found some students are more comfortable reading a traditional book despite all the spiffy tools and features an electronic offer (Larson, 2010; Loh & Sun, 2019).

Throughout this study students indicated a preference for having access to variety of reading materials and many voiced a preference for audio books. Reading platforms like myON® and digital libraries offer a plethora of books from which students may select. Many books include an audio component that most students in this study found helpful. Whereas some educators and parents may not regard reading with audio a valid way to enhance literacy skills, research has shown otherwise which implies students should be given access to variety of books which also have the option of audio (Jeong, 2012). Although some devices have text to speech features this is not the same as a professional audio reading. Even if students do not follow along verbatim in the printed text, the information gained from the reading may be enough to

promote an understanding of the ideas, concepts necessary for success in various reader response activities as well as other core classes which rely heavily on reading comprehension.

The empirical implications for this study suggest although technology has the capabilities to offer choice and voice, provide opportunities for engaged reading and social interactions as part of the reading process, it is not an inherent motivator. In other words, technology alone does not encourage students to read of their own volition; however, its integration into well planned lessons has the potential to promote engagement and positive textual interactions.

### **Practical**

Based on the data for this study middle school students are extrinsically motivated to read with technology because of the available tools and more specifically the audio. It is important for school districts to provide applications and platforms which offer students a variety of reading materials in their preferred mode of reading which for many students is technology. After this study ended the school at which the study was conducted ended the subscription to myON<sup>®</sup> as well as the one-to-one device initiative that allowed students to take their devices home. Although students indicated they were not reading of their own volition, at least they were reading which has some benefits. Students now only use the devices at school, which means they may only be reading at school. Since reading is an important element for success in school and life, parents and teachers along with district leaders should assume a role in equipping students with the books and materials necessary to foster at least a basic level of appreciation for reading at home and school.

Additionally, many students indicated that reading with technology is a source of distraction in the form of the temptation to play games or visit social media sites. This implies that student activity on technology should be monitored. Even when teachers attempt to monitor

students by walking around, usually by time the teacher sees the student's screen they have minimized or closed the off-task activity; therefore, investments should be made in software which allows teachers to remotely monitor student activity. This may assist with keeping students focused while utilizing technology.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

As this study was conducted there were factors controlled by the researcher and those for which the researcher was unable to control. It was the intent to gain an understanding about middle grades students' motivation to read with technology while mitigating factors which could be controlled and working around those things which were uncontrollable. This section discusses the delimitations and limitations for the study.

#### **Delimitations**

This study was delimited by selecting students who were in middle school and had access to personal learning devices. Only students in grades sixth, seventh and eighth were selected for the study. To ensure that students used a digital device for reading, a school was selected with a one-to-one device and personal learning initiative. The purpose of selecting a school with a one-to-one device initiative was to make certain devices that were utilized as part of the overall school curriculum. Middle grades students were selected for the target population because research indicates reading motivation begins to decrease around middle school.

#### **Limitations**

This study was limited because special precautions were necessary for working with minors. First a prior screening of participants was not conducted because Lexile levels, etc. could not be accessed without written permission from a parent. Although teachers were asked

to distribute color coded flyers students based on students Lexile bands, there was not any way to determine a specific level until a parent signed a consent to release this information.

This study was also limited to students who could arrange for afterschool transportation because that is when the interviews were conducted. Although there were students who indicated an interest in the study, they did not have transportation and would not have been able to stay for the interview sessions. Even with the option of the afterschool sweep bus, parents were reluctant because students are dropped off at a central location within a certain proximity of their neighborhood rather than at their regular neighborhood bus stop.

Another limitation of study is that the participants were of African American descent and primarily female. This ethnicity was the predominant ethnic population at the school where the study was conducted; however, the males who participated were the only male students to return the interest letter for participation.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study helped clarify students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. It contributes to the existing body of research by incorporating qualitative research methods to gain firsthand knowledge about why students are influenced to read with devices. Although studies have been conducted with sixth grade students, elementary and English Language Learners as it relates to reading motivation with devices, many studies are of a quantitative nature and do not include students from every grade at the middle school level. Recommendations for further research include expanding the study to include students of other ethnicities, delving further into the reading histories of students to understand what, if any, impact early literacy experiences have on students' attitudes towards reading and getting teacher perspectives on how devices are incorporated into lessons and trends that they recognize in reference to students' motivation to



read with technology. Further, a grounded theory for motivating students to read with technology may offer insight on fostering students who are intrinsically motivated to read with technology as this study did not identify students who demonstrated qualities consistent with intrinsic motivation and aesthetic reading experiences as it relates to reading with technology.

### **Summary**

This qualitative collective case study sought to understand middle school students' motivation to read with personal learning devices. It was determined that students have varied experiences as it relates to their inclination to read with technology; however, their experiences suggest students are extrinsically motivated to read with the devices because of the features and tools which allow them to interact with text on a personal and more independent level. Students also appreciate having access to a plethora of reading material which can be treated as their own while reading. Although some students expressed concerns about distractions as it relates to the temptation to engage in off task behaviors while reading, most students concurred they preferred to risk a digression or two rather than read with a traditional text. While most students acknowledged they did not read of their own volition, utilizing devices made reading easier and in some cases more enjoyable because there is always the option of pressing a button and having someone else do the reading.

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## Appendix A

### PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Middle School Students' Motivation to Read with Personal Learning Devices as it Relates to  
Reading Motivation: A Case Study

Veda Robinson Ojo  
Liberty University  
School of Education

Your child is invited to be in a research study on his or her motivation to read when using an electronic device. He or she was selected as a possible participant because he or she is in middle school and has a Lexile range between 550 and 1300 and scored beginning to exemplary on the spring administration of the 2018 Georgia Milestone assessment. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him or her to be in the study.

V. Robinson Ojo, a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is find out how reading with technology impacts students' internal and external motivation to read.

**Procedures:** If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask him or her to do the following things:

1. Participate in a team building activity which should take about 30 minutes.
2. Take an online survey about their reading habits which should take approximately 10 -15 minutes.
3. Answer one-on-one interview questions. I will ask the questions and your child's answer would be audio recorded. This should take approximately 30 minutes.
4. Participate in a group interview session. This should take approximately one hour. All students will be asked to keep the responses confidential. The group will be audio recorded.
5. I will also access your child's myON reports and reading journals from his/her ELA teacher.
6. Your child and I will review the interview and focus group data. Each review is expected to take 30 minutes.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would encounter in everyday life.

**Benefits:** Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include: The information gained from this study may be used to help teachers and other educators better assist students when they are reading with technology.

**Compensation:** Your child will be compensated with small snacks, school supplies, books and other trinkets (lip balm, slime, toys) for participating in this study. If he or she completes the study, he or she will receive a 25.00 gift card.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. I will also replace the name of the student with a unique number.
- Data will be stored on a password protected computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group; however, focus group participants will be asked not to discuss information outside the group.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect his or her current or future relations with Liberty University or Fulton County Schools. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If your child chooses to withdraw from the study, please contact Mrs. Robinson-Ojo at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should your child choose to withdraw, any data collected, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your child's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if your child/student chooses to withdraw.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Mrs. V. Robinson-Ojo. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at vrobins17@Liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Linda Holcomb, at ljholcomb@Liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN



ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

The researcher has my permission to audio-record my child/student as part of her participation in this study.

---

Signature of Parent

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

Date

## Appendix B

### ASSENT OF CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?**

Middle School Students Motivation to Read with Personal Learning Devices as it Relates to Reading Motivation: A Case Study is a study conducted by Mrs. V. Robinson Ojo.

**Why are we doing this study?**

We are doing this study because I am interested in knowing more about what encourages or discourages students to read with technology.

**Why are we asking you to be in this study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because you are a middle school student who reads with technology.

**If you agree, what will happen?**

If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be asked to participate in a team building activity, answer interview questions individually as well as in a group. I will also review your reading logs, quick writes and myON reports from your Language Arts class. After I have collected all the information, we will review the information together. This will require you to remain after school for 30 minutes on three days and an hour on the day that the focus group meets.

**Do you have to be in this study?**

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then let Mrs. Robinson-Ojo know. If you don't want to participate, it's OK to say no. Ms. Robinson Ojo will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

**Do you have any questions?**

If you have questions, you may ask them at any time. You may ask questions now. You may ask questions later. You may talk to Ms. Robinson Ojo if you do not understand something, please ask Mrs. Robinson Ojo to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

Signature of Child\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Veda Robinson Ojo  
vrobinson17@Liberty.edu  
Linda Holcomb  
[ljholcomb@liberty.edu](mailto:ljholcomb@liberty.edu)

Liberty University Institutional Review Board,  
1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515  
or email at irb@liberty.edu.

**Appendix C****Document Review Form**

Document Type :

Date:

<b>Descriptive Notes</b>	<b>Reflective Notes</b>

## Appendix D

### Reading Habits Survey

**1. Have you read an entire book in the last 12 months?**

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

**2. How much time do you spend reading web pages each day?**

- a. I don't read web pages.
- b. Two to four hours.
- c. Less than two hours.
- d. Five or more hours.

**3. Where do you read? Check all that apply.**

- a. In school.
- b. On the bus.
- c. In a car or truck.
- d. In bed.
- e. At the computer.
- f. In the bathroom.
- g. In the kitchen
- h. family room.
- i. At the library.

**4. Which type of reading do you prefer?**

- a. traditional books and materials
- b. electronic books and materials

**5. Why do you usually read a book?**

- a. Because I think I should.
- b. Because I am interested in the topic or author.
- c. Because it was assigned to me.
- d. I don't read books.
- e. Because I like to read

**6. What is the last book that you read? If you haven't read a book, write "Not Applicable."**

**7. Is being able to read important?**

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

### Appendix E

Interview Question	Research Question
<p>1. Describe any reading routines you have, as well as the books you are most interested in reading.</p> <p>2. Describe your strengths and challenges in the area of reading.</p> <p>3. Describe any reading routines you have, as well as the books you are most interested in reading.</p> <p>4. Discuss your most memorable moment in the area of reading.</p>	<p>SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?</p>
<p>5. How has using a personal learning device changed how you approach assignments that include a reading component?</p> <p>6. Describe the similarities and differences between reading with a personal learning device and reading a traditional text.</p>	<p>SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?</p> <p>SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?</p>

7. Discuss your preferred method of reading and explain why this is your preference	
8.Explain how receiving rewards would impact your motivation read. 9.How would access to wide variety of books effect your desire to read? 10. Discuss the part of reading workshop that you find most appealing.	SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read? SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?

### Appendix F

Focus Group Question	Research Question
<p>1. Describe your experiences with reading as it relates to your successes and challenges.</p> <p>2. If you could change something about yourself as a reader what would it be and why?</p> <p>3. Describe the aspects of reading workshop which are most and least appealing to you.</p> <p>4. Explain how you feel about book talks as they relate to your motivation to read.</p>	<p>SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?</p>
<p>5. Discuss your experience reading with a personal learning device as it relates to your motivation to read.</p> <p>6. Describe any features of a personal device which impacts your motivation to read.</p>	<p>SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?</p> <p>SQ1: How do personal learning devices impact intrinsic motivation to read?</p> <p>SQ2: How do personal learning devices impact extrinsic motivation to read?</p>

<p>7. Explain any factors which motivate you to read.</p>	<p>SQ3: How do personal learning devices impact efferent and aesthetic reading experiences?</p>
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**Appendix G**

January 3, 2019

Veda Robinson

IRB Approval 3549.010319: Middle School Students' Experiences with Personal Learning Devices as it Relates to Reading Motivation: A Case Study

Dear Veda Robinson,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Your study involves surveying or interviewing minors, or it involves observing the public behavior of minors, and you will participate in the activities being observed.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**The Graduate School**

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