Motivated Readers:

The impact of the Kids’ Lit Quiz on Motivation

Ariel Jacques

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Thesis Advisor: Catherine Kurkjian Ed. D.

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Definition of Terms

**Book flood zone:** A place, such as a classroom, where students have “ready access to a wide range of interesting reading materials” (Gallagher, 2009, p. 32).

**Bounded choice:** In this thesis it refers to times when a teacher narrows down the range of texts to a student’s reading level and lets the student choose from that group of texts (Gambrell, 2011).

**Developing readers:** (also termed struggling reader) These students are not reading at grade level (Miller, 2009).

**Dormant readers:** Unmotivated readers who read just to pass a class or test. They do not see reading as worthwhile (Miller, 2009).

**Extrinsic motivation:** A person who performs a task primarily for some external reward (Mitchell, 2012).

**Intrinsic motivation:** A person who performs a task because he/she gets a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment from the task itself (Mitchell, 2012).

**Matthew Effect:** A biblical reference citing the book of Matthew and is often used to describe the ever expanding gap between good and poor readers (Kempe, Eriksson-Gustavsson, and Samuelsson, 2011).

**Underground readers:** Gifted readers who do not connect reading that is done on their own to the reading they have to do in school (Miller, 2009).

**Wide reading:** “Refers to both the amount and type of reading in which children are engaged” (Quizlet, 2012).
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Abstract
Abstract

The Kids’ Lit Quiz (KLQ) is an annual international event where teams of 5th-8th graders get together and answer 100 questions about a variety of literature themes. The creator of the KLQ, Wayne Mills, created this quiz to reward students’ love of reading through a sport-like competition (Mills and Harrington, 2011). He wants to increase reading motivation through the “Sport of Reading”. The main purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of the KLQ on student reading motivation from the perspective of child, parent, and teacher participants. In support of this purpose, this researcher also hoped to find benefits and drawbacks of participation in the KLQ as well as the best ways to prepare for participation. These findings will help to support, educators and parents to better motivate their children to read widely, and will inform facilitators as to how to support children in preparation for the quiz.

Participants in this study were students, teachers, and parents who had participated in the United States 2012 KLQ either as a competitor, coach, or parent. Data was collected two to three months after the KLQ. Student contributions included filling out the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP) (Pitcher et al., 2007) and participating in an interview. Other data sources included a teacher interview, and parent survey. This data was qualitatively analyzed in light of the research questions.

It was found that students who participated in the KLQ started with reading motivation; however there were increases in the amount of reading and the types of books students were reading three months later. Results also show benefits of participating in the KLQ including reading more, learning about new books, meeting new
people, recognition, and raised self-esteem. Drawbacks included forgetting information about texts, competing against older kids, and lack of exposure to texts by children in towns of low SES. Ways to prepare for participation in the KLQ were also shown in the results. Methods included reading a lot, reading different types of books, studying practice questions, and parental support.

The results of this study indicate that while there are many different kinds of students who participate in the KLQ, all have one thing in common and that is motivation to read. It was also concluded that although there were both benefits and challenges of participating in the KLQ, the benefits outweighed the challenges in the fact that every student interviewed said that they enjoyed participating and every parent said that they would like their child to participate again. The final conclusion made was in relation to future preparation. While many methods were mentioned, the most popular by far was to just keep reading.
Introduction

Kids’ Lit Quiz: What is it?

The Kids’ Lit Quiz (KLQ) is an annual international event that brings competition to the world of reading. Students come from all over the world to compete in a “sporting event” (as its founder, Wayne Mills puts it) that is all about reading. The focus of this contest is not solely on winning or losing but on encouraging a love of reading.

History (Nationally and Internationally)


In the United States the KLQ was piloted in 2011 and drew ten teams of children from one school district. Children, parents, and teachers were so enthusiastic about the event that in 2012 it held its first real competition, in which the winners were eligible to participate in the world finals, held in Auckland, New Zealand in July, 2012.

In the 2012 US event, there were 112 participants on twenty-eight teams in participation, all from the same New England state. In all there were thirteen schools representing six school districts. Schools were allowed a maximum of four teams but only two schools did so. One school brought three teams, six brought two teams, and five brought one team. Schools in attendance varied in demographics. Two school
districts had a larger percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than the state average while the other four had percentages lower than the state average. One school district had an ethnic/racial minority population larger than seventy percent. Two districts had thirty to forty percent of their school population in the ethnic/racial minority. The other four districts had ethnic/racial minority populations that ranged from less than twenty percent to two percent (data from 2009-2010 strategic school profiles). The winners of the 2012 US final attended a school in a town that has a high socioeconomic status and high test scores (with 80-90% of 3rd-6th graders at or above goal). This team went to the world final and placed last.

**How the KLQ Works**

The quiz is an event where teams of four children, between the ages of ten and thirteen, come together and compete in a literature competition with teams of other students. As many as four teams are allowed per school. There is no reading list; teams are encouraged read widely in preparation for the quiz. One hundred questions are separated into ten different literary categories. At the end of each round of ten questions a category is completed. The team with the most points wins that category. At the beginning of the competition each team selects one category where their team will receive double points. The team with the most points wins the heat. Teams work collaboratively to generate and select answers to test items. A team of judges from the community grade the answers for each category while participants and spectators compete to win money and books by answering bonus questions posed by the Quiz
Master. Once a category of ten items are graded, the answers are shared and scores are posted. This process continues until all ten categories of questions have been answered.

The winning team from each country receives books and is invited to attend and compete in the world final which rotates locations each year. The 2012 finals were held in the Kids’ Lit Quiz’s country of origin, New Zealand. Six countries that participated in the July 2012 finals were New Zealand, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and USA.

Each country varies slightly as to how it goes about the process of selecting a single team to send to the world finals. Wayne Mills facilitates all heats around the world. New Zealand has been in the KLQ from its beginning and currently has about a dozen regional competitions from March to June each year. The winners of those heats then participate in a national competition to find who will go to the world final. Australia will be in its second year competing in 2013. They will have three heats, which occur in February. From those heats a winning team is chosen to compete in a national final and the winner there gets to go to the world final. South Africa also has several different regional competitions. For example, this year (2013) there will be six regionals with the national competition being held in Johannesburg, in February, 2013. Canada has been a part of the KLQ since 2011. When they began there were only 11 teams in participation but this past year (2012) there were more than 40 teams present. They hold their heats and final competition at different public schools in Toronto, Ontario each year. The United Kingdom does their regional competitions in November and December. Typically there are about 15 heats and then a national final. This year (2012) there were 16 heats
all over the United Kingdom including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England. The United States is the most recent country to participate. The KLQ in the US is held at a state university in New England and participants thus far have come from within the state. There is only one heat which decides who will move on to the World Final. This heat is facilitated by the Quiz Master.

**Purpose and Philosophy**

The KLQ started off as a way to reward students for their reading ability but “over time and as it developed, the quiz has motivated and fostered students' reading (boys' in particular), affirmed students' self-efficacy and encouraged students to widen their scope of reading” (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p. 172). The creator of the quiz, Wayne Mills, wants to help encourage a love for reading by rewarding students for their efforts. As cited by Cowley and Mahy, Mills states, “For decades in schools we’ve recognized achievement in other arenas – through science fairs, math and, above all, in sport. There was nothing for our passionate young readers” (Cowley and Mahy, 2010, p. 1). Mills found that 10-13 was the age when students began to read less or stop reading all together (Mills and Harrington, 2011), so he decided that this would be his target age. Mills decided to create a quiz that would acknowledge students who enjoyed reading and would motivate all students to become readers.

The quiz was created to be much like a sporting event with different teams and a rigorous competition. It was found that students enjoyed the challenge that the KLQ brought. Part of this challenge is the fact that there is no required reading list causing students to choose their own books (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p. 174). The lack of
book list causes the quiz to be even more challenging as questions can be asked about almost any book.

The way athletes prepare for a sport is similar to the way students prepare for the KLQ. First, schools find out when the competition is and choose their team. Next, they look at old questions from previous year (which is similar to an athlete looking at previous games to look for areas for improvement and weaknesses of other teams). Mills and Harrington (2011, p. 174) found that many teams have regular “practices” or meetings. These meetings can occur any time including breakfast clubs before school, lunch meetings during school and, after school snack groups. During this time many teams will come up with their own reading list or genre lists and split the reading up among the team. They look for books that have recently won awards or those which go with the categories provided from previous tests and add those to their reading lists. As in sports, some teams ask for help from past competitors and/or coaches (librarians, parents, or teachers).

The event itself mimics an actual sporting event. Some teams actually meet in a gymnasium. Teams huddle together, with their water bottles and equipment (pencils, paper, and a clipboard), and are encouraged with a word from their coaches or team leaders. During the event students receive points and they work together by relying on each other’s knowledge and strengths to get the best score. In the audience there is sometimes silence during the intensity of the competition and sometimes cheering. At the end of the night the team with the most points wins and receives an award and
bragging rights for the year, which is exactly what happens at the finals of a sporting event.

After creating the KLQ, it was found that the quiz is not just about the excitement of being in a sport but “participating in the Kids’ Lit Quiz plays an important role in these children's reading lives and fulfills some element of the desire to be in a social group of like-minded others” (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p. 182). Because the KLQ has generated so much excitement about reading for pleasure, it is important to find out more about its impact on the motivation of its participants and to evaluate if it does what it sets out to do, which is motivate children to become lifelong lovers of reading.

**Purpose of the Current Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the motivational impact of the KLQ on students who participated in the US heat in February 2012. Data was collected from a convenience sample of students, their parents and teachers. In particular it will look more closely at 1) who the participants were, 2) how they prepared, 3) how they responded to the quiz, and 4) what the impact it had, if any on the amount and types of reading after participating in the KLQ. These findings will help to support, educators and parents to consider alternative motivational methods that will support wide reading (increased time reading and types of books being read), and will inform facilitators as to how to support children in preparation for the quiz.
Review of the Literature

Motivation

Motivation has been a topic of discussion in education for years. “All learning theorists admit the more motivated we are, the easier we learn” (John Farrell, 1982, p.7). Educators spend a substantial amount of time trying to figure out how to motivate their students to learn. Motivation to read is one of the most discussed topics in education. “This topic is in the limelight because so many children don’t read. They don’t read well enough; they don’t read often enough; and if you talk to children, they will tell you that they don’t see reading as meaningful in their life” (Miller, 2009, p. 3).

Motivation consists of a combination of beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions (Lai, 2011, p. 2). This means that teachers need to know their students’ beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions and use this information when helping students choose reading material. Teachers also need to investigate current literature regarding motivation.

In The Book Whisperer, Miller (2009) discusses three types of readers: developing, dormant, and underground. In order to begin to motivate children to read a teacher must first figure out what kinds of readers she/he has. According to Miller (2009) developing readers are those readers who do not read on grade level. These are the students who need the time to apply their learning with real reading instead of just drill and kill methods. Dormant readers are uninterested in reading. These students need to see how exciting reading can be instead of just reading to pass a test. Finally,
underground readers are those readers who do not connect required school reading to the large amount of reading they do in their free time. These students love reading but not when books and curriculum are chosen for them. According to Miller (2009) these students need more attention than they are getting because teachers spend so much time on the other two groups.

**Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic**

The literature describes two different types of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic. “Researchers have distinguished between intrinsic motivation, which refers to being motivated to do an activity for its own sake and out of interest and curiosity, and extrinsic motivation, or doing an activity to receive a reward or other form of recognition” (Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker, 2000, p. 331). There has been much discussion, research, and articles written in education, in relation to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

“Intrinsic motivation involves people doing an activity because they find it interesting and derive spontaneous satisfaction from the activity itself” (Mitchell, 2012, p.18). There are no tangible rewards present. A person who is intrinsically motivated performs a task because he/she gets a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment from the task itself. Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich (2006) discuss student curiosity about books, extended reading time, and trying lengthier, more challenging books as evidence of an intrinsically motivated reader.

Extrinsic motivation on the other hand, is all about tangible rewards. “One is extrinsically motivated to perform the task if he does it primarily for some external
“reward” (Mitchell, 2012, p. 26). It does not matter if the person is interested in the activity or not, they are just looking at the payoff they get. Guthrie et al. (Winter, 2006) talk about how extrinsic motivation in reading is related to grades or competition.

Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck (2010) found in their longitudinal study that students who were intrinsically motivated to read in grade four, developed better reading skills in grade six. This study also found that students who were motivated by extrinsic rewards in grade four showed poorer reading skills in grade six than those who were less extrinsically motivated. In other words, encouraging intrinsic motivation to read was a better way to help children to improve their reading skills. Unrau and Schlackman (2006) “found that intrinsic motivation positively related to and predicted text comprehension equally for their Chinese and American groups” and that extrinsic motivation had a negative effect on one group and no significant effect on another (p. 96). Both of these studies found intrinsic motivation to be more influential however, some professionals argue that under certain circumstances extrinsic motivation is beneficial (Lei, 2010; Urdan, 2003; Cook, 2003). For example, Lei (2010) discusses the idea that students are always comparing themselves to their peers, so extrinsic motivators such as recognition, grades, and competition can be beneficial.

The KLQ has both extrinsic and intrinsic components to it. The fact that the KLQ is a competition, with prizes, shows an external motivation. The audience is another extrinsic motivator in that they are there to show excitement and support to their children/students (Mills, Mar. 2012). On the flip side “children joined the quiz for reasons that were social and based upon a self-motivating love of reading and a desire to
have choice in what they could read rather than parental pressure or school requirement to read” (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p. 181), which demonstrates an internal motivational component to the quiz. Mills (Mar. 2012), the creator of the quiz, states that “it is intrinsically motivating in that the quiz is quite a challenge; a ‘dare-you’ enter challenge to those kids that are avid readers” (p. 1) Another feature that makes the quiz internally motivating is the fact that there is no reading list. Students are encouraged to read whatever they enjoy as well as to try new types of reading.

**Benefits of Wide Reading**

The benefits of reading widely are acknowledged in research. Some benefits include improved fluency (Kuhn, 2005; Ming & Dukes, 2008; Little & Hines, 2006), enhanced vocabulary (Williams, 2008; Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005; Davis, 1995), and reading comprehension (Williams, 2008; Hedrick & Cunningham, 2002; Kuhn et al., 2006). Fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension are three large pieces that help to develop a well rounded reader.

Ming and Dukes (2008) define fluent readers as those who can “quickly (automatically) and accurately recognize words, read these words with adequate expression and phrasing (prosody), and draw the intended meaning from the text (comprehension)” (p. 4). Getting to this point in reading does not happen automatically; instead researchers have found that wide reading is a contributing factor to increased fluency (Kuhn, 2005; Ming & Dukes, 2008; Little & Hines, 2006). The study by Melanie Kuhn (2005), which researched ways to develop fluency for small groups, found that “students in the wide reading group showed improved comprehension” and those
students were more fluent than both the listening-only and control groups (p. 342). Little and Hines (2006) say that it is “common sense” to say that the more reading a person does, the better a reader they will become. In their study, Little and Hines (2006) found that students who participated in an after school program, which focused on wide reading, developed gains in fluency at a higher rate than the national norm group. Ming and Dukes (2008) also agree that a focus on reading is beneficial to gains in fluency; however they go a step further to argue that students need to read appropriately leveled texts in order to make those gains. These studies all point to wide reading as a factor for increased fluency gains.

“Promoting wide reading is another powerful method of promoting incidental word learning” (Williams, 2008, p. 19). Williams (2008) introduced her research study with the idea that reading widely is one way to gain a large vocabulary. In her study, Williams (2008) found that students who read for twenty minutes daily encountered many more vocabulary words and so they had more chance for “incidental learning”. Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) studied eighth graders to determine if word exposure through expository and narrative texts increases vocabulary acquisition. The researchers found that students do learn new vocabulary through reading. They also found that there is a higher probability that a student will learn a word the more times he/she is exposed to that word in context (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). Vocabulary learning is not something that happens overnight. It happens bit by bit, with time and exposure (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005). Time and exposure are two parts of Davis’ (1995) discussion on the effect of an extensive reading program (ERP). ERP is a
program “where students are given time, encouragement, and materials to read pleoriously, at their own level as many books as they can” (Davis, 1995). Davis (1995) found from his research, that students who participate in this program have improved reading skills, language skills (including vocabulary), and personal growth.

One part of reading skills is reading comprehension, which is defined as the process of constructing meaning from reading (Williams, 2008) is also impacted by wide reading. In their research, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that wide reading in elementary school contributes to increases in reading comprehension. According to Williams (2008), extensive vocabulary contributes to increased reading comprehension and wide reading contributes to an increased vocabulary. It can therefore be concluded that wide reading contributes to increased reading comprehension. The research done by Hendrick & Cunningham (2002) agrees with this statement. In their study, they found that students who read widely from third to fifth grade had an increase in listening comprehension of written text. Kuhn et al. (2006) researched the impact of Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) versus Wide Reading in second graders. In comparison to the control group, the both FORI and Wide Reading groups showed better and faster improvements in reading comprehension, however these results showed up earlier for the Wide Reading group (Kuhn et al., 2006). From these research studies, the positive impact of wide reading on fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension is clear.
The Matthew Effect

Wide reading reflects what researchers term the Matthew Effect. This is a biblical reference citing the book of Matthew which states: “For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him” (Matthew 25:29, New International Version). “The Matthew Effect is often used as a metaphor to describe a widening gap between good and poor readers over time” (Kempe, Eriksson-Gustavsson, and Samuelsson, 2011, 181). Kempe, Eriksson-Gustavsson, and Samuelsson (2011) found that there was a Matthew Effect present in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Together, these findings suggest that in order to help both the “poor” and “rich” to get “richer”, in terms of reading ability, it is extremely important for children to regularly practice wide reading. This means that the amount of time spent reading is important. In the study “Time spent reading and reading growth”, Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama (1990) found that the sustained silent reading (SSR) time, in school, contributed to reading achievement for students at the intermediate grade level. Also, implementing an SSR program can cultivate reading habits and increase reading enjoyment in school (Chua, 2008).

Factors That Impact Wide Reading

Since wide reading is so important, how can teachers motivate their students to enjoy reading and therefore read widely and become lifelong readers? Some factors that contribute to wide reading are choice (Duncan, 2010; Guthrie et al., March, 2006; Gambrell, 2011; Servilio, 2009; Miller 2009; Gallagher, 2009; Gambrell & Marinack,
A first factor that contributes to wide reading is choice. “Choice is widely acknowledged as a method for enhancing motivation” (Gambrell & Marinak, 2009, p. 1). Guthrie et al. (March, 2006) identified choice as one of the “seven major instructional practices that increase motivation for reading and reading comprehension” (p. 233). Choice empowers and encourages readers, strengthens self confidence, rewards interests, and promotes a positive attitude toward reading (Miller, 2009). Katheryn Servilio (2009) looked into motivating children with special needs to read through the use of differentiation and student choice. Servilio (2009) found that “differentiated instruction combined with student choice can increase student engagement and learning for all students” (p. 9). Choice helps students to invest in their learning and it shows that the teacher respects their decisions, which causes students to take hold of their learning, and is quite motivational (Duncan, 2010).

Researchers suggest many different ways of incorporating choice into the classroom. Gallagher (2009) discusses the importance of a “book flood zone” (p. 32) where there are many high interest books for students to choose from. Another way to incorporate choice and still have students reading at their reading level is to choose a number of books that are at a student's level and allow them to choose from this selection. Gambrell (2011) refers to this as “bounded choice” (p. 175).
Providing children with access to appropriate text is a second factor that impacts wide reading. The term appropriate texts refers to texts on students' independent reading levels. Treptow, Burns, and McComas (2007) found that it is important to identify students' instructional reading levels and teach using this knowledge (p. 165). This statement also points to the important role that access to texts plays. “Increasing the number of books and other reading materials in the classroom will have a positive effect on the amount and quality of the reading experiences of the students” (Gambrell, 2011, 173). Gambrell (2011) also discusses the idea that providing access to many different kinds of texts communicates the fact that reading is important and a worthwhile use of their time. She explains that access is not just providing the books but also providing the opportunities and interest in reading. Teachers should create classroom libraries where books are of high interest and within reach of a child (Duncan, 2010). Books chosen should be fiction and non-fiction and from a variety of genres, including those that teachers do not always approve of such as graphic novels (Duncan, 2010). Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) did research on what factors motivate students to read by analyzing their conversations with students. They found six categories of motivation, one of which is sources of books. The study found that libraries, teachers, parents, and peers are all sources that impact the amount of wide reading a child does. From their study, Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) give five ways to increase motivation to read, including self-selection (choice), attention to characteristics of books, personal interests, access to books, and active involvement of others. They suggest that teachers have large classroom libraries with many different kinds of books as well as give students plenty of
opportunities to visit the school library. They should also let students bring books home and give parents resources to help them to read widely at home.

A third way to increase wide reading is to make it relevant to the reader. Many reading programs in elementary and middle school primarily focus on decoding. However, Gallagher (2009) believes that reading includes the ability to decode words as well as the ability to connect to what is being read. That connection is what makes reading relevant and where motivation happens. Teachers should not just tell their students how the book they are reading is relevant, but they should instead help students to discover for themselves how the text is relevant and connected to their lives (Hulleman et al., 2010). “Motivation is enhanced when instructional practices focus on connections between school reading and the personal lives of students” (Gambrell, 2011, p. 173). Gambrell (2011) suggests that after students read, they should write about their reaction to the text and how it is relevant to their lives. Bean (2002) suggests that teachers of adolescents pair up old classics, which deal with adult issues, with newer texts that relate those issues to the life of a teenager. He also suggests, reading journals, book clubs, theater, and conversations that go beyond formulated, teacher led discussions.

Unfortunately, the focus today is not on knowing your students and their individual motivations, but on data and testing. Gallagher (2009) states that, “the overemphasis on testing is playing a major part in killing off readers in America’s classrooms” (p.7). Teachers and administrators are so focused on getting students to pass “the test” that they leave out the excitement and enjoyment of learning. Gallagher
(2009) believes that teaching just to prepare students for testing is harmful to readers in two ways. First, this kind of preparation yields shallow teaching and learning. And second, multiple choice testing keeps struggling readers where they are and does not give them the chance to succeed (p.8).

Motivation has been a topic of interest for decades. Throughout the years researchers and teachers have come up with many strategies to motivate children to read. Some have become widely accepted, while others are still up for debate. The findings of each of the above mentioned studies related to motivation to read and the KLQ confirm the importance of this study.
Statement of Need

Motivation plays a big role in every aspect of education and life. Students need to be motivated in every part of their education; otherwise they are just going through the motions. Motivation is lacking in the area of reading. In order to become lifelong readers, students must be motivated. The question is: how do teachers and parents help children along the path toward a love of reading? In particular, what can be learned from the participants of the KLQ to support wide reading that this event promotes?

Mr. Wayne Mills (2012), the creator of the Kids’ Lit Quiz, believes that he has found a way to motivate children to read through competition. Beyond his own research, very little research has been done regarding the Kids’ Lit Quiz in relation to motivating children to read. The only research article found was written by Marj Brown (2006), and discussed the Kids’ Lit Quiz from different perspectives. Brown (2006) discussed the KLQ’s influence on gender, literacy, culture, libraries, and reading patterns. Other than this article, ones written by Mills, and news articles, not much has been researched connecting the KLQ to motivation. This study will investigate the impact of the KLQ on participant motivation to determine the impact and response of the participants. This study will also investigate implications for teachers, parents, and students in strategies that motivate wide reading.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has four main research questions.

1. Who were the participants of the KLQ of February, 2012?
2. What impact did the Kids’ Lit Quiz have on student motivation of children involved in this research?

3. What were the benefits/drawbacks for those participating in the quiz?

4. What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLO?
Methodology

Overview

The research phase of this study took place over the span of two months following two to three months after the Kids’ Lit Quiz, which occurred at a university in New England in February of 2012. Data sources include the “Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile” (Pitcher et al., 2007), student interview, parent survey, and teacher interview. This data was qualitatively analyzed in light of the research questions. Table 1 discusses the ways in which data sources were triangulated to answer the questions.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Relevant Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Who were the participants of the KLQ of 2012?</td>
<td>Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What impact did the Kids’ Lit Quiz have on student motivation?</td>
<td>Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Benefits and drawbacks of the quiz</td>
<td>Student Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLQ?</td>
<td>Student Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population and Study Sample

Participants in this study (students, parents, and teachers) were chosen because they participated in the Kids’ Lit Quiz in February 2012. This data is a convenience
sample representing participants from fourteen schools, six districts, ranging from suburban to urban, who agreed to participate. These schools were located in towns of various socioeconomic statuses in a state on the east coast of the United States. Among the schools that participated in the 2012 KLQ, seven schools from three districts agreed to participate in the study. One school had 4 teams, two schools had 2 teams, and the other four schools brought 1 team each. The teams that were studied varied across the board in percentage of questions answered accurately during the KLQ.

There were 35 students who chose to participate from the seven schools, 23 parent participants, and 6 teacher participants. Twenty-two student participants were interviewed in addition to the reading motivation survey. The students varied in grade, with eleven fifth graders, eighteen sixth graders, five seventh graders, and one eighth grader. There were twenty-six females and nine males.

Sources of Data/Instruments

The student survey (appendix A) that was used is the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile reading survey (Pitcher et al., 2007). It was based on the Motivation to Read Profile developed by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) and was given to all students in order to find out about student thoughts about reading and reading motivations. The purpose of using this profile was to find out the range of reading motivation of the students who participated in the KLQ.

Some students were given an interview (appendix B), which was also formed by the researcher. This interview looked at student perspectives on what kinds, if any, of
changes were made in reading motivation following the KLQ. Both amount and type of reading were looked at. Students were also asked questions about their participation in the KLQ in order to find their thoughts on the purpose and the impact it had on them and others.

Parents were given a survey (appendix C), which was developed by the researcher. This survey was created to find some background information on student reading motivation before and after the KLQ and to determine the degree to which participants were motivated readers to start with. The survey also analyzed at some factors that could have contributed to student motivation to read other than the KLQ. Both the amount of reading and the types of reading were examined in order to see what changes were made in reading habits as it relates to motivation to read widely.

Teachers were given an interview (appendix D), which was formed by the researcher. This interview looked at teacher perspectives of the KLQ and its impact on motivation to read as well as their thoughts on how to prepare for the KLQ. Teachers were asked about what they had done to prepare their students for the KLQ as well as how they motivate their students for wide reading in general.

Collection of Data

Data was collected two to three months after students participated in the KLQ. Schools were contacted about participation in this study and 7 schools responded that they would participate. The researcher went to each school on a different day within a two month time frame to interview students and send home parent surveys. Teacher
surveys were collected by the researcher’s advisor and were added to the other sources for researcher analysis.

Students who chose to participate were given the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (Pitcher et al., 2007). They filled this out with the knowledge that the desire was for students to be honest, not just to answer what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. This portion of the study took five to ten minutes. A convenience sample was chosen to participate in the interview component of the study. The interview was conducted one-on-one and was audio taped for use in transcribing the data. The interview portion lasted about ten to fifteen minutes per child.

After these portions of the survey were completed, students were given the parent survey to take home and give to the adult at home who most closely helped them to prepare for the KLQ. This survey was completed by the parent at home and was mailed to the researcher when received. This survey should have taken about five to ten minutes.

The teacher portion of the data was gathered by the researcher’s advisor. Willing participants were interviewed individually and were audio recorded for use in transcribing data. The interview took about fifteen to twenty minutes per teacher.

**Data Analysis Strategies**

Data sources were analyzed qualitatively across research questions to find themes and patterns in the data. The research program NVivo was used as a way to sort data across various categories. This software also helped to find and organize trends in participant responses.
Data was analyzed for trends that occurred relating to motivation, reading habits, and the effect of the KLQ on both motivation and reading habits. Data was also analyzed in order to find trends in the implications for preparing children for the KLQ.
Results

The intent of this study was to answer the research questions 1.) Who were the participants of the KLQ of February 2012? 2.) What impact did the KLQ have on student motivation of children involved in this research? 3.) What were the benefits/drawbacks for those participating in the KLQ? 4.) What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLQ? The following chapter presents the data and analysis from the student survey and interview, the teacher interview, and the parent survey.

1. Who were the participants of the KLQ of February, 2012?

This research question provides a context for answering the subsequent research questions. In particular, it describes participants overall and grade level results of motivation based on the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMPR) (Pitcher et al., 2007) and the Socioeconomic Status of the families that the participating schools serve.

The Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP) was given to all 36 student participants. Students were scored on their Self-Concept in reading and the Value they put on reading and those scores were added together to find their total score which was out of 80 points. That score was then divided by 80 to find their percentage score. For example the lowest score on the AMRP given in this study was 56 points or 70%. There were 10 students who scored between 70% and 79%, 13 students scored from 80-89%, and 13 scored 90% or above. Percentages of students scoring in each level are shown in Table 2.
The data was then separated by school and averages of each school were taken. School 1 had only one student in participation in this study so those results, while still shown in figure 1, were not taken into account in the following discussion. When looking at the data by school, there are some interesting differences. For example the school identified as the most motivated is School 7, with all participants scoring 90% or above. The school with the lowest motivational scores was School 3 with 71% of participants scoring in the 70-79% range. The rest of the schools scored somewhere in between as shown in figure 1.

Table 2

*Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Students below 70%</th>
<th>% Students between 70% and 80%</th>
<th>% Students between 80% and 90%</th>
<th>% Students above 90%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Concept in reading</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>37.14%</td>
<td>45.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Reading</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>34.29%</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>37.14%</td>
<td>34.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Average scores on the AMRP by school. These scores are shown by Self Concept, Value, and Total.

Motivation can more clearly be seen when looking at some of the individual questions on the AMRP. For example students were asked to fill in the blank to the following statement “Knowing how to read well is ________.” Eighty-six percent of students answered “very important” while 14% answered “important”. No students said that it was sort of important or not important to know how to read well. A few questions after answering a question about the importance of reading students were asked about their reading ability. Eighty-six percent of students said that reading was very easy for
them and 14% said it was kind of easy for them. No students answered that reading was kind of hard for them or very hard for them. So students believe that knowing how to read well is important and they believe that they can read well. It would follow that they are more motivated to read because this important task comes pretty easy to them, especially when taking into consideration the fact that 75% of students said that reading is something they like to do often. Both the overall scores and the individual questions show that these students were already motivated to read but with no one’s scores at 100%, they all have room to be more highly motivated.

**School socioeconomic status.** Free or reduced lunch rates were examined for trends in relation to KLQ results. The town that came in first in the KLQ has 6.4% of its students on free or reduced lunch; compared to the state average of 32.6%. On the other hand, the town that came in last has 76.4% of its students on free or reduced lunch. While this is only a small sample, there does seem to be a trend between SES and scores on the KLQ.

The school that came in last this year was part of the district that participated the first year in the pilot KLQ. After the pilot these kids were highly motivated, according to their teacher. She said that the reason for this is because they were prepared and they competed against other students from their town. Table 3 shows each school that participated in the KLQ with the percentage of their school that received free or reduced lunch in data from 2008 (data from State Department of Education website) and where each of their teams ranked in the KLQ.
### Demographics by Grade and Free/Reduced Lunch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School*</th>
<th>% of school free/reduced lunch (2008)</th>
<th># of 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Teams</th>
<th># of 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Teams</th>
<th># of 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Teams</th>
<th>Place in KLQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>71.66%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>71.66%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>37.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;, 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>24.35%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 6</td>
<td>79.80%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 7</td>
<td>26.76%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 8</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 9</td>
<td>44.78%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 10</td>
<td>7.63%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 11</td>
<td>70.10%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 12</td>
<td>87.16%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 13</td>
<td>35.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 14</td>
<td>76.40%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Highlighted Schools participated in the current study)

2. **What impact did the KLQ have on student motivation of children involved in this research?**

When looking at the data, triangulated among student, parent, and teacher, it is apparent that most students who participated in the Kids’ Lit Quiz, while already motivated to read, did report an increase in amount or types of reading since
participating in the quiz. There were a few who were not as highly motivated as the rest, however, all students reported that knowing how to read well was important (14%) or very important (86%). In this study the influence of motivation will be shown in relation to students reading more or different kinds of books after participating in the KLQ.

Data taken from student interviews show increases in the amount of texts and genres of books students are reading since participating in the KLQ. Out of the 22 students interviewed, 64% reported reading different genres of books now (three months later) then they did before the KLQ. Frequently students commented that they heard about a specific book or genre at the KLQ and decided to go home and try it out. Sixty-four percent of students also reported that they read more often since the KLQ. The list of 64% of students who reported reading different genres is not the same exact list as the list of 64% who reported reading more. Thirty-six percent of students reported reading both more and different genres, 27% said they are just reading more, 27% said they are just reading different genres, and the final 9% represent students who said they read the same amount and the same genres now as they did before (as seen in figure 2). The 9% (2 students) reported reading large numbers of books before the quiz and said they have not really changed that pace. The parent of one of these students reported that her daughter was reading different kinds of books now then she did before. Almost all students reported that they read either more than they did before or the same amount. One student responded that she reads less now; however she did report an increase in genres and an increase in the size of books she was reading, which could account for the drop in the amount of books she was reading.
Figure 2. Student Reported Overall Change in Reading

After analyzing all of the students as a whole, student interviews were analyzed in relation to the demographics of gender, grade, and school in order to find changes in motivation in relation to types of reading and amount of reading. Females (10 of 14) showed more of a change in amount of reading than males (4 of 8) while the change in genres read was about the same across the genders, as shown in figures 3.
Data was then analyzed by grade to find patterns. It was found that all grades, other than eighth grade, had the same percentage (67%) of students increase in the amount of reading they are doing. This study only had one eighth grade participant so grade level data was only looked at for fifth, sixth, and seventh graders. The difference was in the genres of books students are now reading. Sixth graders had the highest percentage of students who are reading new genres (78%), with seventh graders not far behind (67%). Fifth graders seem to be the least motivated here with less than half of them reading new genres now (44%) (See Figure 4).
The third demographic in which data was analyzed was school. All schools in this study had at least 50% of students who participated report that they are reading more now than they did before the KLQ. School 2, School 3, School 5, and School 7 have 50% of student participants indicating that they are reading more, 71% of participants in School 4 reported that they were reading more, and participants in School 1 and School
6 reported that 100% were reading more now (2 to 3 months later) than they did before the KLQ.

These numbers change a bit when looking at the types of books students are reading now. One hundred percent of participants in School 6 and School 3 reported that they were reading different genres now (2 to 3 months later) than they did before the KLQ. Seventy percent of participants in School 5 and School 4 reported that they read different genres while 50% of participants in School 2 reported reading different types of texts. In School 7 twenty-five percent of students reported reading different genres and 100% of participants in School 1 reported that they are reading the same genres now as they did before the KLQ. See Figure 5 and Figure 6.

![Changes in Amount of Reading](image)

*Figure 5 Changes in Amount of Reading By School*
Teacher perspectives were also taken into account, through teacher interviews, when looking at the research question, what impact did the KLQ have on student motivation? The seven teachers in participation discussed a range of the ways the KLQ impacted their students’ motivation to read. First, teachers found that their own teaching was affected by the quiz. Four teachers noted that there were genres (i.e. Traditional literature) discussed at the quiz that their students were not exposed to, and so they decided to add those genres to their curriculum. One teacher reported that the more genres that a student is exposed to, the more likely they will find one or more that interest them. Three months after the KLQ three teachers reported noticing better uses of reading strategies. For example, students were reflecting and analyzing what they read, they were rereading, and they were using their knowledge to find what to read next.
Consistent with the student interview data, the teachers discussed reading increases (the amount of time spent in reading) and expansion of the types of reading engaged in as evidence of improved motivation. One teacher discussed the fact that the students who participated in the KLQ have always been readers but they have now increased in SSR time. Another teacher said that her students have increased their reading because they were excited about their success in the KLQ. One team of students got together on their lunch and recess breaks to practice for the quiz and to read more.

Teachers also noticed an increase in the types of books that students are now reading. One teacher said that her students have revisited genres they hadn’t read in a while. Four teachers said that students discovered new genres and started to read them on their own. They were also more willing to try new genres of books. One teacher said that after the KLQ the boys who participated expanded their genres moving away from an exclusive focus on mystery and action books.

There is also a social component of motivation that teachers discussed in relation to the KLQ. All of the teachers discussed the social motivation of the quiz in one way or another. One teacher said that it lets kids be stars. Another said that her students were excited about a competition that was outside of school, in competition with other students from other schools. One teacher came right out and directly stated that social interaction was highly motivating for her students. Schools were a buzz of excitement about the quiz; even the kids who were not participating were excited. One teacher thought of having their own school level competition to support motivation and let more kids be involved. Another encouraged those who were not involved to make book
recommendations and practice questions for their school’s team(s). One school reported that a student who was not a proficient reader, wanted to be a part of the quiz. That student ended up being on the winning team. Interestingly, winning the trip to the finals in New Zealand was only mentioned as motivational by one teacher.

Four of the seven teachers said that it was hard to tell if their students had increased reading motivation because they were already so highly motivated. Four teachers said that they read widely to begin with, so it is hard to tell if they are more motivated now then before. Four of them did say however, that they are reading different kinds of books now.

A final thought on teacher perspectives regarding student motivation comes from the teacher who brought the last place teams. This school is from a town of low socio-economic status (SES) and was part of the pilot KLQ, the year before, which only included students in schools from her district. She stated that during the pilot students who participated were very highly motivated afterwards because their team had done well. During that competition they had each received five dollars for answering a question correctly. After the quiz, instead of spending the money, they wore that money around their necks as a symbol of pride. She attributed the success of her students to the fact that her teams were competing against other schools that were at their own level. When her school competed the following year against the schools of varying degrees of SES, they came in last place. She said that they were almost less motivated to read afterwards because of how poorly they did in comparison to the other schools. She did note that very little help was provided in preparing this new group of students for
the KLQ and that this may have played a role in the discouragement experienced by her students.

Parent’s thoughts were also taken into consideration when answering the question what impact did the KLQ have on motivation? There were a few questions on their survey that related to motivation. First, parents were asked if their child has always chosen to read for pleasure. Seventy-nine percent strongly agree, 17% agree, 4% disagree, and none strongly disagree (see Figure 7). This is consistent with the student and teacher interviews which indicated that most students were motivated to read before the KLQ.

My child has always chosen to read for pleasure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7. Parent Report on Child’s History of Reading for Pleasure*

Parents were asked if their child has always been a strong reader. Seventy-one percent strongly agreed and 29% agreed. No one disagreed with that statement as shown in figure 8 below. Figure 8 describes parental report on the history of children’s reading performance.
Figure 9 describes parents’ thoughts of student attitudes towards the KLQ. All parents stated that their children enjoyed participating in the KLQ.

My child has always been a strong reader.

![Pie chart and table showing parent responses to the question: My child has always been a strong reader.](image1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents 24

Figure 8. Parent Report on History of Child's Performance as a Reader

My child enjoyed participating in the Kids’ Lit Quiz on Feb. 3rd.

![Pie chart and table showing parent responses to the question: My child enjoyed participating in the Kids’ Lit Quiz on Feb. 3rd.](image2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents 24

Figure 9. Parent Report on Child’s Response to the KLQ

Parents were also asked about any increases in reading they observed. First they were asked if their child increased in reading in preparation for the KLQ. Twenty-nine percent strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 17% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed (See
Figure 10). It is interesting to note that the one student whose parent selected strongly disagree was on the winning team. Secondly, parents were asked if their child increased in the amount of reading since participating in the KLQ (see Figure 11). Twenty-nine percent strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 33% disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. The one parent who selected strongly disagree for the statement “My child increased in the amount of reading in preparation for the KLQ” noted that the only reason his/her child has increased the amount of reading done since the KLQ is because she is preparing for the finals in New Zealand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Parent Observations of Increased Reading-Preparation
My child has increased in the amount of reading he/she does since participating in the KLQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Parent Observations of Increased Reading-Post-KLQ

Parents were also asked about the changes in the genres of books their child is reading. First, they were asked what genres their child read last year. Next, they were asked what genres they are reading now. Finally, they were asked if they thought their child has increased in the kinds of books they read since the KLQ. Data taken from the first two questions was contrary to expectations. It was expected that students would either be reading the same genres as last year or that they would have added new genres from the KLQ. However, the results show that not only did students stay the same or add genres, there were also students who decreased the number of genres read. Three parents (12.5%) reported that their child read the same genres last year as this year. Eight parents (33.3%) reported more genres being read this year than last. Seven parents (29.2%) reported that their child is reading fewer genres now than last year. Finally six parents (25%) stated that their child has added some genres and subtracted others since the KLQ.
There were a few genres that were cited repeatedly as those being read this year that were not read last year and vice-versa. Mystery was popular last year (79% of students were reading mystery texts) for these students, but six students dropped this genre after the KLQ (now 54% of students are reading mystery texts and 25% have moved on to other genres). Comedy/comics/graphic novels and action/adventure both lost three students from before the KLQ to after. On the other hand suspense/thriller gained 5 students going from 42% last year to 58% this year. Biography, traditional literature, and historical fiction all gained three students. Below Table 4 and Table 5 detail the genres parents chose to answer both questions.

Table 4
Parent Report of Types of Books Read Before the KLQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What types of books did your child read last year before participating in the KLQ?</th>
<th>Response Total</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>action/adventure</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biography</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comedy/comics/graphic novels</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical fiction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspense/Thriller</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Literature</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Books</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Parent Report of Types of Books Read After the KLQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What types of books is your child reading now (3 months later)?</th>
<th>Response Total</th>
<th>Response %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action/Adventure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy/Comics/Graphic novels</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical fiction</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspense/Thriller</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Literature</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Books</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final question parents were asked in relation to genres was if their child has increased in the kinds and types of reading since the KLQ. This data seemed to be in agreement, for the most part, with the previous two questions. There were a variety of answers; some said their child was reading different texts while others said their child was not. Out of the 24 parents who participated in the survey 8% said they strongly agree with the statement “my child has increased the kinds and types of reading since the KLQ”, 67% chose agree as their answer, 25% chose to disagree, and none chose to strongly disagree. Figure 12 shows the results of this portion of the survey.
My child has increased the kinds and types of reading since the KLQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 12. Parent report of changes in types of reading-Post KLQ.*

The parent survey also included two open ended questions relating to their child’s participation in the KLQ. The general consensus from parents was that the KLQ was a great experience. Their children had fun, they learned about award winning books, they increase the amount of reading they are doing, and it increased their child’s self confidence. These are all aspects of the KLQ that make it highly motivational in terms of reading enjoyment. Parents also had thoughts on how to motivate children to read such as helping children find the correct genre in their interests, reading as a family, supporting without pressuring them, reading to your child, and reading books your child recommends and discussing them together. These are all things that most of these parents are already doing with their children, which may be why the data has been pointing to the idea that the students who participated in the KLQ were already motivated to read.
In summary, student interviews, teacher interviews, and parent surveys all agree that, for the most part, the students who participated in the KLQ were already motivated to read. However, the data from these sources also shows that three months later there were increases to the amount of reading students are doing as well as a variation in the types of books students are reading.

3. What were the benefits/drawbacks for those participating in the KLQ?

**Benefits.** Students, teachers, and parents were all asked about their opinion regarding the benefits and challenges of the KLQ. There were a few reoccurring themes observed when analyzing the data. First, there were students, teachers, and parents who stated that the KLQ was a great experience and most of them used those exact words. Another theme that was found was that students are reading more now than they did before. A final theme that was discussed by all three groups was the fact that students learned about new books and genres through the KLQ.

Students listed many benefits of the KLQ. The range of benefits include reading more, learning about new books, a good experience, meeting new people, and learning new things. The most popular benefit was that they found themselves reading more now than they did before. Eight out of the twenty-two students listed reading more as a benefit of the KLQ. The second most popular benefit listed by students was that they learned about new books. Seven of the twenty-two students interviewed spoke about this benefit. There were many other benefits that students mentioned such as the KLQ was a good experience, they met new people, and they learned new things. One or two
students each mentioned benefits like it helped them in school and life, they became a better reader, their self-esteem improved, and they won books.

Teachers mentioned many of the same benefits but they also added some new thoughts. The range of benefits includes a change in reading habits, social/competitive benefits, and emotional benefits. Four of the teachers listed more than one benefit of the KLQ. Two teachers discussed the fact that their students learned about new books. The competition aspect was a popular topic among teachers. One discussed the fact that through this, students got recognized for their reading. Another discussed the fact that students had to work together as part of the competition and that was very beneficial. The competition also let students show what they know about books and reading and be rewarded for their reading efforts. One teacher discussed the fact that students learned new concepts through the KLQ. Another said reading for the sake of reading was a reward in itself. Three teachers discussed emotional benefits of the KLQ; such as feelings of success even if they don’t win and self-esteem improvements. One teacher talked about the fact that, during the pilot study, one of her students won five dollars and a book and that carried her through the year in terms of self-esteem.

Parents also came up with many benefits of the KLQ including a fun experience, self-esteem improvements, and reading habit changes. Eight parents stated that it was a fun experience, making that answer the most popular among parents. Another popular answer was in relation to self-esteem. One parent said that participating in the KLQ enhanced his/her child’s self confidence in her reading ability. Another said that the quiz gave his/her son confidence in reading. A third category of answers that was popular
among parents was related to reading. One said that her child was motivated to increase reading and was shown how important reading is for life. Another said that the KLQ expanded his/her child’s interest in different types of genres. A third parents discussed how preparing for the quiz introduced her child to award winning books and at the KLQ she learned about new book titles. Finally one parent said that she now reads the same book that her daughter is reading because of her daughter’s recommendation. They can share what they enjoyed together, and that helps her to remember details from the book.

**Challenges.** While there were benefits from participating in the KLQ there were also drawbacks or challenges even though one of the most popular answers from students and teachers was that there were no drawbacks in participation in the KLQ. One common concern for students and parents was the fact that fifth grades had to compete against eighth graders. Other than that, there was variation among the responses from teachers, students, and parents.

Students seemed to focus mostly on the event itself when discussing challenges. Nine of the twenty two students said that they could not think of any challenges that the KLQ presented. The next most popular answer was that students would forget facts about books they had read. For example, one student said “Yeah it was hard to remember everything because some of the questions we knew the answers we just couldn’t remember so once he announced the answers we were pretty shocked that we didn’t think of that”. Next was the challenge of tough categories of questions used in the KLQ. One student said the cat category was difficult because it was hard to know exactly
what to read. Another popular challenge from students was the difficulty of competing against older kids. Four fifth graders said that it was not fair that they had to compete against eight graders. One suggested separate grade level competitions and another suggested limiting it to middle school only.

Teachers also discussed the quiz itself but they also analyzed the kinds of challenges posed to their students. Three of the seven teachers said there were no challenges. Two teachers thought that their students were not exposed to enough texts to compete successfully. Both of these teachers came from towns with a larger percent of students receiving free or reduced lunches. The amount and variation of categories was a challenge because students did not know what to read. Teachers’ responses support what students discussed in their interviews, however teachers went a step further. One discussed their district imposed limitations on the ability for students to compete again. The district arbitrarily decided that only sixth graders would compete so each year there is a new group of students to train, which makes things difficult. Another teacher commented similarly that her district was resistant to participate in the competition so she had to do it on her own, outside of school. Other challenges include the possibility that children from schools with a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch may be at a disadvantage due to lack of easy access to books.

Parents came from a completely different perspective as far as challenges in the KLQ go. The biggest challenge that parents discussed was in relation to the International Finals. Two parents said that they were not clear on how the competition worked and the fact that there was only one heat to crown the US champion team that would
advance to the finals in New Zealand. They said that they had trouble raising the money for their children to attend. Both of these parents had students on the winning team.

The other challenges mentioned were only discussed by one parent each. One parent indicated that her child’s teams did not have a school representative present at the event. Another discussed the challenge of fifth graders competing against eighth graders. A third parent said that the venue that the event is held in needs to be larger. And finally one parent commented that parents need to be prepared to make an entire night at the event. No parents discussed helping their child with reading or preparation for the quiz as one of the challenges.

To summarize the findings of the second research question, there are many different benefits and drawbacks to participating in the KLQ. The range of benefits includes:

- Students read more now
- Revisit old texts
- Read more closely
- Students learned about new books
- It was a fun experience
- Students met new people
- Student recognition for being an avid reader
- Self-esteem boosts
- Social interaction as a way to engage student

The range of drawbacks or challenges includes:

- Forgetting information about books
- Competing against older kids
- District grade configurations
- Varied categories
- Knowing what to read
• Lack of exposure and access to books by children attending schools with high free/reduced lunch rates.
• Self-esteem detractor under certain conditions
• Fundraising for finalists

4. What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLQ?

Students, parents, and teachers had much to say about ways that participants can prepare for future KLQs in the student and teacher interviews and the parent survey. Answers were given in relation to how students can better prepare as well as how teachers and parents can help their children prepare. Common themes include wide reading in terms of amount and genre, support, book recommendations, and doing practice questions.

Students were asked how adults might help their children prepare as well as how students who are going to participate in the future should prepare. Common advice that students gave for adults was to encourage more reading, support them, practice with them, encourage them to read different genres, assign genres, and recommend books. The most common advice students gave for parents (10 of 22 students) was to remind their children to read. Five students said parents should give support. Four suggested parents conduct practice questions with their children. Two students also suggested that parents give book recommendations. Two other students suggested that parents should just drive their child to the KLQ.

Advice that students gave for teachers was much more hands on. Popular suggestions included support and motivation, recommending books, giving practice questions, and assigning and expanding genres. Seven students said that teachers should
support and motivate their students during the KLQ. Another seven suggested teachers recommend books for students to read that might be on the KLQ. Six students said teachers should provide practice questions, whether they be the ones from the Internet or their own that they made up. Six students also suggested that teachers should assign genres to read. Some of those six said that the teacher should assign each student in the team a different genre to become an “expert” on. Others said that teachers should have everyone in the group read books from one genre at a time. This advice is in relation to the three students who said that teachers should encourage students to expand the genres they are reading. Two students also suggested teachers give students more library access.

Students had a lot of advice for future participants on how to prepare as well as ways that were not helpful to them. There were four main categories of advice and a group of miscellaneous recommendations. The categories include book recommendations, library and study time, practice questions, and reading.

Reading was by far the most popular category for students. 17 students discussed the importance of reading plenty of books. One student said “My only advice is to read, encourage to read, and get in a comfy spot and read.” Every student was adamant that the most important thing students could do was to read a lot. Expanding the types or genres of books students read was another piece of advice under the reading category. Ten students suggested reading lots of different types of books. Five of those ten students mentioned fantasy or Greek mythology specifically as genres that students
should explore. Three other students also suggested reading classics as important advice for future participants.

Going to the library and studying was another category of advice that students gave. Six students said that beyond merely reading books, students should study them. Three students suggested studying as a team as good advice for future participants. Five students said that it would be beneficial to go to the library to find books to read to prepare.

The third category of advice that students gave was practice questions. Students thought it was important to look at the questions online or make up their own questions about books in order to help them prepare. Twelve students gave this advice to future participants. For example one students said “I definitely would print up last year’s quiz like the finals and maybe the beginning ones just so they get a feeling of what it would be like.”

The final category of advice was book recommendations. Five students said that book recommendations were important for preparing for the KLQ. These recommendations could come from teachers, parents, or even other classmates. Two of those students talked about parents, one talked about teachers, one talked about peers, and the final student just said “people”. It did not seem to matter as much where the recommendations came from.

After asking students what helped them prepare for the KLQ and how others in the future should prepare, students were asked if there was anything that did not help them to prepare. Thirteen students said that they did not do anything that was not
helpful. In other words everything these 13 students did seemed to be beneficial. Three students mentioned the fact that they read some books that were not part of the KLQ as detrimental because they could have been reading other things instead. Two students mentioned a lack of access to books as something that did not help them prepare. Both of these students said they could not get to the library enough to read a good amount of books. Two other students said their busy schedules impeded on their preparation for the KLQ. And one student said searching Wikipedia was not helpful.

Teachers had quite a bit to say during their interviews, in relation to advice for preparing for the KLQ. Their advice was aimed more towards parents and teachers however, they did have a few things to say to future student participants. This advice included expanding genres, reading, focusing on specific types of reading such as folktales and classics, reading a balance of different books, studying with a friend, and looking online for literature trivia.

Teachers had advice to parents of students involved in future KLQs. This advice included topics focusing on reading, studying, and supporting students. Under the reading topic teachers suggested that parents read with children, using two copies of the same book followed by a discussion of what was read. Teachers suggested that parents 1) model reading at home, 2) find out about their children’s reading interests and purchase books related to those topics, and 3) discuss books parents enjoyed as children. Under the studying topic teachers suggested meeting with other parents and students who are involved in the KLQ to practice questions and discuss books. Under the category of providing support to their children, teachers suggested that parents take
their children to the library and share their children’s participation in the KLQ with the Board of Education.

Teachers also had advice for other teachers who were going to participate in the KLQ. This is where teachers had the most to say. Four categories of answers that teachers gave as advice to other teacher focused on 1) reading, 2) starting early, 3) providing emotional support to students, and 4) practicing. Under the reading category three of the seven teachers suggested that students should be given choice of what they want to read. They also suggested students should read widely. One teacher thought that teachers should analyze student book logs to determine students’ tastes in books and two thought teachers should prompt students to read different kinds of books. Another teacher thought that it was important to be aware of books contained in one’s own classroom libraries and to discuss fairy tales, tall tales, and fables in the classroom. One teacher suggested expanding student’s knowledge of genres, while another suggested helping students select books.

The second category was in relation to when teachers should start preparing for the KLQ. Two teachers stated in their advice that preparation should start as early as the beginning of the school year. One of these teachers suggested that students should start preparing through summer reading and the other said that teachers should start preparation in September.

The third category that teachers discussed in relation to advice to future teacher participants was emotional preparation to students. Advice included building student confidence, making it clear that it’s not all about winning; it’s about loving and sharing
reading, celebrating students at a school level, making it an honor to participate, preparing students emotionally, and being a positive role model. Teachers thought it was important to prepare students emotionally because there can only be one winning team. They did not want students to become discouraged and unmotivated because they did not win.

Teachers also discussed how they prepared for the competition itself in their advice to other teachers. First teachers need to decide if they want to have a winning team or a team that focuses more on enjoyment. Then it was suggested to develop a game plan. One teacher said to meet with your team weekly or biweekly. Other suggestions included doing class against class competitions to get excitement going, focusing on pop culture, developing and implementing jeopardy games, and preparing students in the last 15 minutes of each class. Two teachers said they would have students get questions from the KLQ website and practice those. Another teacher said that teachers should invite a student who participated the previous year to talk to the team about their experience.

Finally, teachers ended their advice with some things that they would have done differently if they could have gone back in time. Each teacher had multiple things they would have done differently. Two teachers discussed the fact that they would start preparing earlier. One said she would start talking about the quiz at the beginning of the year and meet with those that are truly interested on a more regular basis. She would also begin the year with and introduction to fairy tales, fables, and tall tales. This teacher also said she would have students work on expanding the types of books they read.
Another discussed changing how students were selected to participate was a good idea. Their school chose students by a first come first serve basis. The students who got their money and permission slips back the quickest got to participate. In retrospect she would change the process. Unfortunately she did not elaborate on why or how she would change the selection process. This teacher also said she would have students help generate questions. She saw another school do this and thought it was a good idea. This other teacher had all of his/her students make up practice questions for the students who were competing. The final teacher to comment suggested including a child from a higher grade on their team. The previous team was made up of all fifth graders and they felt like they were at a disadvantage so this year they decided they wanted an older student on their team.

Parental advice was also taken into account when answering the question what can be learned about ways to prepare for the KLQ? Parents were given a chance at the end of the survey to add their own comments about their child’s participation in the KLQ as well as what advice they would give to future participants. Four parents suggested reading as a good way to prepare. One of those four suggested finding award winning books to read, two parents suggested that parents read with their child, and the fourth parent advised parents to let their children read based on interest. Three parents remarked about emotional preparation. Two of those parents said to be supportive and the third warned against pressuring students to read what they do not like. The rest of the parents provided tips for helping children on the day of the quiz. They advised parents to 1) make sure that children eat dinner prior to the event, 2) prepare
themselves and their children to make a whole night out of the event, and 3) discuss in advance what will happen if their child is on the winning team.

In summary parents, teachers, and children recommend that productive preparation entailed:

- Reading a lot
- Reading different types of books
- Providing choice of what is to be read based on interest
- Studying practice questions
- Starting the preparation early
- Providing emotional and study support to participants
- Rethinking how teams are chosen and formed instead of by first come first served
Discussion

Summary of Findings

This study set about looking for the answers to four research questions. These questions were all in relation to the Kids’ Lit Quiz and its impact on student motivation. Data was collected from students, parents, and teachers in the form of a student interview, the Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile (AMRP), a parent survey, and a teacher interview. The data was triangulated in order to answer these questions: 1.) Who were the participants of the KLQ of February 2012? 2.) What impact did the KLQ have on student motivation of children involved in this research? 3.) What were the benefits/drawbacks for those participating in the KLQ? 4.) What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLQ?

Who were the participants of the KLQ of February 2012? There were differences and similarities among the different participants of the KLQ of February 2012. The AMRP showed that most students scored at the high end when it came to overall motivation. There were however, some distinct differences school-wide. When averages of scores were taken the school with the highest motivation scores was School 7. This school came in 8th place in the KLQ and had a percentage of students getting free/reduced lunch lower than the state average. The school with the lowest scores, on average, on the AMRP was School 3 which had teams come in 19th and 23rd place and with the percentage of students getting free/reduced lunch higher than the state average. The
AMRP and SES data show differences in levels of motivation as well as in socioeconomic status.

Participants also had similarities. They all had motivation to read that was above 70%. They all thought knowing how to read well was important. Reading was at least somewhat easy for all of them. And every one of them said that they enjoyed participating in the KLQ.

**What impact did the KLQ have on student motivation of children involved in this research?** It was found, through student interviews and the AMRP, that while students who participated in the KLQ were already motivated to read, all but two students increased in the amount of reading they were doing, the types of reading, or both, two to three months later. Mills and Harrington (2011) support these findings in their discussion of the purpose of the KLQ. They state that it was started to reward students who already love reading, but as time went on it actually became a tool for motivating students to read.

The data was then broken down by demographics of gender, grade, and school. More girls said they increased in the amount of reading than boys; however the numbers of students who are reading different types of books was about the same among boys and girls. Sixth graders had the largest number of students reading different types of books, followed by seventh graders, and then fifth graders. There was no difference in the numbers of students who are reading more books, by grade. School 7, which had a percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch lower than the state average, had the highest percentages of students reading more as well as different types
of books. School 6, which had one of the highest percentages of students receiving free/reduced lunch, had the lowest percentages of students reading more or different books. These results are in keeping with the finding that students from schools with higher percentage of free and reduced lunch were less motivated in relationship to those children in richer districts.

These results are also connected to the Matthew Effect. Kempe, Eriksson-Gustavsson, and Samuelsson (2011) discuss the Matthew Effect as the ever expanding space between good and poor readers. The results of this study show the presence of the Matthew Effect in that the schools in towns of higher SES were more highly motivated to read and those from schools in towns of lower SES were less motivated to read. Motivation was shown by increases of amount of texts read and/or changes in the types of books read.

Teachers discussed the impact of the KLQ on their own teaching as well as their students’ reading motivation. Teachers were motivated to change their curriculum to add genres of books that their students had limited exposure to. The amount of reading and the changes in the types of reading students were doing was noted by teachers.

The positive social component of the KLQ was also discussed by teachers as being motivational. This is intentional as collaboration and social interaction are built into the design of the Quiz. Students must work together to study before the quiz as well as help each other during the event itself. “Participating in the Kids’ Lit Quiz plays an important role in these children's reading lives and fulfills some element of the desire to be in a social group of like-minded others” (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p. 182). Research has
shown that social interaction has a positive effect on motivation. Whitney (2010) found, in her study of the impact of a social component of SSR on motivation and engagement, that social activities positively affect student motivation and engagement.

In the survey most parents said that their child has always chosen to read for pleasure and has always been a strong reader. Parents also unanimously said that their child enjoyed participating in the KLQ. There were varying responses to the statement “My child increased in the amount of reading in preparation for the KLQ” with most parents agreeing. There were also varying responses to the statement “My child has increased in the amount of reading since participating in the KLQ”. Parents' answers to questions relating to changes in genres also were varied. Some students were reading more genres, some less, and some stayed the same. This data agrees with student and teacher collected data that suggests that there were students who increased the amount of reading they are now doing, some who increased the number of genres they are reading and some who did both. In this way the KLQ had a different effect on each and every participant. The one factor that stayed constant was that every student said they enjoyed participating and every parent said they would like their child to participate again.

While there were motivational differences in demographic groupings, the results of this study align with the statement made by Mills and Harrington (2011) that “the quiz has motivated and fostered students' reading, affirmed students' self-efficacy and encouraged students to widen their scope of reading” (p. 172).
What were the benefits/drawbacks for those participating in the KLQ?

Students, parents, and teachers discussed benefits and drawbacks for those participating in the KLQ. Benefits were academic (i.e. increases in the amount of reading, revisiting old texts, reading more closely, learning about new books) and social (i.e. a fun experience, meeting new people, student recognition for being an avid reader, self-esteem boosts, and positive social interaction). Drawbacks were academic (i.e. forgetting information about books, varied categories, knowing what to read) and related to demographics (i.e. competing against older kids, district grade configurations, lack of exposure and access to books for students in towns of low SES, fundraising for finalists).

The benefits of the KLQ that were discovered in this study are backed up by research Mills and Harrington (2011) found that students had improved self-efficacy or self-esteem from participating in the KLQ. They also discuss the benefit of learning about new texts and genres, reading more, and student recognition. In their research they also discovered that students “joined the Kids' Lit Quiz club because they liked reading and thought it would be fun to meet other students who also liked to read” (Mills and Harrington, 2011, p.181).

As shown throughout the results, SES has an effect on the motivation of participants involved in the KLQ. Access and exposure to a wide variety of texts has a big impact on the results of the Quiz. This is where the Matthew Effect comes into play. The students from towns of high SES may have had more access to texts and this may have increased the likelihood that their parents read to them as children. This situation may have set the stage for children to develop a love of reading and this love may have
inspired them to read more and more as they got older. On the other hand students from towns without as many resources may have had less access to texts and a smaller chance that their parents read to them as children. This situation may have decreased the chance that they would develop a love for reading and thus were not inspired to read widely as they got older. Here the “rich” readers are getting richer and the “poor” readers are getting poorer, as demonstrated by the Matthew Effect. Access to texts and the opportunity to read a wide range of books play a key role in the amount of reading children may engage in.

While students, parents and teachers all listed challenges presented in the KLQ, their overall impression was positive. Every child that was interviewed said they enjoyed participating in the KLQ and every parent who was surveyed said they would like their child to participate next year. All teachers indicated that this was a motivational experience. Also the benefits far out way the drawbacks, most of which can be easily remedied using the advice from the final research question.

While almost all of the challenges can be easily remedied, it is important to look at one challenging situation in particular and the conditions under which it occurred. Only in one instance did a teacher express concern regarding the impact of the Quiz on her student’s self esteem. This team came in last place in the Quiz and the teacher indicated that the children went away from the event discouraged. The classroom teacher reported that they were a new team and had not participated the previous year. They received very little help and preparation from teachers and parents. They also arrived late to the event. Teacher involvement and preparation for the quiz might have
buffered the impact of coming in last; however as this is a competition there will always be a team that comes in last place. The advice in the section below gives some ideas of how to make sure that every participant leaves the KLQ motivated to continue reading.

What can be learned about ways to prepare participants for the KLQ?

Students, parents, and teachers had different kinds of advice when sharing ways to prepare participants for the KLQ. Reading a lot of texts was by far the most popular answer to this question. It was also suggested that students study practice questions either by themselves, with their peers, with their teacher, or with their parents. Teachers thought that it was important to start preparing early in order to give students their best chance of doing well. Students, teachers, and parents all mention being supportive in their advice. They all also discussed the need for students to read different kinds of books instead of just sticking with one genre.

The literature also supports these preparation methods. Reading a lot, or wide reading, has many benefits including, enhanced fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Little and Hines (2006) say that it is “common sense” to say that the more reading a person does, the better a reader they will become. Ming and Dukes (2008) found that a focus on reading is beneficial to gains in fluency. As discussed in the review of the literature, “promoting wide reading is another powerful method of promoting incidental word learning” (Williams, 2008, p. 19). Finally, wide reading in elementary school contributes to increases in reading comprehension as discussed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997).
Mills and Harrington (2011) discuss beneficial ways that teams prepare for the KLQ in their research, which support the findings of the current study. Studying practice questions was a common practice discussed; however, every team does it differently. It was found by both the present study and the one by Mills and Harrington (2011) that participants study as a team, bring in adult support, and/or study individually. Mills and Harrington (2011) also found that schools hold class versus class events in order to prepare students for participation in the KLQ. These researchers also discussed the importance of parent support.

**Recommendations**

Recommendations in this section include those for the KLQ organizers and participants. The KLQ does a great job of creating an exciting environment where children can be recognized for reading. As one student put it “It was good getting recognized for reading as a sport. Because you see kids getting recognized for being good athletes or for being responsible or respectful but not really for reading, so I feel like it was a good thing and it helped out a lot of kids”. There are however, as with any event, some recommendations for future KLQs.

There were a few students who were upset about being so young in comparison to other participants. It might be helpful to let participants know that there is the option of having mixed grade level groups. Another suggestion would be to start students in grade 5 with the awareness that they will be the youngest but that this is a great experience and practice for the coming years.
There was also a teacher who said that her students, who came in last, were very discouraged. There are a few ways to mitigate the negative impact coming in last may have. One suggestion might be to only show the top 10 finalists so as to not discourage those at the bottom of the list. Also, preparation is a prerequisite to participation. Teachers and parents should provide encouragement and support to reams. Additionally, it is important to recommend to teachers that they need to prepare students for what to expect. This might include practice sessions within and across schools. Teachers should also be careful in how they select teams. Those students who love to read and may be discouraged as those who do not read for pleasure. It is recommended also that teachers and parents down play the importance of winning, but emphasize that all participants are winners because they love to read and because they have been selected to represent their particular schools.

Literature also makes suggestions that can help teachers and parents with students who want to participate in the KLQ. In order for students to successfully participate in the KLQ there needs to be a motivation to read. Incorporating choice is another suggestion that can help motivate students to read more. “Choice is widely acknowledged as a method for enhancing motivation” (Gambrell & Marinak, 2009, p. 1). Choice empowers and encourages readers, strengthens self confidence, rewards interests, and promotes a positive attitude toward reading (Miller, 2009). These are all qualities of a motivated reader.

Providing students with access to texts is yet another way that teachers and parents can help students to be more highly motivated to read. Library access was one of
the preparation methods mentioned in the current study. Gambrell (2011) also discusses the idea that providing access to many different kinds of texts communicates the fact that reading is important and a worthwhile use of their time. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) suggest that teachers have large classroom libraries with many different kinds of books as well as give students plenty of opportunities to visit the school library.

A third way research suggests as a method for motivating children to read is by making reading relevant. “Motivation is enhanced when instructional practices focus on connections between school reading and the personal lives of students” (Gambrell, 2011, p. 173). Reading includes the ability to decode words as well as the ability to connect to what is being read (Gallagher, 2009). These connections are where reading becomes relevant and motivational.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the fact that that data was subject reported. There is always the possibility that participants wrote or said what they thought was the right thing, not necessarily the truth. However, this was mitigated by the fact that participants were reassured that their names would not be used and that honest answers were more important than perfect answers. This was also lessened by the triangulation of data between students, parents, and teachers.

A second limitation of this study is the fact that a convenience sample was used. There were a limited number of participants because some schools, districts, and parents did not give approval to collect data. The sample of student participants
represented 35 of 112 total KLQ participants. The study would have been enhanced with data collected from a broader sample of participants.

This study did not consider the motivation of the participants using a control group such as their school peer group. In an email Linda Gambrell (personal correspondence, 2012), one of the authors of the Motivation to Read Profile, on which the AMRP was based, she writes “There are no established norms for high versus low motivation, rather the range of scores in a classroom, grade level, or school can be interpreted to determine high versus low motivation”. With this insight it is important to be aware of where the participants stand within their peer group in order to find how motivated these participants really are.

**Recommendations for further research**

One recommendation for future research is to have a larger participant sample. Either finding ways to have more participants from the United States or going abroad and doing the same research in other countries in participation. This would help to increase the sample size as other countries have been in participation longer than the United States and so there are more students who compete. This would also provide comparison data across countries. Are students from countries who have been participating longer more highly motivated? How do students from different countries prepare for the KLQ; specifically how do the winning teams prepare? What are the characteristics of the students that have won the KLQ in the past?
A second recommendation would be to compare the motivation of participants in the KLQ with peers who did not participate. Using a control group such as their school peer group would show if students who participate in the KLQ are indeed more highly motivated than their peers. This control group could also show future researchers a more in-depth view of any changes in reading motivation before and after the KLQ. Knowing where the participants rank within their peer group will help to find how motivated these participants really are.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that while there are many different kinds of students who participate in the KLQ, all have one thing in common and that is motivation to read. This motivation is shown through the amounts and types of books that students read and through the excitement they show through participation in this event. While there were benefits and challenges of participating in the KLQ, every child who was interviewed said, without hesitation, that they enjoyed participating in the KLQ and every parent said that they would like their child to participate again. By becoming aware of strengths and potential pitfalls and the advice offered by participants, it is hoped that future KLQ competitors can be better prepared to do their best in what has been called the “Sport of Reading”.
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Appendix A

Student Survey

Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey

J O U R N A L O F A D O L E S C E N T & A D U L T L I T E R 3 8 2 A C Y 5 0 : 5 F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 7

1. I am in ______________.
   □ Fifth grade
   □ Sixth grade
   □ Seventh grade
   □ Eighth grade

2. I am a ______________.
   □ Female
   □ Male

3. My friends think I am ______________.
   □ a very good reader
   □ a good reader
   □ an OK reader
   □ a poor reader

4. Reading a book is something I like to do.
   □ Never
   □ Not very often
   □ Sometimes
   □ Often

5. I read ______________.
   ▲ not as well as my friends
   ▲ about the same as my friends
   ▲ a little better than my friends
   ▲ a lot better than my friends

7. My best friends think reading is ______________.
   □ really fun
   □ fun
   □ OK to do
   □ no fun at all

8. When I come to a word I don’t know, I can ______________.
   □ almost always figure it out
   □ sometimes figure it out
   □ almost never figure it out
   □ never figure it out
9. I tell my friends about good books I read.
   □ I never do this
   □ I almost never do this
   □ I do this some of the time
   □ I do this a lot

10. When I am reading by myself, I understand ______________.
    □ almost everything I read
    □ some of what I read
    □ almost none of what I read
    □ none of what I read

11. People who read a lot are ______________.
    □ very interesting
    □ interesting
    □ not very interesting
    □ boring

12. I am ______________.
    □ a poor reader
    □ an OK reader
    □ a good reader
    □ a very good reader

13. I think libraries are ______________.
    □ a great place to spend time
    □ an interesting place to spend time
    □ an OK place to spend time
    □ a boring place to spend time

14. I worry about what other kids think about my reading ______________.
    □ every day
    □ almost every day
    □ once in a while
    □ never

15. Knowing how to read well is ______________.
    □ not very important
    □ sort of important
    □ important
    □ very important

16. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I ______________.
    □ can never think of an answer
    □ have trouble thinking of an answer
sometimes think of an answer
always think of an answer

17. I think reading is ____________.
☐ a boring way to spend time
☐ an OK way to spend time
☐ an interesting way to spend time
☐ a great way to spend time

18. Reading is ____________.
☐ very easy for me
☐ kind of easy for me
☐ kind of hard for me
☐ very hard for me

19. As an adult, I will spend ____________.
☐ none of my time reading
☐ very little time reading
☐ some of my time reading
☐ a lot of my time reading

20. When I am in a group talking about what we are reading, I ____________.
☐ almost never talk about my ideas
☐ sometimes talk about my ideas
☐ almost always talk about my ideas
☐ always talk about my ideas

21. I would like for my teachers to read out loud in my classes ____________.
☐ every day
☐ almost every day
☐ once in a while
☐ never

22. When I read out loud I am a ____________.
☐ poor reader
☐ OK reader
☐ good reader
☐ very good reader

23. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel ____________.
☐ very happy
☐ sort of happy
☐ sort of unhappy
☐ unhappy

Note. Adapted with permission from the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, & Mazzoni, 1996)
Appendix B

Student Interview

Student Interview Questions

I am in _____________.

☐ 5th grade
☐ Sixth grade
☐ Seventh grade
☐ Eighth grade

I am a _____________.

☐ Female
☐ Male

1. What types of books did you read last year before you knew about the Kids’ Lit Quiz? (nonfiction, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, mystery, graphic novel, etc…)

2. What types of books do you read now? (nonfiction, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, mystery, graphic novel, etc…)

3. About how many books did you read the year before you knew about the Kids’ Lit Quiz)?

4. About how many books did you read to prepare for the Kids’ Lit Quiz?

5. About how many books have you read since?

6. How did the quiz impact the amount of reading you do?

7. Are there any changes in the kind of reading that you do since the KLQ? Prompt: Did the KLQ contribute to these changes?

8. What helped you to prepare for the KLQ?

9. What did not help you to prepare?
10. What advice would you give to those who are going to participate in the future? Prompt to a friend, teacher, to parents?

11. Would you participate in the KLQ again? Why or Why not? (did you enjoy it?)

12. Were there any benefits from participating? If so, what were they? If not, why do you think so?

13. Were there any challenges or difficulties in participating? If so, what were they and how did you overcome them? If not, why do you think so?

14. Did your teachers help you to prepare? If so, how? If not, do you think it would have been helpful for them to have helped you?

15. Did your parents help you to prepare? If so, how? If not, do you think it would have been helpful for them to have helped you?

16. If you were a student coach of a team how would you help them prepare?

17. Do you have anything else to add about your participation in the quiz?
Appendix C
Parent Survey

Parent Reading Survey

Please read each question and circle or check the answer that best fits.

My child is in ______________.
  o 5th grade
  o Sixth grade
  o Seventh grade
  o Eighth grade

My child is a ______________.
  o Female
  o Male

1. My child has always chosen to read for pleasure.
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

2. My child has always been a strong reader.
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

3. My child enjoyed participating in the Kid Lit Quiz on Feb. 3rd.2012
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

4. My child increased in the amount of reading in preparation for the Kids Lit Quiz.
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

5. My child has increased in the amount of reading he or she does since participating in the Kids Lit Quiz?
   Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree

6. What types of books did your child read last year before he/she knew about the Kids Lit Quiz? (check those that apply)
   □ Action/Adventure
   □ Biography (Non-fiction)
   □ Comedy/Comics/graphic novels
   □ Fantasy
   □ Historical fiction
   □ Suspense/Thriller
   □ Realistic Fiction
   □ Traditional Literature (folktales, fables, myths, legends)
   □ Mystery
   □ Picture Books
   □ Poetry
7. What types of books is your child reading now? (check those that apply)
- Action/Adventure
- Biography (Non-fiction)
- Comedy/Comics/graphic novels
- Fantasy
- Historical fiction
- Suspense/Thriller
- Traditional Literature (folktales, fables, myths, legends)
- Mystery
- Picture Books
- Poetry
- Science Fiction
- Informational (Non-fiction)
- Realistic Fiction

8. My child has increased the kinds and types of reading since participating in the Kids Lit Quiz.

9. I read frequently to my child when he/she was little:

10. I enjoy reading to my child and at times I still do so.

11. I would like my child to participate in the Kid Lit Quiz next year.

12. Please add any comments you have about your child’s participation in the Kid Lit Quiz:

13. Please give advice to parents of children who will participate in the Kids Lit Quiz in the future.
Appendix D

Teacher Survey

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How did you become involved in the Kids Lit Quiz?

2. How did you select teams?

3. Did the KLQ impact reading motivation of the class prior to the quiz? Explain, following the quiz? Explain

4. Did the KLQ impact reading motivation of the selected teams prior to the quiz? Explain Following the quiz Explain

5. Did the KLQ impact the kinds of reading your students engaged in? For the class in general, for the kids on the selected teams?

6. What ways do you usually motivate wide reading in your class? Have you added any strategies to your repertoire since your students participated in the KLQ?

7. If you motivated your students, what strategies did you find effective in preparing students to read widely in preparation for the quiz?

8. What strategies were ineffective in preparing students to read widely?

9. Are there any changes in the amount of reading your students do since the KLQ? Prompt: Did the KLQ contribute to these changes?

10. Are there any changes in the kinds of reading your students due since the KLQ? Prompt: Did the KLQ contribute to these changes?

11. What advice would you give to those who are going to participate in the future? Prompt other teacher, to parents, to students?
12. Would you participate in the KLQ again? Why or Why not?

13. What would you do differently in preparing your students for the KLQ?

14. What advice do you have for the KLQ organizers?

15. Were there any benefits from participating? If so, what were they? If not, why do you think so?

16. Were there any challenges or difficulties in participating? If so, what were they and how did you overcome them? If not, why do you think so?

17. Did motivation for wide reading expand beyond the walls of your classroom? Other grades and classrooms in your building, other schools in your district, other districts?

18. What is the response of parents to the KLQ?

19. Did the parents of the students help their children to read widely in preparation for the KLQ?

20. If you were to train student coaches of a team what advice would you give them?

21. If you were to train parent coaches of a team what advice would you give them?

22. Do you have anything else to add about your participation in the quiz?

23. Do you have any classroom anecdotes to include that capture some of the feelings either positive or negative about the KLQ?
Biographical Statement

Ariel V. Jacques

Ariel Jacques completed her undergraduate degree at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut in May of 2009. She received her degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in mathematics and obtained her teaching certification for grades K-6. Ariel graduated with Suma Cum Laude honors.

Mrs. Jacques is currently a graduate student at Central Connecticut State University. Upon approval of this thesis Mrs. Jacques will have earned her master’s of science degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in literacy.

Mrs. Jacques has been substitute teaching for the past three years in various elementary school classes. Last year she covered the first half of the year for an elementary music teacher and finished the year as a paraprofessional. This year she has just completed three months as a substitute first grade teacher. She also volunteers at her local church a large group leader of a group of 40-60 elementary age students and 10-12 grade level teachers. She has been involved in this program for more than 10 years.