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## A Study of Incarcerated Youth: How Does Interest Affect Comprehension and Engagement

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## **A Study of Incarcerated Youth: How does Interest Affect Comprehension and Engagement**

### **Abstract**

Current research explores the relationship between high-interest reading material and comprehension in classrooms as well as the impact of literacy on recidivism; however, there is a shortage of research on effective instructional reading practices for incarcerated youth. This qualitative study examines the experience of five white, male incarcerated youth as they experience one-on-one reading instruction from five of BGSU's pre-service teachers. Instructional strategies used in the study were modeled off of an online program called A-Z Reading and focused on developing students' fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The study initially aimed to examine the impact of high-interest materials on the comprehension of incarcerated youth, but grew to include the impact of student dispositions on engagement as well. Data was collected through comprehension assessments, surveys, and mentor lesson plans and reflections detailing observations of student behaviors, engagement with the material, and progress during each session. While there was no obvious correlation between high-interest materials and student comprehension scores, the results of the study suggest that mentor/student rapport, vulnerability, high-interest materials, self-efficacy, and value placed on reading all factor into student motivation and engagement.

### **Introduction**

A reading partnership program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) was started five years ago by Dr. Joanna Weaver in an attempt to build self-efficacy and an awareness of teaching responsibilities and necessary teaching skills in BGSU's pre-service teachers (Murnen, et al., 2019, p. 376). The reading partnership began with the Penta Career Center and later included Fostoria Middle School and Van Buren Middle School as well. Just last year, the

Northwest Ohio Wood County Juvenile Residential Center (JRC) and Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) in Bowling Green became the newest partners to the program and helped in renaming it Mentoring in Literacy Enhancement (MILE). With the establishment of this reading program, freshmen and sophomore teacher candidates were offered the opportunity to design and implement lessons each week, mentoring developing readers. The program aims to benefit both BGSU's population of pre-service teachers and developing readers in the facilities.

### **Instructional Reading Workshops**

In order to participate in the study, BGSU students (pre-service mentors) were required to attend two instructional reading workshops called Promoting Reading Achievement Across Content Areas (PRAACA). The PRAACA workshops were conducted by Dr. Weaver, Dr. Timothy Murnen, and Dr. Cynthia Bertelsen and took place over the course of two days, each session lasting approximately three hours. During this training, pre-service mentors were taught how to identify and mark miscues (reading errors) while working with students. In addition, future mentors were also taught how to conduct an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and how to assess the reading level of a text using the Fry Graph Readability Formula, both of which will be thoroughly explained at a later point in the study.

After attending this training, mentors were eligible to work at the Penta Career Center, Fostoria Middle School, and/or Van Buren Middle School; however, additional training was required for students interested in working at the JRC or the JDC. During this second training, teacher candidates reviewed how to conduct an IRI. Students also listened to a presentation regarding the implementation of Reading A-Z instructional practices in addition to an overview of procedures and protocols within the two facilities. This extra training was required to equip mentors with guided instructional strategies that would enable them to address the learning needs

of the students while also helping mentors adjust to the unique context. Once mentors completed both trainings, they became eligible to participate in the reading program.

## **Materials and Procedures**

### **A-Z Reading**

To fully understand the purpose of the A-Z Reading training and its relevance to this study, it is necessary to have some background information on the A-Z Reading Program. Reading A-Z is an online program launched in 2002 with the goal of “providing affordable, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning solutions to all educators and students who need them” (Learning A-Z, 2020). The program targets a K-6 reading audience and provides teachers with reading materials, lesson plans, and additional instructional resources.

When the JRC and the JDC facilities first established a reading partnership with BGSU, A-Z Reading instructional practices and reading materials were used with the students. When it became clear that the materials provided by the program were not appropriately challenging and/or engaging the students, the program materials were abandoned in favor of high-interest reading material selected by the students; however, the instructional practices, which consisted of repeated reading, vocabulary practice, and comprehension assessments still provided the central framework of the study. The implementation of all three of these practices will be explained in the next three sections.

### **Repeated Reading**

Repeated reading was one of three instructional practices discussed with mentors in the A-Z Program training, and was a requirement in each weekly session. According to Greta

Gorsuch and Etsuo Taguchi (2010), repeated reading is an effective strategy for developing both reading fluency and comprehension (p. 27). Gorsuch and Taguchi (2010) assert that repeated reading increases sight recognition and automaticity in lower-level processing resulting in increased fluency and comprehension (p. 28). Marcie Penner-Wilger (2008) also supports this assertion explaining that automaticity “is gained through practice to the point where previously effortful tasks, such as word decoding, become fast and effortless – freeing up cognitive resources for other tasks, such as text comprehension” (p. 3).

Repeated reading can take many forms, but in this particular study the cold, warm, hot read method was applied. To start, students were given a short passage approximately 100 words in length and allowed one minute to read the passage out loud. This first reading is called the cold read. If the student completed the passage before time was up, he started from the beginning and continued reading until time was called.<sup>1</sup> If the student did not finish the passage, the mentor marked the last word the student read before time was called. Similar to the IRI, mentors had a separate copy of the passage and used their teacher copy to mark student errors. After the student finished reading, the mentor subtracted the number of student errors from the total number of words read to document the cold read score. The mentor then discussed reading errors with the student and answered any questions that arose. This process was repeated for the warm read which typically shows improvement in student fluency.

The hot read did not take place until the next session and involved the same process as the cold and warm read. This means that students practiced fluency through repeated reading during every session. Mentors conducted cold and warm reads during one session, and the next

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that using the pronoun “he” is not biased language. All student participants in the study were male.

session, conducted the hot read. In this study, cold and warm reads began on the second session, the hot read took place on the third, and on the fourth session, a new passage was selected to begin the cold, warm, hot read process again.

### **Vocabulary Practice**

In addition to fluency practice through repeated reading, mentors were also required to provide vocabulary instruction to students. Like the repeated reading, this requirement was pulled from the A-Z Program training; however, unlike with the repeated reading activity, mentors had a bit of flexibility to decide their own approach to vocabulary instruction based on their student's needs and learning preferences. Some mentors had students create flashcards for the terms and definitions and played matching games. Others created word walls — large collections of vocabulary words accumulated and reviewed over time — with their students. Although instruction varied, vocabulary practice was required in this study due to the strong correlation between vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension, and writing and speaking skills. (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, pp. 2-5).

### **Comprehension Questions**

The final instructional practice integrated from A-Z reading was comprehension questions. In order to track student progress and comprehension, students were given biweekly comprehension assessments to measure their understanding of the reading. These assessments consisted of ten questions and, given the diverse range of materials chosen by students, relied on six different categories of questions (based on A-Z instructional materials) for consistency across the group. These categories included main idea, detail, cause and effect, inference, sequence of events, and vocabulary. Each assessment contained one main idea question, two detail questions,

one cause and effect question, two inference questions, two sequence of events questions, and two vocabulary questions. (Appendix A.)

In special circumstances, mentors were able to alter the time frame of the assessment and/or the types of questions asked. For example, some students had “bad days” when mentors came to the facility, so it was not in the best interest of the student or the study to proceed with the assessment.<sup>2</sup> Also, there were times where certain materials did not lend themselves well to the types of questions being asked. In these situations, mentors were given the flexibility to make practical accommodations for their students given the student’s needs and the nature of the material.

## **IRI**

As was mentioned earlier, pre-service mentors received mandatory training during which they learned how to conduct an IRI. (Appendix B.)<sup>3</sup> The IRI is an informal assessment developed to determine a student’s reading instructional needs regarding word recognition, word meaning, reading strategies, and comprehension in addition to the student’s instructional reading level (Houghton Mifflin Company). The IRI, completed within the first two sessions of this study, was used to provide mentors with an idea of their student’s instructional needs and reading level to help inform instructional decisions.

## **Fry Graph Readability Formula**

The Fry Graph Readability Formula, developed by Edward Fry, uses the number of syllables and the number of sentences in a 100-word block of text to determine the reading level

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<sup>2</sup> Some of the circumstances that can be associated with the term “bad days” include changes in medication, problems with another resident in the facility, problems with guards in the facility, low grades in a class (or multiple classes), difficult family visitations/phone calls, difficulty meeting the facility program’s behavioral requirements, and additional difficult circumstances.

<sup>3</sup> The IRI materials attached to the study are at the 5th grade level; however, it is important to note that the structure of this sample is the same for IRI materials at all levels.

of the text from which the block was pulled (Readability Formulas, 2020). The Fry Graph Readability Formula was used in this study to compare the reading level of the student-selected texts to the students' instructional reading level determined by the IRI. (Appendix C.) Mentors used this knowledge to predict the amount of difficulty a student might have had with a text in order to provide instructional support and scaffolding if it was needed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In order to understand the focus, perspective, and purpose of the current research project, it is necessary to have some information on the background experience of the researcher. I began mentoring at the JRC my sophomore year at BGSU. The JRC and JDC had just been added to BGSU's reading partnership, and I was one of two mentors at the facility. The first semester, we worked with the A-Z Reading Material, but by the end of this semester, we came to realize that the students were reading at levels that surpassed the difficulty of available A-Z reading resources. As mentors, we also faced difficulty engaging students in the reading material. It is possible that the absence of a challenge contributed to the lack of student engagement, but students also expressed their lack of interest in the stories provided by the program.

As a mentor, I wanted to help improve the students' reading experiences, and I became invested in the role that interest in reading material has on student engagement and comprehension. While conducting research at the facility, I also became interested in the impact of student dispositions on engagement with reading. The challenges that we faced the first semester in this facility led me to ask two questions: How do students' dispositions affect their motivation and engagement with reading? How do students' interests and engagement with reading impact their comprehension? These are the two research questions at the heart of this study.

## Review of Literature

Research has been done in traditional classrooms regarding effective and engaging instructional practices for teaching reading. Studies have discovered that a variety of factors affect student engagement with reading and achievement. According to Applegate and Applegate and Kasper, interest in reading materials, self-efficacy, and the value students attribute to reading are all factors that affect the way students engage with the material and the degree to which they comprehend it (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226 and Kasper, 2018, p. 607).

According to Kasper (2018), interest was viewed as the most important part of text comprehension because it was tied to the motivation to read for enjoyment, but other studies suggested that student motivation to read is driven by more than interest (p. 602). Applegate and Applegate (2010) found that the motivation to read is also affected by the expectancy-value theory (p. 226). This theory holds that motivation is affected by two key factors: (a) self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed in a task (in this case, reading) and (b) the value an individual attributes to the completion of the task (Applegate & Applegate, 2010, p. 226).

John Guthrie, Susan Klauda, and Amy Ho (2013) adopt a more complex view of the relationship between instruction, motivation, engagement, and achievement that combines and builds on aspects of Applegate and Applegate (2010), and Kasper's (2018) ideas. According to Guthrie, et al., motivation is driven by intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, valuing reading, and prosocial goals (Guthrie, et al., 2013, p. 10). In this particular study, intrinsic motivation is defined as interest and enjoyment in reading, self-efficacy as confidence, valuing reading as the perception that reading is important, and prosocial goals as intentions to interact socially in reading (Guthrie, et al., 2013, p. 10). This means that intrinsic motivation encompasses Applegate and Applegate (2010), and Kasper's (2018) ideas regarding interest, self-efficacy, and

value attributed to reading, and expands on them to acknowledge the impact of motivational factors on student engagement and ultimately, student achievement. The results of the study suggest that instruction that builds student motivation leads to higher achieving students, sometimes through the process of increasing engagement, and other times, directly through motivation itself (Guthrie, et al., 2013, p.22).

There are long-term benefits from reading that illustrate the importance of developing literacy skills in children and young adults. For example, Cunningham and Stanovich's (1998) findings suggested that volume in reading across adolescence contributes to growth in both general knowledge and verbal skills which leads to a higher number of future employment opportunities for young people (p. 7). In addition, Gloria Wilson and Craig Michaels state that "the ability to read, write, and access information directly affects students' self-confidence, motivation, and school performance" (Wilson & Michaels, 2007, p. 206). This is particularly informative for my study as incarcerated youth are characterized in research as students with challenging background situations, low self-efficacy, difficulties with intellectual and academic performance, and emotional and behavioral disorders (Foley, 2001; Gentler, 2012; Harris, 2009; Houchins, 2018; Pyle, 2016).

Given the contrast between these two statistics, it seems that improving literacy within this particular population could help these students with short term goals such as building self-efficacy and improving academic performance (Wilson & Michaels, 2007; Foley, 2001; Gentler, 2012; Harris, 2009; Houchins, 2018; Pyle, 2016). There is a need for more research on how to reach incarcerated students, especially in terms of reading instruction, given these negative characteristics and the fact that many of these students have been classified as developing readers (Foley, 2001; Gentler, 2012; Harris, 2009; Houchins, 2018; Pyle, 2016). In addition to building

self-esteem and improving academic performance, higher literacy and academic abilities are known to reduce the likelihood of recidivism among incarcerated youth (Wexler, et al., 2014, p. 3; Brunner, 1993). This leads back to the importance of motivating developing readers and generating interest in reading especially for incarcerated youth already in detentions or rehabilitation facilities.

Incarcerated youth stand to benefit from literacy instruction for several reasons. In addition to improved self-esteem and academic abilities, the connection between higher literacy skills, a wider range of employment opportunities, and the reduction of recidivism indicate that literacy skills would have both short term and long term benefits for incarcerated youth (Brunner, 1993; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Wexler, et al., 2014; Wilson & Michaels, 2007;). Moreover, identifying high-interest materials and assessing the effects of these materials on the comprehension and engagement of incarcerated youth may help inform educators working with incarcerated or at-risk youth.

## **The Study**

### **Participants**

Five volunteer mentors — Aelin, Aaron, Ari, Cleo, and Margaret — were introduced to the study upon completion of BGSU's PRAACA workshops and the additional Reading A-Z Training. Five students — David, Red, Bronson, Jacob, and Flash — were selected by the Juvenile Residential Center based on reading ability and willingness to participate and were assigned to mentors based on the mentor's prior experience working with JRC students (if any). It is important to note here that all mentors and students are referred to throughout the study using their chosen pseudonyms to protect the privacy of all participants.

Mentors and students met for one hour every Saturday for a total of ten weeks of reading instruction. A diverse range of instructional materials and strategies were used depending on the individual interests and needs of students; however, central activities consistent across all mentors included repeated readings and vocabulary practice modeled at the A-Z Training session and explained previously in the Materials and Procedures section of the study. In addition, mentors also administered biweekly comprehension assessments which were also outlined in the Materials and Procedures section of the study.

### **Methodology**

***Introductory survey.*** Mentors used the first Saturday with their students as an introductory session. During these sessions, mentors were instructed to build a rapport with the students, to complete pre-interest surveys, and to conduct an IRI explained previously in the Materials/Procedures section of the study. Through the surveys, mentors collected data from students regarding their reading backgrounds and habits, confidence in reading, value placed on reading, interest in reading, and topics of interest. These surveys were used by mentors to become familiar with their students interests and learning needs. (Appendix D.)

***Informal reading inventory.*** During the first and second sessions, mentors were also asked to conduct an IRI. An IRI, explained previously in Materials and Procedures section is an informal reading assessment used to assess a student's reading level. The assessment comes in two parts: Graded Word Lists and Graded Passages. To start the Graded Word List section of the assessment, the mentor provided the student with a list of words two grades below the student's current grade level in school. If a student read all the words correctly, then he advanced to the word list at the next grade level. If a student made any errors, then the mentor moved the student to an easier word list until the student was able to read all words on the list with complete

accuracy. The highest grade level at which a student could read all of the words with complete accuracy became the placement level, or the level at which the administration of Graded Passages began.

Once a student's placement level had been determined, mentors proceeded to the Graded Passages segment of the assessment. Mentors began by explaining the reading assessment process to students and presenting the passage to the student. The student read through the passage while the mentor marked errors. After the student finished reading, the mentor took the passage from the student and asked a series of comprehension questions from the packet that accompanied the reading. Mentors continued to advance to the next passage grade level until the student reached his frustration level. Frustration level occurs when the student falls below 90 percent in word recognition, achieves below 50 percent on the comprehension assessment, and/or exhibits physical signs of extreme frustration. Once the student reached frustration level, the mentor collected the student's materials, and concluded the Graded Passages segment of the assessment.

### ***Selecting Reading Materials***

The interest survey and IRI were used to provide the mentor with knowledge about the student's background with reading, interests, and current reading strengths and weaknesses to inform and guide mentor and student decisions. Some students came into the program with stronger background experiences in reading and could provide mentors with titles of materials or topics they were interested in reading about. These students did not need much help from the mentor in terms of selecting material and the mentor's sole responsibility was to make sure the material was accessible, and to bring the materials to weekly sessions. Other students were still exploring their interests and were not familiar with materials they would enjoy reading. The

mentor then played a larger role in the selection process by making suggestions that might have been of interest to the student given his reading level and interests. It is important to note that although mentors were aware of student reading levels, the material did not necessarily need to be precisely at the student's tested reading level. Several of the students in this study were interested in reading materials above their tested grade level.<sup>4</sup> While mentors informed the students that the specific text they chose might be more difficult, (to introduce text difficulty as a factor in the student's decision) the choice ultimately depended on the student's interests and the ability of the mentor to access the material.

### ***Instructional Practices***

As outlined in the Materials and Procedures section, repeated reading, vocabulary practice, and comprehension questions were areas of focus for all participants. Each student struggled significantly in at least one of these areas, and mentors adapted their instructional focus to target students' weaknesses while using students' strengths to build self-efficacy. Repeated reading began during the second week of the study and was incorporated into every session from that point forward. Vocabulary practice was more flexible, because some days were more difficult than others depending on the text being read. Comprehension assessments were conducted every other week.

### ***Post Surveys***

Post surveys were another tool used to measure student progress. While the comprehension assessments provided quantitative data measuring the students' performance, the

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<sup>4</sup> Students may also choose to read material below their reading instructional level. Before the study began, a mentor at the JRC read children's books with her student. The student's goals focused specifically on improving his fluency as he wanted to be able to read fluently to his six-month-old son. This is to show that while it is important to challenge students, helping students achieve their own personal reading goals was a more centralized goal in this study.

post surveys provide information about students' perceptions of their own accomplishments. Every time students completed a comprehension assessment, they were also given a post survey to document what they read, their engagement with the material, their perception of their own understanding of the material, and the easy and challenging areas of their reading. (Appendix E.) This data was useful for mentors because they were able to get written feedback from their students regarding their engagement with the material and see how students perceived their own strengths and weaknesses.

### ***Mentor Lesson Plans and Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan (SOAP) Notes***

Mentor lesson plans and SOAP Notes were the final items used for data collection in this study. For each session, mentors completed a lesson plan template outlining the student's progress in the previous lesson, the plan for that day, and a description of the student's progress that day. In addition to documenting lesson procedures, mentors were also asked to complete a SOAP Notes template describing subjective interpretations of the student's attitude and behavior during the session, observations of student actions and dialogue depicting student engagement, information about assessments (formal or informal assessments) conducted that day, plans for the next session, and any challenges that were encountered. (Appendix F.)

### **Data Analysis**

The data in this study was collected primarily through surveys, comprehension assessments, and mentor lesson plans and SOAP Notes. Surveys were used to serve multiple purposes in this study. During the first mentoring session, mentors provided students with an interest survey to gather information about their interests, reading habits, and background reading experiences. At the very end of the study, students were given another similar survey to see how students and their views of reading had changed. In addition to the pre- and post-

surveys, students were also given post-surveys every other week to check in on students' perceptions of their progress. Students were asked to rate their interest in the material and to describe easy and challenging parts in the reading. This information was used to give students an opportunity to share their thoughts about their reading experiences over the course of the study and was used to provide additional insight on the students' comprehension assessment scores.

Surveys played a critical role in gathering student data, but comprehension assessments and mentor lesson plans and SOAP Notes also played a significant role in the study. The comprehension assessments provided quantitative data to show how well students were comprehending the material. The mentors' lesson plans and SOAP Notes were used to record observations about students' attitudes and engagement each lesson and to provide qualitative data pertaining to the students' comprehension of the reading material.

### **Findings**

In order to understand the impact of this study on the group as a whole, it is necessary to look at each mentor/student pair individually to track individual progress and development. Each case study will describe the materials used during the sessions, interests expressed by the students, the determined IRI reading levels, the levels of the texts being read, the students' comprehension scores, students' reflections on their learning, mentor observations' and any additional interesting information pertaining to each mentor/student pair.

#### **Aelin and David**

Aelin and David spent their ten weeks reading a pocketbook Constitution along with sections of the book *Love and War*, songs from *Hamilton*, and several other short articles related to the Constitution. On his first day, David mentioned that he was currently reading the *Divergent* series, but expressed interest in reading the U.S. Constitution which reads at an 8th

grade level. David worked with reading material below his tested reading instructional level (9th grade), but his interest in the material was a high point of the sessions, according to one of his post-reading surveys in which he reported, “Hard- the story is written in older language. Easy -I am interested in the material” (personal communication, October 27, 2019).

Despite the challenge that the older language presented, David’s interest in the material appears to have motivated him to continue reading and persist through difficulties based on his previous comment and his mentor’s observations regarding his engagement. From their first session together, all the way until the end, Aelin often described David as a “willing participant” and “engaged learner” (personal communication, November 2, 2019). Aelin also took note of several behaviors that illustrate David’s engagement including furrowing his brow and rubbing his chin (personal communication, September 28, 2019). These behavior and attitude descriptions indicate that despite the challenges David faced with the language in *The Constitution*, he was willing to continue working and persisting through those challenges due to his interest in the material.

While some of these behaviors could be attributed directly to David’s interest in the material, some of them could also be a result of David’s desire to please his mentor. Aelin taught David in one of his classes at the JRC over the summer where they established a strong rapport that clearly carried into their sessions together. Aelin alluded to this rapport in her first SOAP Notes when she wrote, “He mentioned that he enjoyed learning and wanted to inform me of all the topics he had learned since I had last seen him” (personal communication, September 21, 2020). David’s open communication with his mentor carried on through all of the sessions, and it is important to note that this strong relationship was likely another factor in David’s engagement with the material.

David's scores on his comprehension assessments were inconsistent throughout the study, often taking significant leaps and dives, but according to Aelin, his fluency, expression, and vocabulary abilities significantly improved. In week three, David was able to read 115 words per minute and by week ten, David was able to read 150 words per minute with expression demonstrating improvement in both his reading speed and prosody. Aelin also reported that David began adding new vocabulary words to his word wall without being told, and even made a word wall for his own independent reading. On this subject, David explained to Aelin that he "[was] gaining vocabulary knowledge that has helped him understand the meaning behind the texts he [was] reading" (personal communication, October 20, 2019). David also shared with Aelin that after working with the word "wall," he became more comfortable asking questions when he didn't know something. Both the creation of his own word wall and David's acknowledgement of the fact that he is now more comfortable asking questions reveal several interesting learning characteristics, or dispositions that David possesses.

The act of sharing his feelings and observations about his own learning first and foremost alludes to the strong rapport that this particular student/mentor pair established. David and Aelin's time together before the beginning of the study was a huge advantage that seems to have allowed Aelin and David to progress faster than other groups. David's willingness to share his feelings with his mentor definitely points to the rapport that was already established between them, but it also shows that David was willing to be vulnerable which doesn't always happen, even if the mentor/student rapport is strong.

According to Brené Brown in her Ted Talks *Listening to Shame* and *Daring Classrooms*, Brown explains that while vulnerability requires emotional risk, exposure, and uncertainty, it is also the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change (B. Brown, 2012; B. Brown, 2017).

Many students, especially incarcerated youth, struggle with the part of learning that demands vulnerability given their challenging background situations, low self-efficacy, difficulties with intellectual and academic performance, and emotional and behavioral disorders (Foley, 2001; Gentler, 2012; Harris, 2009; Houchins, 2018; Pyle, 2016). Students not willing to be vulnerable in the classroom usually face difficulties admitting that they are wrong, that they are struggling, or that they don't have an answer and they cope with these challenges by moving away (withdrawing), moving towards (making self-deprecating comments), and/or moving against (lashing out and fighting back) (B. Brown, 2017). When David shared with Aelin that he created his own word wall to improve his vocabulary and admitted that the word wall helped him feel more comfortable asking questions, David was revealing a perceived "weaknesses" or area that needed improvement. Revealing these ideas to his mentor demonstrated a level of comfort and trust with the mentor, a willingness to be vulnerable and open to new ideas, and metacognitive awareness of his own learning. All three of these dispositions contributed to David's engagement with his own learning as did David's positive attitude and the value he placed on reading.

Overall, although David's comprehension scores do not show consistent growth over the course of this study, his strong rapport with Aelin (likely established by the extended amount of time the pair worked together), his willingness to be vulnerable, and his interest in the topic all appear to have had an impact on the way David engaged with the material.

### **Aaron and Red**

Aaron and Red had a very unique situation in this study that is necessary to explain before any additional information is shared. For the first three sessions of this ten-week study, I worked with Red because his original mentor did not show up to the sessions. Aaron was recruited and received his training during that three-week time period, and I told Red that until

Aaron was able to step in, I would be working with him. I gave Red the Interest Survey and conducted the IRI during which time I learned that Red had several negative reading experiences that impacted his view of reading in addition to a struggle with violent thoughts. While Red expressed his disinterest in reading long texts, he did share that he enjoyed picture books and artwork and was very good at using the pictures to make predictions. I brought in the book *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds for our last session together in the hope of providing Red with a positive reading experience from a larger text and with the goal of showing Red the danger and pain that come with violent actions.

When Aaron began working with Red the following week, Red was extremely upset. In his SOAP Notes, Aaron shared that Red refused to work with him until I joined them at their table (personal communication, October 12, 2019). At first, Red only addressed me as I tried to help Aaron establish a rapport with Red; however, Red gradually became comfortable with Aaron and I was able to leave to observe other groups. The reason that I share the details about this unique situation is that it took an exceptionally long time for Red and Aaron to develop the rapport and expectations that would guide their sessions. This negatively impacted Red's ability to progress in the study compared to other groups.

In the third session, Aaron learned that he and Red shared an interest in video games. With this shared interest in mind, Aaron brought in short articles about video games for part of the study and shifted to the novel *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline when Red expressed disinterest in continuing to work with video game articles. On the IRI, Red tested at a 5th grade instructional reading level which matched the reading level of the articles; however, *Ready Player One* tests at the 8th grade reading level which is interesting considering the drastic change in Red's engagement with the book in comparison to the articles.

In the beginning sessions, Aaron reported that although Red did not struggle with comprehension and seemed to be able to quote the text directly, Red struggled significantly with fluency while reading the articles and often resisted Aaron's attempts to model fluent reading. Aaron said that the sessions were challenging because Red's attention span was so short and he became quickly irritated with the reading (personal communication, October 19, 2019). After shifting from the articles to *Ready Player One*, Aaron reported notable changes in Red's behavior saying that he listened more than before, allowed Aaron to help him with fluency, admitted that reading character dialogue was uncomfortable for him, and looked to Aaron for confirmation of words he didn't understand (personal communication, November 9, 2019). Aaron also said that in one session, Red was so captivated by the story that he didn't even realize he hadn't colored until fifteen minutes before the session ended (personal communication, November 16, 2019). This was a huge deal because coloring was the incentive Aaron put in place to encourage participation, and Red was so engaged with his reading that he completely forgot about it. Red's changed behaviors in light of the increased difficulty of the text shows that interest can be a powerful motivator that drives students to persist through difficult challenges.

The drastic changes in Red's behavior from the beginning of the study to the end suggest several things. First, it is evident that Red was not able to learn from Aaron until Aaron established a rapport with him and the pair were able to identify a common interest. This can be seen in Red's refusal to speak to Red before I joined their table during Aaron's first session. Second, while Red's interest in *Ready Player One* is not reflected in his comprehension scores (potentially because they were already good to begin with), Red did show more engagement with the material by allowing Aaron to help him with fluency and challenging words in addition to forgetting about his coloring incentive. This demonstrates a strong correlation between interest,

motivation, and engagement because Red was not motivated to read or engaged with reading until he was presented with material he found interesting. Finally, Red's willingness to let Aaron help him with fluency and the fact that he shared discomfort with reading character dialogue demonstrates a willingness to be vulnerable where Red had previously been defensive (acting out and protesting when Aaron tried to make suggestions). All three of these changes indicate that rapport, interest, and vulnerability played a large role in Red's ability to engage with the text.

### **Ari and Bronson**

On her first day working with Bronson, Ari learned in the interest survey that Bronson was extremely interested in Greek mythology. After conducting the IRI and identifying his instructional reading level (6th grade), Ari began with a few short articles on Greek mythology followed by a shift to *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, all of which read at the 6th grade level.

Ari and Bronson's sessions were structured differently than the rest of the sessions as they met two days a week instead of one. Despite this shift, Ari and Bronson progressed similarly to other mentor/student pairs because the amount of mentoring time per week still remained fairly consistent. Another interesting point in their sessions was that Bronson wanted to read *The Lightning Thief* in spite of already having read it. Ari said that Bronson wanted to revisit the text to make sure that he did not miss anything the first time around, but another factor in Bronson's request to reread the text could have been his discomfort with reading out loud (personal communication, October 17, 2019).

From the very beginning, Ari noted that Bronson seemed very uncomfortable reading out loud. In their third session together, Ari mentioned in her SOAP Notes that Bronson expressed discomfort reading out loud despite his strong background knowledge in Greek mythology and

his ability to comprehend the text (personal communication, October 8, 2019). The same day, Ari also noted that while Bronson was passive, indifferent, and sometimes inattentive while reading and answering questions about the IRI passages, he often challenged what he read in the Greek articles, making statements such as “that simply would not happen in the Greek world” (personal communication, October 8, 2019). This shift from passivity to discontentment with the reading indicates a positive shift in Bronson’s interest and engagement with the material, and although resistance to the reading presented a new challenge for his mentor, it is clear that Bronson’s interest in the topic contributed to his focus on the reading and motivated him to engage with the text.

Ari was pleased with Bronson’s improving engagement and desire to discuss the text, but Ari also wrote in the “Challenges” section of her SOAP Notes that she needed to find a way to create “a ready-to-learn, comfortable environment” (personal communication, October 8, 2019). Ari indicated in her SOAP Notes that she wanted to create a comfortable learning environment, but part of the problem might have been Bronson’s discomfort with reading out loud. According to Brené Brown in her Ted Talk “Listening to Shame” and her SXS presentation “Daring Classrooms,” learning requires vulnerability which often leads to feelings of emotional risk, exposure, and uncertainty (B. Brown, 2012; B. Brown, 2017). It is possible that Bronson’s low self-efficacy and low confidence in his ability to read out loud caused him to become defensive when Ari tried to work with him on his fluency and prosody. Ari also wrote that when she tried to incorporate a drawing activity into the day’s lesson, Bronson was reluctant to participate. “[He] doesn’t think he’s good at it so he doesn’t want to try,” Ari wrote in response to Bronson’s behavior (personal communication, October 17, 2019). The fact that Bronson withdraws from challenges is consistent with Brown’s idea about moving away from vulnerable experiences as a

defensive mechanism (B. Brown, 2017). Bronson's actions also reflect Applegate and Applegate's ideas about self-efficacy and the expectancy-value theory which asserts that a lack of confidence negatively impacts motivation (Applegate and Applegate, 2020).

While Bronson expressed his discomfort with reading aloud frequently during the first four weeks, Ari wrote that, although reluctant, he eventually began to warm up to the idea (personal communication, October 29) It is especially interesting that she notes him warming up to reading out loud after describing new developments in their relationship the past two sessions. On October 22, Ari explained that Bronson talked to her about his future plans and inquired about hers. In her SOAP Notes that day, she wrote "Today I got [Bronson] to smile and laugh...He's kind of shy but we are still building a good bond" (personal communication, October 22, 2019). The following day, Ari reported that Bronson did not seem to be interested in reading because he wanted to share information about his life back home and his reason for coming to the facility. She wrote "I don't think he was having a bad/sad day. Our conversation was very calm and easy going. He was simply opening up - kind of like building rapport" (personal communication, October 24, 2019). Although consistent practice and encouragement from Ari likely played a role in Bronson's growing tolerance for reading out loud, the fact that this was noted immediately after two days of great rapport suggests that a strong relationship and trust could have been another factor in Bronson's growing confidence with his fluency skills.

Although there is not enough quantitative data gathered from comprehension assessments to suggest any clear indication of comprehension growth, Ari observed a huge shift in Bronson's attitudes towards the sessions once he began reading materials he was interested in. In her SOAP Notes, Ari quoted Bronson as he directly acknowledged interest as a motivator. He said that he is "very passionate about reading and learning if it is intriguing" (personal communication, October

3, 2019). This insight was reflected in his changing behaviors as he shifted from an unfocused and passive listener to a talkative and engaged participant. Although Bronson was initially resistant to the idea of practicing fluency, Ari reported improvement in Bronson's attitude toward reading out loud and his fluency skills near the end of the study.

Overall, Bronson's emotional and behavioral responses to reading aloud are very revealing. It seems that while interest is directly connected with Bronson's motivation to read and engage with the text, low self-efficacy and an unwillingness to be vulnerable in his learning became an obstacle in his sessions with Ari, until practice, rapport, and feelings of trust eased some of Bronson's discomfort. While the extent to which practice, self-efficacy, and rapport contributed to Bronson's developing fluency skills is not clear, it is relevant to note the relationship between these factors and Bronson's confidence and reading abilities.

### **Cleo and Jacob**

Cleo and Jacob spent their ten weeks reading *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline. After giving Jacob the interest survey on the first day, Cleo learned that Jacob wasn't very interested in reading, rarely read outside of what he was forced to read for school, and hated school despite having decent grades (personal communication, September 28, 2019). Cleo also learned that Jacob was really into video games so when she asked if Jacob would be interested in reading *Ready Player One*, a book about video games, Jacob got really excited (personal communication, September 28, 2019). Jacob tested at a 6th grade instructional reading level in his IRI, but like Red, he was still willing to read *Ready Player One* (8th grade reading level) because he found it interesting.

As Cleo and Jacob worked through the book, Cleo noticed that Jacob was capable of reading very quickly and took pride in how fast he could read despite comprehending very little

of the text. Cleo observed this challenge in her SOAP Notes where she wrote, "...he reads super fast with no regard to punctuation" (personal communication, September 28, 2019). She explained that the speed at which he read and his "get-things-done" mentality interfered with his ability to comprehend the text, but he slowed down significantly after watching her read (personal communication, October 5, 2019). Reading speed was something that Cleo and Jacob worked on consistently throughout the study because it took a long time to help Jacob understand that while speed does factor into "good reading" as he mentioned on his interest survey, it is not good when reading speed prevents comprehension (personal communication, September 28, 2019).

Another interesting observation Cleo shared in her SOAP Notes was that Jacob hated reading short stories and only liked reading longer texts (personal communication, October 5, 2019). As mentioned earlier, Jacob prided himself on being a quick reader and the amount of reading he could complete which suggests that Jacob was motivated to read *Ready Player One* not only because he found the topic interesting, but also because he enjoyed the length of the text. This is especially interesting because it complicates the definition of interest. Instead of focusing specifically on the content or topic of the reading, Jacob was also attracted to a text based on his perceived difficulty of that text. According to Cleo, both the topic and perceived difficulty of the text played a role in his engagement (personal communication, October 12, 2019).

While Jacob definitely struggled to slow down his reading and shift his focus to comprehending the text, Cleo noted gradual improvement and eventually, Jacob began sharing his excitement with Cleo about what he was doing in his English class in the facility as well (personal communication, October 12, 2019). Cleo explained that Jacob's participation in the

sessions was largely impacted by his performance in his other classes as well as his progress in the facility's rehabilitation program, so when he was having a good day, it usually came through in their sessions (personal communication, October 19, 2019).

On the other hand, this also applied to Jacob's bad days. Cleo described several occasions where Jacob entered the session visibly upset, rushed through their session, and/or resisted participating in the day's reading because he had received a bad grade in a class or gotten in trouble with the guards (personal communication, November 2, 2019). This behavior suggests that self-efficacy played a large role in Jacob's engagement with the lessons. This was especially noticeable in the Saturday session on November 9, when Jacob shared with Cleo that his meds had been changed and he was struggling to focus. In her SOAP Notes that day, Cleo wrote, "He is very focused on doing everything right, so when he can't or doesn't, he gets very frustrated, and says he can't" (personal communication, November 9, 2019). Jacob struggled a lot in the facility, and this was clear to Cleo who observed and attempted to accommodate for Jacob's shifting moods, adjustments in his medications, and newly formed self-harm tendencies. These mood swings and behavior changes are important obstacles to note, as they interfered with Jacob's ability to participate and test.

Overall, there was not enough data collected to show consistent growth with comprehension, but Cleo's observations and Jacob's comments provided valuable insights into his developing reading habits and takeaways from the text. Jacob's emotional state and shifts in his medicine often affected his ability to focus and engage with the lesson, but it is clear that Jacob's interest in the material, his self-efficacy, and the value he placed on reading shaped his motivation to read and engage with lessons over the course of the study.

### **Margaret and Flash**

Flash went into his semester with Margaret with a great attitude because, like Aelin and David, Margaret and Flash worked together over the summer. Margaret and Flash had already established a rapport by the time the study began, so upon completing the interest survey and IRI, (Flash tested at a 6th grade instructional reading level) Margaret and Flash went straight into reading parables from the Bible and poems with biblical messages. Some of the materials covered in their sessions together included the parables *The Good Samaritan* and *The Mustard Seed* in addition to a short poem called “Footprints in the Sand.”

According to Margaret, Flash was temperamental, easily distracted, and easily affected by his emotions. Margaret wrote in her SOAP Notes that when she worked with him over the summer, Flash went back and forth between feeling challenged and bored, and often used going to the bathroom as an avoidance strategy (personal communication, September 20, 2019). She reported that this happened a few times in their sessions together, but for the most part, he put forth effort to remain engaged in their sessions demonstrating motivation to participate due to interest in the material and/or a strong relationship with his mentor (personal communication, October 26, 2019).

Flash expressed in his interest survey that he had many good reading experiences with family, but not with friends (personal communication, September 20, 2019). According to Margaret, Flash had a lot of difficulty with being separated from his family (personal communication, October 26, 2019). This is relevant to the study because Margaret noticed that this challenge affected both his participation in the JRC rehabilitation program and his engagement in reading sessions. On his last day at the JRC, Margaret observed that Flash was in a horrible mood because he had recently had a bad phone call with his family. When he came out, he didn't have his glasses (because he broke them) and he told Margaret that he did not want

to read that day (personal communication, November 16, 2019). Margaret convinced him to participate for a little bit, but she said that every time he made a small mistake, he punched himself in the head, so she let him go back to his unit (personal communication, November 16, 2019).

In his beginning sessions, Margaret observed that Flash was easily distracted and easily upset, and she associated this frustration with low self-efficacy. She wrote in one of her SOAP Notes, that Flash “has a very low-efficacy self-concept of himself as a reader, but also strives to show me how much he can do” (personal communication, September 20, 2019). This observation demonstrates the importance of rapport in student motivation and engagement as Flash paid attention and engaged in an effort to please his mentor.

Over the course of their time together, Margaret and Flash both made comments about his newfound ability to observe and engage in strategies that good readers have. His attention to punctuation and expression improved, he began to self-correct while reading (which he took a lot of pride in), and he made clear efforts to take the perspective of the characters he read about (personal communication, October 19, 2019). These improvements built confidence that helped with his self-efficacy as did Margaret’s compliments on his progress once again revealing the impact of rapport and self-efficacy on student engagement (personal communication, September 28, 2019).

### **Strengths**

One of the strengths of this study was the population size. This study was centered around five mentor/student pairs which allowed for close monitoring and detailed observations of every mentor/student pairing. Another strength of the study was the one-on-one instruction as one-on-one instruction allows for individualized instruction tailored to the needs of each student.

Additionally, the mentors' wide variety of educational teaching opportunities and experiences allowed them to work together and learn from each other. Finally, there is a limited amount of research available on educational instructional strategies for incarcerated youth. There is not much information available about educational resources and strategies implemented with incarcerated youth, and the lack of information increases the value of this study and the results.

### **Limitations**

While the small population size and focus can be seen as a strength, it is also one of the limitations of this study. The study took place within the scope of BGSU's MILE program, and while the JRC was willing to accommodate five mentor/student pairs, all of which are represented in the data collected in this study, data from five white, male students excludes all other demographics and a wide variety of dispositions, learning abilities, and experiences characteristic of incarcerated youth. It also does not account for any differences in JRC and JDC facilities.

Another limitation of the study is the short time frame within which the study took place. The study lasted for ten weeks, but because mentors and students only met once a week, more time and data would have been helpful in providing a deeper understanding of how students' behaviors and learning changed as a result of the tutoring sessions. In addition to the short time frame of the study, one of the students was also removed from the facility before the study could be completed. As a result, this student provided less data than the other participants, and was unable to complete some of the final assessments before departure.

Lastly, mentor flexibility with assessments and instructional strategies can also be seen as a limitation of the study because the modifications in the assessments and instructional approach create inconsistencies in the data. While these inconsistencies are inconvenient for research

purposes, the larger goal of the study is to provide incarcerated youth with valuable reading experiences and strategies that they can use after the end of the study. Assessment modifications and a variety of instructional options enabled tutors to tailor their instruction to each individual student and provide for that student's learning needs. Personalized instruction and student growth were more highly valued in this study than consistent instruction, nonetheless, these differences still impact the findings in the study.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

In light of all the data collected throughout this study, the correlation between interest and comprehension remains unclear; however, some conclusions can be reached regarding the impact of the mentor/student relationship and student dispositions on a student's motivation to read and engagement during the sessions.

One of the most notable conclusions reached in this study, was that without a strong mentor/student rapport, no learning could take place. This was evident in the obvious contrast between Aelin and David's and Margaret and Flash's progress in comparison to Aaron and Red's. Where Aelin and Margaret had the entire previous summer to build relationships with their students, Aaron joined the study a few weeks late. Aelin and Margaret's sessions with their students immediately took off in a positive direction while Aaron was unable to gain the trust of his student until the two had spent more time together.

Building off of rapport, it was clear that a student's willingness to be vulnerable in the learning process also had a positive effect on student learning. This can be seen in Aelin and David's sessions when David shared his observations about the impact of his word wall on his vocabulary abilities and willingness to ask questions. It can also be seen in Ari and Bronson's progress as Bronson gradually opened up to Ari and began putting more effort into reading

fluently despite his discomfort with reading out loud. In both pairs, student engagement and achievement depended on a willingness to expose weaknesses in order to improve hinting at the importance of vulnerability in student engagement and achievement.

Without a strong relationship that established a bond of trust, students were unlikely to open themselves up to change and growth; however, while these two characteristics are important to acknowledge and certainly contribute to student learning, they were not the only factors playing into student motivation and engagement. Once a bond had been established between a mentor and a student, interest and self-efficacy began to play a larger role in student reading motivation and engagement. Every student reported in his post-interest survey that interest in the material drew him into the reading sessions. Aelin and Margaret often reported observations of behaviors such as “a furrowed brow” or “sitting up straighter” while reading or discussing material the student found interesting. Aaron observed that one day, Red nearly forgot about his incentive because he was so engaged with the text. By noting shifts in student behaviors and responses to high-interest reading material, in addition to observing physical and verbal signifiers of student confidence levels, it is clear that both interest and self-efficacy played a role in student reading motivation and engagement.

Jacob, Cleo’s student, also benefited from high-interest material. Despite reporting very little interest in reading, Jacob flew through six chapters of *Ready Player One* eager to see what happened next. Also, although Jacob never explicitly acknowledged a changed perception of reading, Cleo’s observations of Jacob’s behavior in the sessions suggested a positive shift in Jacob’s attitude towards reading while also affecting his understanding of the characteristics of a strong reader. At the beginning of the study, Jacob described a good reader as an individual who could read quickly and had good comprehension skills (personal communication, September 28).

Cleo explained to Jacob that reading too quickly could have a negative impact on his comprehension, and as Cleo modeled a slower reading pace, Jacob followed suit and responded to his reading with more enthusiasm and emotion. This showed that interest in addition to high reading values were extremely important factors in Jacob's engagement.

Overall, while this study has nothing concrete to offer in terms of the impact of high-interest reading materials on student comprehension, this study demonstrates that mentor-student rapport, a willingness to be vulnerable, high-interest reading material, high self-efficacy, and high value placed on reading all play a role in students' reading motivation and engagement in the learning process. These conclusions suggest that instruction centered around developing these attitudes and dispositions in students in addition to using high-interest materials is likely to increase the reading motivation and engagement of incarcerated youth.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Comprehension Rubric

## Comprehension Assessment Rubric

Categories/Points	5 points	3 points	1 point	Score
<u>Main Idea</u>	Identifies the topic and is able to independently provide significant information about the main idea	Can identify the main idea, and provide some additional information, but still requires <u>some</u> mentor assistance in recognizing the main idea	Cannot identify the main idea, and requires a <u>significant</u> amount of prompting for more details	/5
<u>Detail</u>	Can identify the detail without mentor assistance	Can identify information related to the question, but cannot answer it completely without <u>some</u> mentor assistance	Cannot identify the detail without <u>significant</u> mentor assistance	/5
				/5
<u>Cause and Effect</u>	Student can identify the cause or effect of the circumstances or event independent of the mentor	Student can identify the cause or effect of the circumstances or event with <u>some</u> assistance from the mentor	Student cannot identify the cause or effect of the circumstances or event without <u>significant</u> mentor assistance	/5
<u>Inference</u>	Student can make an inference/prediction that is relevant to the text and provide adequate support for the inference/prediction independent of the mentor	Student can make an inference/prediction that is relevant to the text, but cannot provide adequate support for the inference/prediction without <u>some</u> mentor help	Student cannot make an inference/prediction relevant to the text without <u>significant</u> mentor assistance or modeling	/5
				/5
<u>Sequence of Events</u>	Student is able to correctly identify the sequence of events independent of the mentor	Student can identify the order in which the events occurred with <u>some</u> mentor prompting	Student cannot identify the order in which the events occurred without <u>significant</u> mentor help	/5
				/5
<u>Vocab</u>	Student is able to provide a clear definition that accurately reflects the meaning of the word in question and takes into account the connotation of the word as it appears in context	Student is able to provide a definition that slightly resembles the meaning of the word in question, but cannot account for the connotation of the word as it is used in the context without <u>some</u> mentor assistance	Student is unable to provide a definition that resembles the actual meaning of the word in question without <u>significant</u> mentor assistance	/5
				/5

## Question Guidelines

- 1.) Ask students about the **main idea** of the reading they covered this week
- 2.) Choose an important **detail** from the reading to ask the student about. This detail should be important to the reader's overall understanding of the text
- 3.) Ask a **cause and effect/inference** question. Have the student explain how a certain set of circumstances or a specific event lead to another event or a change in circumstances.
- 4.) Ask the student to make an **inference** about the past experiences a character has had, make a prediction about what a character will do, or make an inference about something that will happen in the future
- 5.) Ask the student a question about a **sequence of events** or the order in which events take place. You can ask students about an event that preceded or followed an important moment in the reading. This is not an inference or prediction question. The student should be able to point to a specific moment in the text to explain what event preceded or followed the event you chose.
- 6.) Ask the student to define a difficult word in the reading that you think to be at or slightly above their reading level. You can ask them to define the word using context clues. (**vocabulary**)

### Additional Info:

- Significant help = 3+ questions from student or prompts from mentor
- Some help = 1-2 questions from student or prompts from mentor

## Appendix B: IRI (Word List, Graded Passage, and Comprehension Questions)

## Word List

LISTS		LIST 1			TEACHER
<b>LEVEL 4</b> ◇◇	<b>LEVEL 5</b> ☆	<b>LEVEL 6</b> ●	<b>LEVEL 7</b> ■	<b>LEVEL 8</b> ◆	
1. amused <u>+</u>	1. base <u>+</u>	1. absurd <u>+</u>	1. accumulate <u>+</u>	1. agile <u>+</u>	
2. ancient <u>+</u>	2. border <u>+</u>	2. affairs <u>+</u>	2. apprehension <u>+</u>	2. candid <u>+</u>	
3. award <u>+</u>	3. bore <u>+</u>	3. appeal <u>+</u>	3. comprehend <u>+</u>	3. convey <u>conveyed</u>	
4. cemetery <u>Cemetery</u>	4. detour <u>+</u>	4. association <u>+</u>	4. delegated <u>+</u>	4. enumeration <u>enumeration</u>	
5. echo <u>+</u>	5. dismay <u>+</u>	5. cavity <u>+</u>	5. dense <u>+</u>	5. gorge <u>Georgia</u>	
6. elastic <u>+</u>	6. establish <u>+</u>	6. complicated <u>+</u>	6. domain <u>+</u>	6. immune <u>+</u>	
7. flock <u>+</u>	7. exhausted <u>+</u>	7. crucial <u>+</u>	7. execute <u>+</u>	7. improvised <u>+</u>	
8. government <u>+</u>	8. gallant <u>+</u>	8. deliberately <u>+</u>	8. exited <u>excited</u>	8. incredulous <u>+</u>	
9. invade <u>+</u>	9. glimpse <u>+</u>	9. despite <u>+</u>	9. justifiable <u>+</u>	9. intricate <u>intricate</u>	
10. jealous <u>+</u>	10. haunt <u>+</u>	10. eternal <u>+</u>	10. omen <u>+</u>	10. neurotic <u>+</u>	
11. lizard <u>+</u>	11. hitched <u>+</u>	11. extinct <u>+</u>	11. optimistic <u>+</u>	11. nocturnal <u>+</u>	
12. mechanic <u>+</u>	12. ignore <u>+</u>	12. hesitate <u>+</u>	12. potential <u>+</u>	12. petty <u>+</u>	
13. mysterious <u>+</u>	13. impulse <u>+</u>	13. inspiration <u>+</u>	13. quaint <u>+</u>	13. placid <u>+</u>	
14. portion <u>+</u>	14. lacked <u>+</u>	14. menace <u>+</u>	14. ritual <u>+</u>	14. poise <u>+</u>	
15. savage <u>+</u>	15. marvel <u>+</u>	15. precise <u>+</u>	15. status <u>+</u>	15. reluctantly <u>+</u>	
16. scarlet <u>+</u>	16. rude <u>+</u>	16. rehearsal <u>+</u>	16. tampered <u>+</u>	16. shiftless <u>+</u>	
17. signal <u>+</u>	17. thicket <u>thicket</u>	17. ridiculous <u>+</u>	17. terrain <u>+</u>	17. tactful <u>+</u>	
18. statue <u>+</u>	18. transaction <u>+</u>	18. routine <u>+</u>	18. tranquil <u>+</u>	18. tangible <u>+</u>	
19. stout <u>+</u>	19. transparent <u>+</u>	19. specific <u>+</u>	19. versatile <u>versatile</u>	19. toxic <u>+</u>	
20. vicious <u>+</u>	20. turban <u>+</u>	20. strenuous <u>strenuous</u>	20. vulnerable <u>+</u>	20. unduly <u>unduly</u>	
<p>0-2 errors—Independent level    3-4 errors—Instructional level    5+ errors—Frustration level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">000 = mcky</p>					

## Graded Passage

TEACHER 7 ■

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:** Read the following story to find out about some famous animals that live on Sable Island, which is in the Atlantic Ocean near Nova Scotia.

What did the first horses that came to Sable Island look like? We can only assume that they were much like farm horses anywhere in the world, but the harsh winters on Sable slowly changed the appearance of their descendants. They became smaller and stockier, had short ears, and in winter grew very long hair. Some stallions today have manes and tails so long that they nearly touch the ground.

Most of the horses live in small herds, each consisting of several mares and their foals and a stallion who protects them. The herd is usually led by a mare, but when two herds meet, the stallions trot toward each other, heads held high, tossing their long manes from side to side. Shoulder to shoulder, they push each other and neigh and nip a bit, but then, having proven that they are both powerful and unafraid, they proudly prance back to their herds.

This is what biologists call ritual fighting: it's mostly for show.

Source: From "The Wild Horses of Sable Island," by Fred Bruemmer. Reprinted from Owl Magazine with permission of the publisher, Bayard Presse Canada, Inc.

MA

**SCORING AID****Word Recognition**

%—Miscues

99-2

95-8

90-16

85-25

**Comprehension**

%—Errors

100-0

90-1

80-2

70-3

60-4

50-5

40-6

30-7

20-8

10-9

0-10

**164 Words**

(for Word Recognition)

**164 Words**

(for Rate)

## Comprehension Questions

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

<u>1/2</u> main idea	1. What is the purpose of this story? (to describe the horses of Sable Island and the way they live) <i>now horses have changed</i>	WPM 9840
<u>1</u> inference	2. Do we know what the first horses that came to Sable Island looked like? (no) <i>yes</i> What did the story say that caused you to answer this way? (It says, "We can only assume that they were much like farm horses anywhere in the world.") <i>described them (short ears)</i>	
<u>X</u> cause and effect/ detail	3. What can we assume caused the appearance of the descendants of the first Sable Island horses to change? (the harsh <u>winters</u> )	
<u>1/2</u> vocabulary	4. What are descendants? (their offspring; later generations of horses)	
<u>X</u> detail	5. How does the author say the horses changed? (They became smaller and stockier, had short ears, and in winter grew very long hair.) [Accept two out of the three changes as an adequate response.] <i>grew more hair, had small ears</i>	
<u>1/2</u> detail	6. How long are the manes and tails of some stallions today? (long enough to nearly touch the ground) <i>really long</i>	
<u>X</u> vocabulary	7. What is a foal? ( <u>a young horse</u> )	
<u>X</u> inference	8. Do the stallions with the small herds really want to fight stallions from other herds? (no) What did the story say that caused you to answer this way? (They only neigh and nip a bit. It is mostly for show.)	
<u>1</u> sequence	9. Name, in order, three things the stallions from different herds do when they meet. (trot toward each other, push each other and neigh and nip a bit, proudly prance back to their herds) [Give full credit for the second step if any part of it is given.] <i>shoulder to shoulder, bumped shoulders, nipping</i>	
<u>1</u> detail	10. What do biologists call this type of fighting? (ritual fighting)	

*show*

## Appendix C: Fry Graph

### The Fry Graph Readability Formula

#### Directions:

**Step 1:** Select 3 samples of 100-word passages randomly. Photocopy or type the three passages and attach them at the end of this document. (As you count words, eliminate any numbers from the word count).

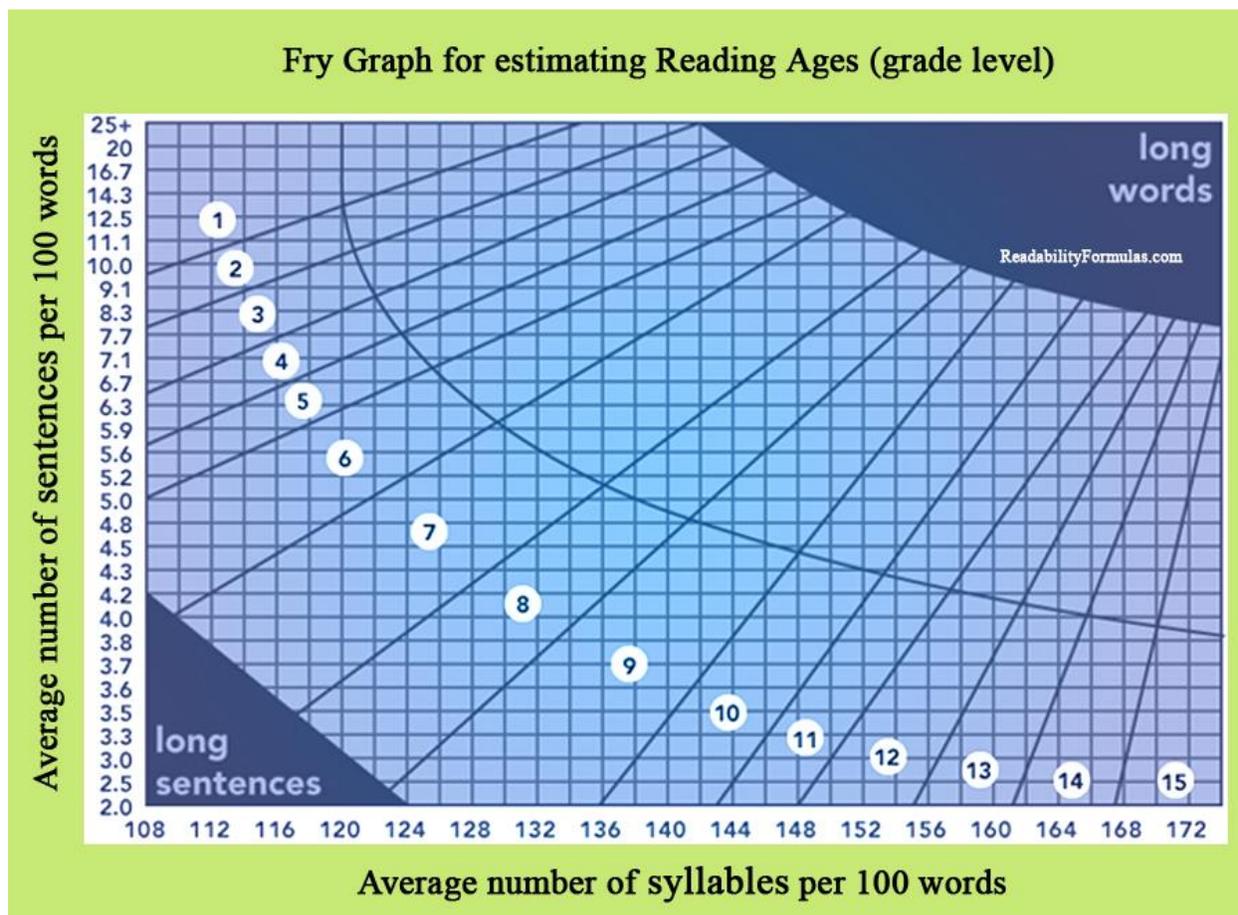
**Step 2:** Count the number of sentences in all three 100-word passages, estimating the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest 1/10th. **Place the number of sentences in the middle column below.**

**Step 3:** Count the number of syllables in all three 100-word passages. Place the number of syllables for each passage in the right column of the table below:

	Number of Sentences	Number of Syllables
<b>First 100 Words</b>		
<b>Second 100 Words</b>		
<b>Third 100 Words</b>		
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Average</b>		

**Step 4:** Using the Averages from the last row of your table above, and the graph below, **Plot a single dot where the two lines intersect.** (I'm providing the dot. Just click and drag it to the intersection!). The area where the dot is plotted signifies the approximate reading grade level of the content. ●

**Step 5:** If you find a great deal of variability, you can put more sample counts into the average.



### Appendix D: Introductory Survey

Mentor name \_\_\_\_\_ Student name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pre-Interest Survey of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students Fall 2016

1. Tell me about yourself as a reader:

2. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest interest, what interest do you have in reading?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

3. On a scale from 1-10, what is your confidence level in your reading ability?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

4. If you could read anything, what would it be? Why?

5. What makes a person a good reader?

6. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best, what level of reader would you consider yourself?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

7. What makes you want to read in class?

8. Tell me about a good experience you had with reading?

9. Tell me about a bad experience you had with a book.

10. How do you choose the books you read?

11. Tell me about the reading you do outside of school. How many days a week do you read?

1-2 days      3-4 days      5-7 days

12. Tell me what your teachers have done that has helped you the most with reading.

13. What advice would you give to someone who does not want to read?

14. If you could change anything about yourself as a reader, what would it be?

15. Circle all reading material that you would enjoy reading if you had to choose: What do you like to read?

Science fiction  
Satire

Drama  
Action and Adventure

Romance  
Mystery

Horror  
Self help  
Guide  
Travel  
Children's  
Religious  
Science  
History

Math  
Anthologies  
Poetry  
Encyclopedias  
Dictionaries  
Comics  
Art  
Cookbooks

Diaries  
Journals  
Prayer books  
Series  
Trilogies  
Biographies  
Autobiographies  
Fantasy

## Appendix E: Reading Post-Surveys

Tutor Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-reading Survey for JRC Fall 2019

1.) Tell me what you read this week.

2.) On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how interested were you in the material?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

3.) Why?

4.) On a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how well do you think you understood the material?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

5.) Were there parts of your reading that were easy? Were there parts of your reading where you struggled?

## Appendix F: Mentor Lesson Plans and SOAP Notes

		The BGSU LitStudio			
					
<b>MILE Lesson Plan</b>					
Mentor		Mentee		Date	
Age		Grade Level		DOB	
Assessments					
<b>CODES</b>					
Oral Language (OL)		Phonics (P)		Phonemic Awareness (PA)	
Comprehension (C)		Vocabulary (V)		Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	
				Word Recognition (WR)	
				Written Language (WL)	
<b>MODALITIES</b>					
Visual (V)		Auditory (A)		Kinesthetic (K)	
				Tactile (T)	
				Interactive Technology (IT)	
<b>LESSON PLAN</b>					
<b>Time/Code</b>	<b>Review of Previous Lesson</b>			<b>Notes/Modification</b>	
	<b>Lesson based on Focus Area for Intervention or varying skills for Tutoring</b>				
	<b>Review Activity/Progress Charting</b>				
<b>Materials:</b>				<b>Location:</b>	

<b>Evaluation of Instruction (SOAP)</b>	By:	Date:	
<b>S</b>	<b>Subjective:</b> mentee's willingness to participate, demeanor, body language, attitude. Teacher's perceptions and reflections		
<b>O</b>	<b>Observation</b> of Student Learning: Anecdotal Notes		
<b>A</b>	<b>Assessing</b> Student Learning: Progress monitoring, Running Records, Oral or Written Comprehension		
<b>P</b>	<b>Planning</b> for next lesson: Bullet points		
<b>Challenges:</b> What challenges did you encounter while working with your student?			
<b>Further Learning:</b> What else do you need to know how to do?			