

INCREASING STUDENT MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS THROUGH
STUDENT CHOICE

by

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of Arts in Education

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Project Summary

This capstone project sought to answer the research question *Can providing student choice improve student motivation in a middle school English Language Arts class?* Daniels and Bizar (2005) list student choice as one of the important characteristics of “best practice” classrooms, and student choice has continually been shown to increase intrinsic motivation in learners (Guthrie and Knowles, 2001). However, teachers find it’s much easier to place a book in their students' hands then try to teach them how to pick their own books. This project is meant to change that notion. The project I created includes a Google website that houses a variety of resources for the overworked teacher. I included a Google form tracker in order for teachers to keep track of strategies that work well and strategies that might need to be replaced with new ones.

This project’s goal is to share this information with other educators that might not be exposed to this type of work. English Language Arts teachers shouldn’t be the only ones encouraging student choice in their classrooms, which is why developing a website that can be shared across the school and district to all content areas will be a great benefit. The Engagement Theory endorses this project because it emphasizes that students are motivated to read and are socially engaged by talking about or sharing their reading (Tracy & Morrow, 2017) and by getting more teachers resources to help encourage independent reading in the classroom this will allow students the opportunity to do both.

The intended audience for this project are educators that teach middle school aged students, however high school teachers could also adept the resources and use them in their classrooms. This project is for educators that share a love of allowing students to become autonomous and make choices for themselves. The resources in this project are meant for small

groups and independent learning. The use of mini-lessons and student-teacher conferencing will be used. Educators that want to put more control of student's learning into the hands of the students themselves will benefit from this website. Tips for scaffolding and differentiating will be provided on the website in order to better serve each teacher's specific students.

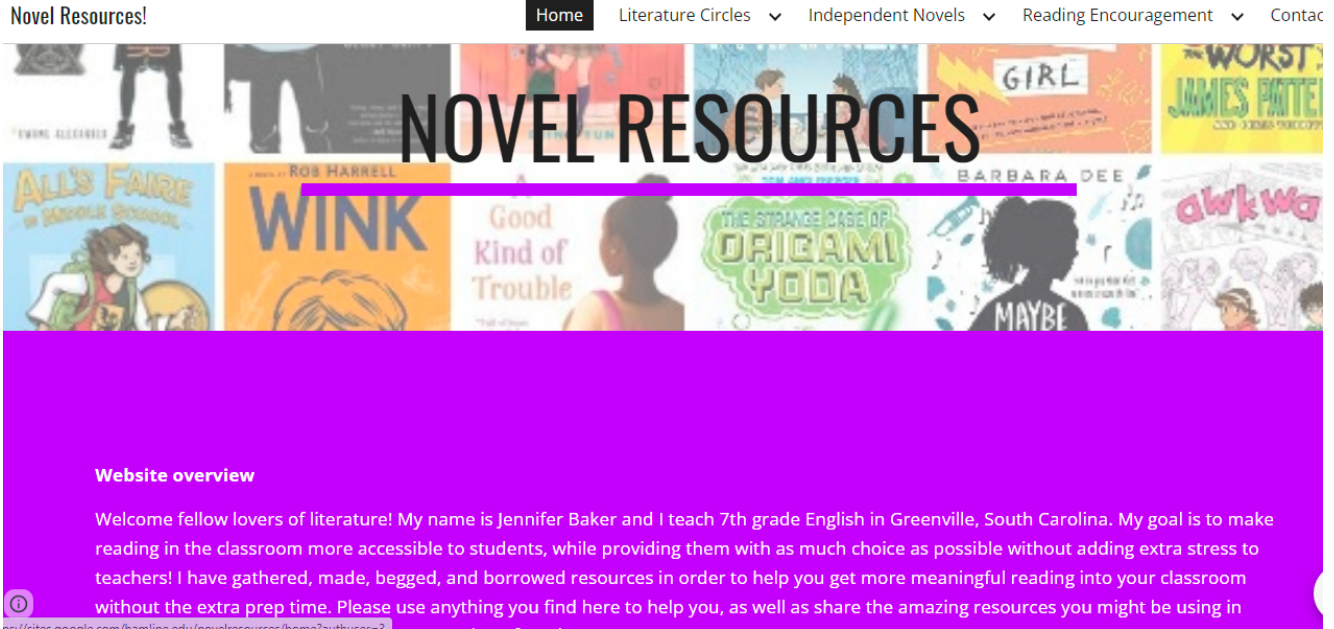
Capstone Project Description

Below is a link to my website. This website has resources to help facilitate reading in middle school classrooms (6-8). There is an overview page, which details what will be found in the website and a little about myself. There is a literature circle tab, which details already made literature circles and also procedures and how to implement the literature circles. There is an independent novel tab. This tab explains how to monitor independent novels in the classroom with conference sheets and projects. There is a reading encouragement tab. This allows for other resources teachers may want to use in their classroom in order to encourage students to read. Lastly, there is a contact tab, and this tab allows for teacher collaboration, as well as student feedback to help tailor our methods to them.

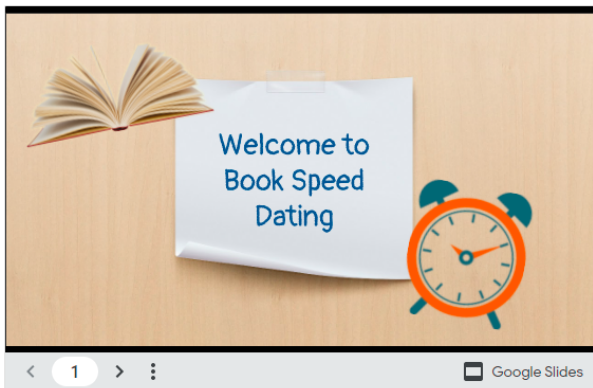
[Website Link](#)

Screenshots of Website

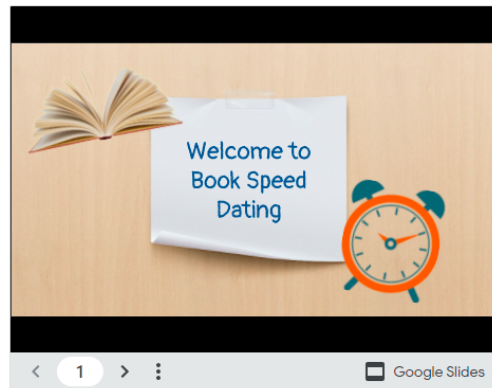
Overview/Home Page



Literature Circle Page



These literature circle novels were used to do a literary analysis of some aspect of the novel. Students were given choice (theme, authors, purpose, word choice, genre). They tracked their observations throughout the novel and then wrote a literary analysis paper on the aspect they tracked. Then they will use the



These literature circle novels are designed for a unit that is looking at historical moments. This was used in an informational text unit where students analyzed how the specific historical event in the novel impacted the story, characters, setting, and conflict.



Jobs Description Slides

Discussion Leader/Summarizer

Name: _____ Date of Share: _____

Group members: _____

Book: _____ Chapters and page numbers: _____

Write a summary of the chapters you read and be ready to share with the group. Make sure others in the group share the information that they have gathered from the novel. Fill the chart below for each day's work for each member. (7 sentences)

Jobs Assignment Sheet - student copy



Guiding Questions for Literature Circles:

- What is the setting of the book? How does it add to or take away from the story? (Important for historical accuracy)
- What do you think the author's purpose for writing this story is? Why do you think that? (This is a student's thought. Teacher should not tell a student what to think)
- What is the main conflict in the story? Can you relate to the main character's conflicts or problems? Why or why not? Can you make any text connections between your novel and yourself, another text, or the world around you?
- How does the main character develop throughout the story?
- What motivates the main character's actions? Do you think these actions are justified or

Literature Circle Procedures/guiding questions

Literature Circle Choices

This is for you to inform me of your choices. You MUST choose different books for each choice. I need to know a number of options.

 jabaker@greenvilleschools.us (not shared) 

[Switch account](#)

* Required

Use this form to help determine what books your students want for their literature circles. Students can pick their top three choices and you can place them into groups according to reading level, ability level, or however you desire.

All you have to do it.....

File-Make a Copy-Fill in your books-Send to kids.

Literature Circle Structure:

Students have selected a book they are interested in. Book selection is based on a survey of student interest, but ultimately a student's parent/guardian has the final say in their student's book selections. While students read, the teacher calls each group up for a small group discussion. Since these topics deal with heavier issues, the teacher will want to monitor and help guide the students in conversation. In order to help them think critically about a text and make their own opinion about an issue. Below are guiding questions that the teacher uses in small group discussions. The teacher should hold 6-8 small group discussions as the students read their novels. (2-3 per week).

Guiding Questions for Literature Circles:

- What is the setting of the book? How does it add to or take away from the story? (Important for historical accuracy)
- What do you think the author's purpose for writing this story is? Why do you think that? (This is a student's thought. Teacher should not tell a student what to think)
- What is the main conflict in the story? Can you relate to the main character's conflicts or problems? Why or why not? Can you make any text connections between your novel and yourself, another text, or the world around you?

Independent Novel Page

Grade level: 2-3 **Lexile level:** 450-725

- I Survived series
- The Sword in the Tree by Clyde Robert
- The Year of Billy Miller by Kevin Henkes
- Miss Daisy is Crazy by Dan Gutman
- Only a Dog by Bertha Whitridge Smith
- Clouds of Terror by Catherine A. Welch
- Magic Treehouse Series by Mary Pope Osborne
- The Chocolate Touch by Patrick Skene Catling

Grade level: 4-5 **Lexile level:** 645-845

- I Survived series
- The Hero Two Doors Down
- Magic Treehouse series

Grade level: 6-8 **Lexile level:** 860-1010

- Code of Honor by Alan Gratz
- Allies by Alan Gratz
- Projekt 1065 by Alan Gratz
- One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams Garcia
- The Hero Two Doors Down by
- I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Wa:
- Free Lunch by Rex Ogle
- The Giver by Lois Lowry
- Liar, Liar by Gary Paulson
- Slacker by Gordon Korman
- Unteachables by Gordon Korman
- Restart by Gordon Korman
- Nightbooks by J.A. White
- A Summer of a Thousand Pies by Margaret Dilloway

Reading Encouragement Page

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READING ENCOURAGEMENT

Book Trailer Tuesday
First Chapter Friday
Book Brochures
Reading Surveys

USE THIS SECTION TO FIND RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOUR STUDENTS TO BE READING INDEPENDENTLY. YOU WILL FIND VARIOUS METHODS TO SHOWCASE TEXTS IN YOUR

Contact Page

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CONTACT

Contact information

jbaker35@hamline.edu Switch account

* Required

Email *

Student Feedback

jbaker35@hamline.edu Switch account

* Required

Email *

References

Links include:

- Google slides to literature circles (users can make their own copy)
- Google slides and documents explaining the literature circle procedures and jobs
- Google sheets for literature circles and independent reading calendars
- Google sheets for independent reading conferences
- Google forms for teacher contact and student feedback

