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Teachers' Perspectives of Best Instructional Practices in Motivating African American Boys to Read

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2019

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EdS, Georgia Southwestern State University, 2012

MA, Albany State University, 2010

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Elementary school officials have reported difficulty motivating young African American boys to read. It is important that teachers understand why these children have not been motivated to read and create classroom environments that encourage reading motivation. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating 3rd -grade African American boys to read. The conceptual framework for this study consisted of critical race theory, self-determination theory, and the theory of social constructivism. The research questions focused on teachers' perspectives regarding 3rd -grade African American boys' motivation to read and best instructional practices in reading instruction for these students. Through a purposeful sampling strategy, 10 teachers were invited to participate and share their teaching experiences. The criterion for inclusion was that the participant taught reading to 3rd -grade African American boys. Data were collected from 5 teachers who agreed to participate through semistructured interviews. Recordings of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using axial coding. Axial coding of the transcribed interview data and thematic analysis revealed 3 overarching themes: (a) best instructional practices, (b) motivation for reading, and (c) classroom resources. Results indicated that different types of instructional practices had influenced the teachers' perspectives on motivating these students to read. This study contributes to positive social change by providing school administrators and educational leaders with knowledge that may be beneficial to the initiation of policies, strategies, and procedures to motivate third-grade African American boys to read.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my guardian angel, my big sister Melanie Nicol Thomas, who I miss dearly and think about daily. It was Melanie who persistently encouraged me to start my doctoral degree. I was very hesitant, but she convinced me before I had my first child to continue my education, because with it I could excel in my career. My sister always took the "big sister" role as a job with tremendous character and integrity. Her personality was so big that she touched the lives of all she came in contact with. She was a great teacher of many things for me, and I will always cherish the moments we shared. The year 2016 was bittersweet for me: I became a mother, and I lost my dear big sister. Although she is not here physically, I know she is with me always, and I'll never walk alone. So, this is it, Mel . . . WE did it! Love you always!

Acknowledgments

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). All glory and honor and praise is to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the ability to complete this accomplishment! My family is everything to me. Thank you to my amazing husband, who has been by my side throughout this process every step of the way, for being my sounding board, my motivator, and my biggest cheerleader from the very start. I also want to thank you for being both daddy and mommy when I had to step away from time to time to focus on my research. To my babies, Nia and Nori: This is all for you! Mommy took this leap of faith to show you that you can achieve anything with hard work and determination. I love you both with all of my heart!

Thank you to my parents for everything, the known and the unknown. You two have been the greatest example of how to navigate through this thing called life. I thank you for your guidance and direction. To my siblings: Thank you for being who you are. Thank you to my church family, Open Door Church of Praise, for always encouraging greatness. Thank you to the first and only school system I've ever worked for, Mitchell County School System. It was being in this county at the middle stage in my career that helped me pursue this goal in my academic career.

Thank you to my chairperson, Dr. Terri Edwards, for answering all my questions, phone calls, and e-mails. Thank you to the rest of the Walden University faculty and staff members who had a hand in advancing my academic career. Your support has been amazing, and I thank you sincerely.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Teachers and other school officials have reported difficulties engaging African American boys in reading (Husband, 2014). Heaven (2015) found that African American boys struggled in education because educators labeled them as below-level learners and perceived them as less able to learn than all other ethnic groups. Researchers have suggested that students who exhibit severe reading difficulties in the primary grades are likely to continue to struggle with reading throughout school (Austin, Vaughn, & McClelland, 2017). Sandberg, Hellblom-Thibblin, and Garpelin (2015) found that teachers' perspectives on reading instruction were pluralistic in the sense that each of the teachers they studied referred to several strategies and approaches to promote learning and development related to reading. By inquiring about teachers' perspectives of the best instructional practices they used, I intended to encourage teachers to voice their understandings, feelings, and concerns regarding the motivations of third-grade African American boys. At the time of the study the state in which the study took place required that third-grade students take a reading assessment. Other states did the same, which allowed for nationwide comparisons of standardized testing scores for third-grade students. I did not include lower grades in my study because the state did not mandate reading assessments for them.

Motivation to read is an integral part of successful reading. The motivation to engage in an activity, such as reading, might stem from an individual's willingness to participate or the excitement of receiving incentives (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017). Researchers investigating reading motivation have found that extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation must be considered to gain a better understanding of what motivates

an individual to read (De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, Haerens, & Aelterman, 2016). According to De Naeghel et al. (2016), students' intrinsic reading motivation, which occurs when students read for pleasure or out of perceived personal significance, positively contributes to their reading comprehension. Kolic-Vehovec, Zubkovic, and Pahljina-Reinic (2014) noted that intrinsic motivation is relevant for activating knowledge of reading strategies with the aim of better comprehension. In contrast, Schaffner and Schiefele (2016) studied extrinsic motivation, which is reading to attain external consequences such as good grades in school or praise from parents and teachers. Schaffner and Schiefele suggested that although extrinsic motivation is positively associated with good grades in reading, it is less likely than intrinsic motivation to positively influence reading comprehension.

According to Unrau, Ragusa, and Bowers (2014), African American boys disengage from reading when the content has little or no real-world or personal significance. Administrators have expected teachers provide reading instruction to students who have little or no motivation to read (Long & Szabo, 2016). Chinappi (2015) stated that teachers need to understand why African American students are not motivated to read and to create classroom environments that will motivate students to read. Few researchers have focused on teachers' perspectives on students' motivation for reading (Conradi, Jang, & Mckenna, 2014; Unrau et al., 2014; Wyatt, 2014). Chinappi also said that research into teacher perspectives on motivating students to read might benefit classroom teachers. It is important to understand teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices to provide ideas and creative ways to motivate third-grade African American boys to read.

Background

In the United States, African American boys in urban schools have been the most vulnerable students in the public education system (Graves et al., 2017). This is because schooling in the United States has been based on the dominant White middle-class standard of behavior and academic ability (Milligan & Howley, 2015). School segregation has created poor educational opportunities for African American boys (Allen, 2015) because inequality of treatment and opportunities between racial groups is usually the result of an implicit assumption that some racial groups are superior to others (Ford, 2014). According to Wright (2017), African American boys have faced systemic and institutional obstacles to navigation of the public education system and, as a result, have often failed early in their education. Nurmi and Kiuru (2015) identified studies performed by researchers who focused on the role of developing equitable teaching practices for all students and the quality of instruction for student learning, motivation, and academic adjustment. Despite prevalent rhetoric regarding American equality, the school experiences of African American students and students belonging to other minority races have remained substantially separate and unequal in the United States (Allen, 2015).

Reading development in the early grades is crucial for later success in school and beyond. Teachers' skills and theoretical knowledge are important factors in the reading development of children (Sandberg et al., 2015). Effective early reading instruction in elementary school can be critical for helping many children learn how to read (De Naeghel et al., 2016). For decades, American educators have debated how to effectively motivate children to read (Giles & Tunks, 2015). Various researchers have attempted to discover the best methods to motivate students (Endley, 2016). Giles and Tunks (2015)

noted that after years of controversy, researchers and practitioners have reached no universal agreement on how best to motivate children to read. Giles and Tunks also found that some educators argued from the perspective of social constructivism and theorized that individuals learned to read as a result of socioculturally constructed meaning through everyday literacy activities. Teachers with extensive knowledge of the most effective reading strategies can succeed only to the extent that their students are motivated to learn and use those strategies (Wigfield, Gladstone, & Turci, 2016). Therefore, teacher preparation in literacy instruction must include motivating students to read (Hikida et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

Teachers and other school officials report difficulty motivating African American boys to read (Husband, 2014). Furthermore, few researchers have investigated reading motivation in early grades (Stutz, Schaffner, & Schiefele, 2016). Reading is fundamental and necessary for participation in society, and is a gateway to education, career potential, and personal success (Kavi, Tackie, & Bugyei, 2015). In the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017) showed a gap in reading proficiency between African American boys and White boys. The NCES (2014, 2017) examined relationships between students' reading performance and various background measures such as race and ethnicity. The NCES (2017) reported that African American boys scored 206, which was lower than all other racial groups. White and non-Latino boys scored 232, and Hispanic boys scored 209 (NCES, 2017).

Administrators, educators, and policy makers have continually made changes to improve student success. After years of changing assessments, curriculum standards, and

student expectations, African American boys have continued to underperform in school (Cameron, Grimm, Steele, Castro-Schilo, & Grissmer, 2015). According to Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman, and Chan (2015), African American boys scored below proficient on state reading assessments. The contention that many third-grade African American boys do not like reading has received support from statistics and research findings regarding African American boys' underachievement and their perceived lack of engagement in academic reading tasks (Howard, 2008; Husband, 2012; McGee, 2013; Meier, 2015; Shippen, Houchins, Steventon, & Sartor, 2005). This has indicated a need for bold and creative ways for schools to motivate African American boys to read (Howard, 2016). According to Howard (2016), school leaders who embrace racial and cultural identities may offer students the best instructional practices for pursuing academic success.

In this study, I explored teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Few educational researchers have investigated teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices they use to motivate third-grade African American boys to read (Husband, 2014). According to Lazowski and Hulleman (2016), young learners such as third-grade African American boys may lack the motivation to read because they have had unpleasant experiences with reading. Intrinsic motivation to learn is a key factor that contributes to the development of reading success (Froiland & Oros, 2014). Froiland and Oros explained that intrinsic motivation entails learning for the sake of personal fulfillment and because learning is inherently interesting and enjoyable. Given the emphasis on independent reading in third grade, third-grade students need to continue developing knowledge-based skills to become

proficient readers (Capotosto et al., 2017). These students have been assessed for proficiency in independent reading through standardized testing.

At the time of the study, students took standardized tests at the end of each school year to assess their knowledge of learned content. The standardized tests measured achievement and growth for all students (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016). The average scores for African American boys have been significantly lower than the average scores for White and Asian boys (Hardy, 2015). The results of the standardized tests are segmented according to race or ethnicity, disability, and gender. Vega, Moore, and Miranda (2015) said that African American boys scored below all other racial groups. Educational researchers have long been concerned about gaps in standardized test scores between African American, White, and Asian boys, and these gaps have stimulated a great deal of debate (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Wasserberg, 2017; Yeung, 2012). Although the creators of standardized tests rely on the same grade-level content for all students, it is important to remember that students differ in their learning styles. When students have different educational needs and resources, equal treatment is likely to lead to educational gaps.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. I hoped that encouraging teachers to share their perspectives on best instructional practices would help me identify their understandings, feelings, and concerns regarding the motivation of third-grade African American boys to read. The information gained from this study may provide ideas for the planning and implementation of reading

curricula and teacher training. The teachers' perspectives provided new insight into obstacles to motivating third-grade African American boys to read and could offer knowledge to administrators and educational leaders to help them initiate reading procedures, strategies, and programs.

Research Questions

In this study, I explored teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Two research questions guided the study:

1. What are teachers' perspectives on reasons third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) critical race theory (CRT), Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT), and Hirtle's (1996) theory of social constructivism. Ladson-Billings and Tate's introductory work on CRT in education provided a significant spotlight on the salience of race, school, and educational outcomes in the mid-1990s. They built on the work of scholars who had called for greater analysis of race, culture, teaching, and learning for diverse populations (Howard & Navarro, 2016). CRT within the field of education has become an evolving methodological, conceptual, and theoretical construct whose advocates have sought to disrupt race and racism in educational theory and practice (Solórzano, 1998).

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), they based their work on the work of multicultural scholars and critical race scholars in the legal field. The intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding social and, consequently, school inequity. It enables scholars to ask, in unique ways, how racism is related to inequities in education. I used CRT to choose a population of teachers who taught African American boys. I also used CRT to design the research questions, which focused on African American boys.

SDT is an approach to human motivation and personality that relies on traditional empirical methods for personality development and behavioral self-regulation (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997). With their theory, Ryan and Deci (2000) explained people's innate psychological needs for self-motivation, personality integration, and the conditions that foster those positive processes. Through empirical processes, they identified needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Ryan and Deci contended that these three needs are essential for facilitating optimal functioning of natural propensities for growth and integration, active social development, and personal well-being. I used SDT to design the research questions to focus on third-grade African American boys' motivation to read.

Hirtle's (1996) theory of social constructivism was also part of the conceptual framework of this study. Hirtle's theory is based on Vygotsky's (1986) zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1986) defined the ZPD as the discrepancy between a child's actual mental age and the level he or she reaches when solving problems with assistance. Vygotsky (1986) also said that every child can do more with assistance than he or she can do alone—though only within limits set by his or her development. In this theory, constructivists challenge traditional educational philosophy, which rests on the

assumption that educators transmit a fixed body of knowledge to learners (Clarà, 2017). I used the theory of social constructivism to describe how socially mediated situations move learners forward through stages of cognitive development (Hirtle, 1996). Clarà asserted that teachers' perspectives are rooted in the constructivist theory developed by Vygotsky. The theory of social constructivism helped me frame the study by developing interview questions with which I could socially construct new knowledge from teachers' perspectives.

I used the conceptual framework to explore the perspectives of teachers on their best instructional practices when teaching third-grade African American boys to read. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) addressed race and how it affects African American students in education. Ryan and Deci (2000) empirically identified the following three needs for becoming self-motivated: (a) competence, (b) relatedness, and (c) autonomy. Hirtle's (1996) theory of social constructivism identified interactions that involve cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Using Hirtle's theory allowed me to socially construct new knowledge from semistructured interviews with participating teachers. I used the framework during data collection to develop a fully detailed view of teachers' perspectives and analyzed the data using axial coding to break down the core themes. I documented participants' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read using the social constructivist approach. CRT, SDT, and the theory of social constructivism were meaningful and helped me frame the study.

Nature of the Study

I used a basic qualitative research design for this study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), people conduct qualitative research in an ongoing manner as they make meaning of activities, experiences, or phenomena. Jonsen, Fendt, and Point (2017) argued that qualitative research is critical to social sciences and the understanding of both organizational behavior and behavior within organizations. Qualitative research is based on the methodological pursuit of understanding the ways that people see, view, approach, and experience the world and make meaning of their experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers use a basic qualitative research design to uncover knowledge of perspectives, settings, and techniques (Kozleski, 2017). Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, and Richardson (2005) stated that a basic qualitative study meets the standards of trustworthiness and credibility that undergird scientific evidence. Conducting a basic qualitative study allows a researcher to concentrate on (a) how people interpret their experiences, (b) how people construct their worlds, and (c) what meaning people attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A basic qualitative design was appropriate for this study because I wanted to identify teachers' perspectives within a natural setting.

Several methods can be used to collect data for qualitative research. Interviewing is a method of data collection used in qualitative research that elicits data directly by asking questions of participants (Babbie, 2017). Brayda and Boyce (2014) stated that qualitative research captures the social, political, economic, and educational factors that affect the everyday existence of African Americans. Interviews are at the center of many qualitative studies because they provide deep, rich, individualized, and contextualized

data that are central to qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Interviewing for qualitative research begins with an assumption that the perspectives of others are meaningful (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). I used semistructured interviews to collect data on similarities and differences among participants.

Participants included teachers who worked with third-grade African American boys. I interviewed the participants with a list of predetermined questions (see Appendix C). Rather than asking participants to read questionnaires and enter their answers, I collected data on teachers' perspectives by asking the questions orally and recording the audio of participants' answers. The questions were semistructured, and I allowed participants to elaborate if necessary. I uploaded each interview to the online service Rev.com for transcription. I kept notes and memos in my reflexive journal during the data analysis process. The journal included my thoughts and feelings that occurred after I conducted each interview and during data analysis.

I analyzed participants' responses using Quirkos v2.2 software for analyzing qualitative text. The software provided a visual outline of the interviews and a manageable way to code, analyze, and explore unstructured text data. I examined codes and grouped them with other codes that shared similar meanings (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used coding strategies to group codes by subcategories, view coded text by nodes, and sort topics to easily retrieve specific parts of the data from the participant interviews. Analyzing codes is one overall approach for generating themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the primary instrument in this study, I used thematic analysis to construct and actively develop themes. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Braun and Clarke

(2006) suggested that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned because it provides core skills that are useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis. Once I had read all the coded data and grouped and combine codes, I documented themes by how they addressed the research questions. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) stated that the goal of the thematic analysis is to use the themes to address the research questions.

Definitions

This section contains definitions of key concepts used throughout the study.

Best instructional practices: I based reported contributions of educational interest to best instructional practices on the assumption that interest in teaching methods enhances motivation to learn more about efficient best instructional practices, and thus, increases the use of mastery-oriented and cognitively activating practices (Schiefele & Schaffner, 2015). Best instructional practices also include techniques to keep instruction in the classroom environment lively and stimulating (Ermeling, Hiebert, & Gallimore, 2015).

Motivation: The general desire or willingness of someone to do something. Deci and Ryan (2008) stated that motivation is what moves individuals to think, act, and develop.

Perspectives: Feedback on the perceived impact of teaching and student learning, areas of strength, and areas needing improvement. Perspectives offer insight into ongoing intervention efforts that have cumulative effects on student achievement over a number of years (Lee et al., 2017).

Reading engagement: An individual's actions, interactions, and strategies related to reading activities and tasks, including behavioral, cognitive, motivational, and social dimensions (Cantrell et al., 2017).

Assumptions

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that research designs are based on assumptions about what is being investigated. The first assumption of this study was that the teachers would respond honestly to the interview questions. I assumed that teacher participants would give honest responses because it would take considerable time and effort to validate the answers of each participant. I e-mailed a letter of invitation and a consent form to each potential teacher participant and asked each one to reply "I consent" to authenticate his or her integrity.

The second assumption was that my past employment in the field of education would not negatively impact the study. I did not have any professional relationships with any of the participants. I was not affiliated with their school.

The third assumption was that participants' answers would express their own experiences. Because the purpose of the study was to discover each teacher's perspective, I assumed that teachers would discuss their own current best instructional practices and not mention practices used by other teachers.

The fourth assumption was that participants would have a sincere interest in participating and not have any other motives, such as impressing their job supervisor by agreeing to take part in the study. I assumed this was true because I did not offer any incentives for participating in the study.

Scope and Delimitations

I explored teachers' perspectives on how they motivated third-grade African American boys to read by asking them to share the best instructional practices they used in their classrooms. The teachers were licensed and in good standing with the state's professional standards commission. The scope of this research was third-grade teachers from a metropolitan city in a northern state. Teachers participating in this study had experience teaching reading to third-grade African American boys. I chose third grade because there was a state-mandated reading assessment for third-grade students. I left out lower grade levels because they did not have state-mandated reading assessments. Delimitations narrow the scope of a study. During semistructured interviews, teachers answered questions regarding their perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the viewpoints of the participants.

Administrators from the studied school did not participate in the study. Only certified elementary teachers who taught reading to third-grade students participated. The research sample consisted of only third-grade teachers because the study focused on third-grade students' motivation to read based on the best instructional practices that teachers used. Because this study focused on African American boys in third grade, the study did not need participants who did not teach third-grade students. Individuals who had worked with third-grade students but had no experience of teaching reading were also excluded.

I considered social cognitive theory as another possible component of the conceptual framework (Bandura, 1998). I decided not to use social cognitive theory

because it relates to observing others within the context of social interactions and experiences. I did not want to use an observational approach for this study.

To ensure transferability, I included detailed descriptions of the data so that readers can make comparisons to other contexts. This will allow readers to take aspects of the study design and findings into consideration in different contexts without needing to replicate the entire design and findings (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations

The first of several limitations in this basic qualitative study was that I selected and used a small sample of five participants from one elementary school. This limited the number of perspectives collected.

The second limitation was the possibility of participants dropping out of the study. The availability of participants was constrained because I conducted interviews during summer break. I explained to potential participants the time necessary for the interviews so they could decide whether to volunteer for the study. Participants were volunteers who could withdraw from the study at any time with no ramifications.

The third limitation was any participant's unwillingness to share or describe his or her perspectives honestly. Teachers could have had a difficult time describing their perspectives on specific events in the classroom. Although my intention was to get teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read, other aspects of the classroom could have influenced participants. Possible influencing factors included shortages of classroom resources and inability of teachers to manage their classrooms. A reasonable measure to address this limitation was to help participants feel comfortable and assure them that I would not evaluate their

classroom management. Another reasonable countermeasure was to ask clarifying questions when needed.

My own biases might have affected the outcome of this study. Reflexivity requires a researcher to be vigilant and to frequently reassess his or her positionality and subjectivities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I did not allow my thoughts and perspectives to interfere in this study. One way to control bias was to ensure that I did not have any relationships with the teachers who participated. I excluded from the study any teachers who worked for me or were personal friend. I noted at the top of my interview questions whether I had any bias toward a participant's responses. I was also careful of my body language during interviews. Reflexivity required systematic attention to my subjectivity; this entailed that I engaged with and scrutinized subjectivities and biases in systematic ways (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) said that reflexivity is one of the ways that researchers seek to understand the nature of subjectivities as they relate to the construction, design, and enactment of their research. I used reflexivity when reviewing the interview transcripts to check for any biases.

Significance

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The NCES (2017) reported that third-grade African American boys had the second lowest reading comprehension scale scores. Their scores were not high enough to meet their academic reading needs (Anderson & Sadler, 2009). To efficiently and effectively understand what motivates third-grade African American boys to read, teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices needed to be explored. Teachers' perspectives

can significantly affect students' willingness to engage and be motivated by the use of best instructional practices.

Reading success has long been an emphasis in schools, and it is one of the three core areas evaluated annually for all students in each of the 50 states of the United States (Froiland & Oros, 2014). Participants in this study had an opportunity to reflect on the best instructional practices they thought motivated third-grade African American boys to read. This study may promote positive social change for reading motivation by providing information to administrators and educational leaders regarding teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. This information may lead to implementation of successful strategies for reading instruction.

The study was important because it enabled teachers to voice their understanding of best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The information gained from this study might facilitate planning and implementation of reading curricula and teacher training. The teachers' perspectives provided new insight into the challenges related to motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I identified, based on national reading reports, that there is a problem with motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The research questions for this study focused on exploring teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. This study had a basic qualitative design, and I collected data using semistructured interviews. I analyzed the data using software that searches for emerging themes and categories. I delimited the

study to certified elementary teachers who taught reading to third-grade students. The study may be important to practitioners, researchers, and educators by providing knowledge that could help them initiate policies, strategies, and procedures to motivate third-grade African American boys to read.

In Chapter 2, I describe the nature of the problem of motivating third-grade African American students to read. I describe how researchers have investigated the reading achievement of African American boys but not what motivates third-grade African American boys to read. I describe in detail the conceptual framework of the study, which consisted of CRT, SDT, and the theory of social constructivism. I explain past research related to this study, including studies with similar conceptual frameworks, those with a basic qualitative approach, and seminal work. The following topics are described in the literature review: reading motivation, reading among African American boys, the role of culture in education, reading engagement, race in education, teachers' perspectives, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' cultural competency.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I describe existing research pertinent to my study of teachers' perspectives on the ability and motivation of third-grade African American boys to read. Teachers and other school officials in the United States have reported difficulties motivating African American boys to read (Husband, 2014; Learned, 2016). Reading is a fundamental skill needed to participate in society. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Researchers have investigated African American boys and their ability to read, but not what specifically motivates them to read (Cartwright, Marshall, & Wray, 2016; Ford & Moore, 2013; Wigfield et al., 2016). Many researchers have investigated various aspects of reading achievement, but few have investigated teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read (Boonen, Damme, & Onghena, 2014; Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). To help fill this gap in existing research, I explored teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

This chapter includes a review of the literature based on reading motivation and engagement for early learners. After describing the search strategies used to conduct the literature review, I explain the conceptual framework of the study using CRT, SDT, and the theory of social constructivism. I then describe reading motivation, reading among African American boys, the role of culture in education, reading engagement, race in education, teachers' perspectives, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' cultural competency.

Literature Search Strategy

For this literature review, I searched for books, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, and Internet sources on reading and reading motivation among African American individuals, and teachers' perspectives. Throughout my coursework at Walden University, I maintained my interest in the topic of reading motivation for third-grade African American boys, and many of my papers and assignments focused on this topic. As a result, I reviewed many articles on reading motivation and teachers' perspectives on how they motivate students to read. Through the Walden University Library, I accessed a variety of databases, including the following: Academic Search Complete, EBSCO ebooks, Education Research starters, Education source, Education Resources Information Center, Google Scholar, ProQuest central, SAGE journals, and Taylor and Francis Online. I used the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database to access dissertations and used the library's reference lists as a guide for finding further articles. I searched each database using the following terms and key phrases related to the topic: *reading motivation for third grade students*, *teachers' perspectives of African American boys*, *teacher's best instructional practices for reading*, and *motivating students in reading*. I read the resulting articles, keeping the research questions in mind, to gather information relevant to the study.

I began the literature review for this study by researching the importance of reading among African American individuals within the framework of CRT. I also investigated the theory of self-determination, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and the theory of social constructivism. After researching social constructivism, I determined that

this was an appropriate theory to help me understand teachers' perspectives on third-grade African American boys' motivation to read.

Conceptual Framework

Critical Race Theory

Part of the conceptual framework for this study was Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) CRT. CRT in education focuses on the interconnection of race, school, and educational outcomes (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) asserted that race remained a significant factor in society in general and education in particular. CRT rests on the work of scholars who called for greater analysis of race, culture, teaching, and learning for diverse populations. CRT also provides some basic tenets to help situate and construct a theory of African American boys' reading development and best instructional practices (Bush & Bush, 2013). The purpose of CRT in education is to elucidate how race operates in society and education at both the structural and local, everyday levels (Brown, 2014). This theory may provide insight into how third-grade African American boys are motivated in educational settings.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) wrote that race remained a significant factor in society in general and education in particular. The authors proposed the use of CRT to examine the role of race and racism in education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Ledesma and Calderón (2015) noted that CRT had become an increasingly permanent fixture in the tool kit of education researchers seeking to examine educational opportunities, school climate, and representation. Ledesma and Calderón also demonstrated how CRT was used to discover how race and racism manifest themselves throughout the K–12 education system. One of the central tenets of CRT is recognition of the experiential

knowledge of people of color. According to Dixson and Rousseau (2005), CRT scholars utilized personal narratives and stories as valid forms of evidence to document discrimination from a qualitative rather than a quantitative perspective. Ledesma and Calderón included tools in their study to acknowledge race and racism in the classroom in the context of policy and community work.

CRT treats the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression. Scholars have recognized through CRT that racism is endemic in American life (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Massey, Rugh, Steil, and Albright (2016) argued that racism has never waned in the United States despite the passage of federal and state mandates prohibiting racial discrimination. They further observed that racism has not lost any power because it creates an assumption of normality and renders invisible those who do not fit assumed normality in daily life (Massey et al., 2016). Ledesma and Calderón (2015) noted that calls for color blindness and equal opportunity have helped avoid racism. This is because, as Ladson-Billings (1998) stated, racism is enmeshed in the fabric of social order so that it appears both normal and natural to people in their own culture. Gichiru (2014) proposed that culturally relevant pedagogy developed out of dissatisfaction with explanations concerning the intersection of teaching and culture in the 1970s and 1980s. People have come to perceive that racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society, and CRT's central focus is uncovering how racism is perpetuated (Hernández, 2016). Using CRT as part of my conceptual framework helped uncover how third-grade African American boys are taught in the classroom.

CRT in education centers on race and racism in relation to other axes of oppression, providing necessary conceptual tools for the investigation of educational

inequities that African American boys experience. Hernández (2016) wrote that most CRT researchers focused on elementary education and how its institutions socialize children to carry on roles of oppressor or oppressed through tracking, unequal educational resources, and devaluation of minority cultures. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) suggested that some researchers argued that African American boys lacked academic reading performance in school because they were poor. The authors said that the cause of their poverty, in conjunction with the condition of their schools and schooling, was institutional and imbued with structural racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In response to these growing concerns, CRT emerged as a way to analyze the pervasiveness of racism in society (López, 2003). According to Hernández (2016), CRT scholars adopted a social justice research agenda directed toward the elimination of multiple kinds of oppression and the empowerment of underrepresented groups. CRT scholars suggested that society fails to see racism in racial groups because it is such a typical experience that it is taken for granted (López, 2003).

The empirical development of CRT has continued. Researchers have examined teacher attitudes, behaviors, best instructional practices, and the scope of approaches and findings on these topics in the expansive field of education (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014; Kumar & Hamer, 2013; Ledesma, & Calderón, 2015). Howard and Navarro (2016) argued that the presentation of race is one of the most crucial steps and requires careful investigation. Ledesma and Calderón (2015) utilized CRT to examine teaching and found that teacher attitudes reflected the widespread problematic ideologies of colorblindness, meritocracy, and liberal attitudes that have maintained racism in the United States. These problematic ideologies of desired equality have maintained racism

because they treat race as an individualized problem and subscribe to postracialism. Researchers have also discovered that teachers are most effective when they teach in ways that are culturally relevant to students of color (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Byrd, 2016; Chapman, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Scholars have recognized that examining teacher attitudes toward students of color impacts student learning (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012; Matias & Liou, 2014). Using CRT as part of the framework for this study provided understanding of best instructional practices used in the classroom by teachers for third-grade African American boys.

Self-Determination Theory

SDT is concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference. According to Wehmeyer and Field (2007), self-determination first became a topic of interest within education in the late 1980s. Ryan and Deci (2000) noted that self-determination is an approach to human motivation that highlights the importance of behavioral self-regulation. Educators use self-determination instruction so that students become more autonomous in their learning, gain self-regulation and decision-making skills, and increase their levels of self-determination (Sinclair et al., 2017). Shogren et al. (2015) described the history of self-determination and returned attention to the logical processes that contribute to the motivational foundation of SDT. As part of the conceptual framework, SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000) proposes that learning environments play a significant role in determining students' inner motivation for learning. I chose SDT to focus on the motivation of third-grade African American boys.

Motivation is the general desire or willingness of someone to do something. Deci and Ryan (2008) stated that motivation is what moves individuals to think, act, and develop. When an individual is intrinsically motivated, he or she is energetic, compassionate, and feels a sense of satisfaction or fulfillment (Riley, 2016). The concept of intrinsic motivation can be understood within the conceptual framework of Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT. According to González-Cutre, Sicilia, Sierra, Ferriz, and Hagger, (2016), SDT is an organismic theory that includes an individual's ability to evaluate novel experiences, explore them, and assimilate and integrate them into the individual's identity. Taylor et al. (2014) said that this theory specifies different types of autonomous and controlled forms of intentional action. According to the SDT, the source of intrinsic motivation is an innate pattern of development and assimilation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation encourages a different mode of learning; instead of learning for grades or recognition, students learn because they want to (Riley, 2016). Extrinsically motivated behavior is not initiated from within the individual but requires external rewards such as praise or avoidance of negative consequences (Wrzesniewski et al., 2014). Taylor et al. (2014) said that extrinsic motivation is relevant for socially prescribed activities such as doing homework, because homework is often not inherently interesting.

Self-determination allows people to feel they have control over their choices and lives. Ryan and Deci's (2000) SDT describes how human beings might be proactive and engaged or passive and alienated as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function. Ryan and Deci also argued that research guided by SDT should focus on the social-contextual conditions that facilitate, rather than forestall, the natural

processes of self-motivation and healthy psychological development. Ryan and Deci examined factors that enhance rather than undermine intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being. Güntert (2015) said that intrinsic motivation describes such volitional and autonomous activities and suggested that intrinsic motivation is a prototype of self-determined activity. Ryan and Deci addressed three innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these three needs yields enhanced self-motivation and mental health. Researchers have highlighted how the actualization of all three basic psychological needs has led to increased feelings of task-competence and task-value, increased willingness to engage in learning tasks, and higher overall task performance (Jang, Reeve, Ryan, & Kim, 2009; Katz & Assor, 2007; Reeve, 2009).

SDT addresses the following three universal, innate, and psychological needs: (a) competence, (b) autonomy, and (c) relatedness. Riley (2016) described the need for competence as a feeling of effectiveness and capability. The need for autonomy is the experience of choice in the initiation, maintenance, and regulation of activity and the experience of connectedness between actions and personal goals and values (Sinclair et al., 2017). The needs for competence and autonomy are both necessary to maintain intrinsic motivation (Hui & Tsang, 2012). Sinclair et al. stated that the need for relatedness encompasses the need to feel securely connected to the social surroundings and the need to experience oneself as worthy and capable of love and respect. Relatedness is a significant predictor of sustained intrinsic motivation (O'Brien, 2018).

SDT predicts the outcomes of social environments that are antagonistic toward developmental tendencies. Ryan and Deci (2000) concluded that whether people trust their interests and values is a significant matter in every culture and is a dimension along

which people make sense of their own and others' behavior. Self-determined behavior is carried out based solely on an individual's free will and choice, while a behavior controlled by an external source occurs in response to that source (Brouse, Basch, LeBlanc, McKnight, & Lei, 2010; Cooke, Fielding, & Louis, 2016). Ryan and Deci stated, "Our focus, accordingly, has been to specify the conditions that tend to support people's natural activity versus elicit or exploit their vulnerability" (p. 76). Intrinsically motivated behaviors are deliberate and occur by one's own choice (Sinclair et al., 2017). I used SDT as part of the conceptual framework of the study to help recognize whether third-grade African American boys were motivated to read intrinsically or extrinsically. These types of motivation have the potential to either positively or negatively impact third-grade African American boys' motivation to read. I used SDT to design the research questions to focus on third-grade African American boys' motivation to read.

Social Constructivism

I used the theory of social constructivism to socially construct new knowledge from the semistructured interviews conducted in this study. The theory of social constructivism traces its roots back to the 1960s. Social constructivism is the theory of how, why, and what is known and learned, in what conditions learning occurs, and how knowledge and learning evolves (Nitulescu & Rotaru, 2012). Vygotsky (1978) explained that a child follows an adult's example and gradually develops the ability to do specific tasks without help. Vygotsky proposed a type of cognitive learning that encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. According to Hirtle (1996), Vygotsky found that socially mediated situations move learners forward through stages of cognitive development. Vygotsky (1986) also proposed that people construct new knowledge and

meanings from their experiences. Kiemer, Gröschner, Kunter, and Seidel (2018) conducted a study, the findings of which supported social constructivism as a theory of knowledge that enables teachers to promote meaningful learning and intrinsic motivation in their students. I applied the theory of social constructivism to motivating third-grade African American boys because of its relevance for learning and intrinsic motivation.

The theory of social constructivism accurately captures the understanding that only instruction that promotes a child's formation of meaning can drive the child's conceptual development (Clarà, 2017). Instead of searching for ways to coerce students into learning what someone else has prescribed, social constructivist teachers focus on helping their students find their own passions, create their own learning agendas, and connect who they are to what they do in school (Oldfather, West, White, & Wilmarth, 1999). Social constructivism stresses the role of social community in constructing knowledge of an individual (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2017). Rahimi and Yadollahi described the theory of social constructivism as an active approach that focuses on the role of knowledge construction.

The theory of social constructivism describes human development as socially situated and knowledge as constructed through interaction with others. The basic principle is that students learn most effectively by engaging in carefully selected collaborative problem-solving activities under the close supervision of instructors (Mnkandla & Minnaar, 2017). According to Nitulescu and Rotaru (2012), social constructivism models knowledge and learning via cooperation and collaboration. Social constructivism is socially negotiated; simply stated, the theory maintains that individuals construct knowledge through cooperation and not solely on their own (Hyslop-Margison

& Strobel, 2008). Social constructivism requires linking prior knowledge to new knowledge through meaningful social interactions (Aminah & Asl, 2015).

Vygotsky (1978) developed the concept of the ZPD, which is the difference between what a learner can do with and without help. Vygotsky's work on the perception of art, cultural-historical theory of mind, and the ZPD has impacted modern education. According to Rahimi and Yadollahi (2017), Vygotsky indicated that knowledge is something that arises in social interactions under certain conditions. Armstrong (2015) stated that the ZPD is a realm in which learning conditions can be optimized through the identification of competencies that a learner could develop with the right assistance. A child's development begins with instruction, which is a type of child–adult collaboration (Vygotsky, 1986). I used the theory of social constructivism in this study to construct new knowledge from teachers regarding motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Reading Motivation

The elementary years are a time when students develop reading skills and teachers assess how they are progressing in those skills. Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, and Vernon-Feagans (2016) stated that good early reading instruction by classroom teachers in early elementary school may be critical to helping many children learn to read. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) suggested that teachers are enthusiastic about providing instruction to students in ways that allow them to observe their strengths while working toward further learning goals. According to Hamre, Hatfield, Pianta, and Jamil (2014), children learned more when teachers actively and intentionally use their

interactions to engage children in classroom experiences. Wigfield et al. (2016) found that it is imperative for teachers to build comprehension levels with students who struggle with reading, especially at early levels. Researchers investigating reading motivation reported that teachers can play a critical role by persistently stimulating the intrinsic reading motivation of their students (De Naeghel et al., 2014). Teachers' efforts to promote reading motivation in students are a crucial part of high-quality education that provides students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds with literacy competencies necessary for success in society (Bonner, Warren, & Jiang, 2018). Roebers et al. (2014) found that motivation predicted reading performance more than cognitive ability did for many years.

Research on reading motivation has had a long history (Conradi et al., 2014). Various conceptualizations of motivation have emerged. The types of motivation used in reading research commonly include intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Schaffner, Philipp, and Schiefele (2016) defined intrinsic motivation to read as the willingness to read because reading is satisfying and rewarding. Mori (2015) conceptualized intrinsic motivation as specific to either object or activity, where the former refers to motivation to read because of an interest in the topic of a text (i.e., reading curiosity) and the latter refers to motivation to read because the activity itself is a positive experience. Intrinsic motivation to learn is a fundamental factor that contributes to development of reading achievement (Froiland & Oros, 2014).

Extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards such as grades and praise. Froiland and Oros (2014) investigated the effects of intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, classroom engagement, and extrinsic motivation on reading development

among third-grade students. The researchers distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for different activities (Wigfield et al., 2016). Ryan and Deci (2000) reported that intrinsic motivation relates to longer-term engagement in achievement activities than extrinsic motivation. Froiland and Oros measured reading literacy using students' ability to comprehend and decode text and their knowledge of vocabulary. Froiland and Oros focused on how reading motivation affects reading in the classroom.

The conditions that motivate students to read are important to the process of teaching and fostering learning. Because reading is an inherently effortful activity that involves choice, motivation is essential for extensive reading (Mori, 2015). Reading motivation is tied not only to reading achievement but also to the amount of reading that students engage in with or without assistance (Cantrell et al., 2017). Researchers investigated how 84 parents from predominantly low-income communities described supporting their third-grade children's reading skills, motivation, and habits (Capotosto et al., 2017). Earlier researchers had emphasized the importance of motivation in developing reading skills (Conradi et al., 2014). Capotoso et al. (2014) found that the parents studied often assumed responsibility for fostering the reading skills, motivation, and habits of their children.

A variety of factors influence motivation. Reading researchers have long had an interest in motivation-related variables (Conradi et al., 2014; Kanfer, Frese, & Johnson, 2017; McGill, 2012). The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has long been central to the science of motivation (Corpus, Wormington, & Haimovitz, 2016). This approach has yielded rich information about the developmental trajectories and predictive power of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. In achievement contexts,

intrinsic motivation is associated with a host of positive outcomes, including real affect text comprehension and pleasure reading (Guthrie et al., 2006). Extrinsic motivation is associated with maladaptive coping strategies and poor academic achievement (Bonneville-Roussy, Evans, Verner-Filion, Vallerand, & Bouffard, 2017). According to Ceci and Kumar (2016) although extrinsic motivation may not have the same sustaining power as intrinsic motivation, it is arguably necessary at times and, at the very least, ensures some engagement with the learning process. Children who are intellectually curious but also who are oriented toward adult approval and mindful of extrinsic constraints may perform best in elementary school (Corpus et al., 2016).

Student motivation is a key factor for successful reading. Wigfield et al. (2016) reviewed work on the development of children's reading motivation. McGeown, Osborne, Warhurst, Norgate, and Duncan (2016) found that children's reading motivation correlated with their degree of engagement in a variety of reading activities. Wigfield et al. found that children's competence beliefs, intrinsic motivation, and value placed on academic subjects decrease throughout schooling. Students must become competent readers, committed and motivated to read throughout elementary school, to increase the value to them of academic subjects (De Naeghel et al., 2016). Children initially find most school activities to be interesting and exciting, resulting in enthusiasm and valuing of academic activities. Factors that influence reading competence (such as phonological awareness and reasoning ability) are important for both educators and researchers to know (Stutz et al., 2016). Children form attitudes toward reading from their past experiences with reading, educational backgrounds, cultural beliefs, and successes and failures in reading (Akbari, Ghonsooly, Ghazanfari, & Shahriari, 2017).

Researchers have identified a number of factors important to reading motivation, including self-concept, value of reading, choice, time spent talking about books, types of text available, and use of incentives. Schaffner and Schiefele (2016) addressed reading motivation as a potential determinant of losses or gains in reading competence over 6 weeks of summer vacation. They found that summer reading programs not only boosted students' reading skills and motivation but also helped moderate the common summer reading setback that forms a big part of summer learning loss (Small, Arnone, & Bennett, 2017). Schaffner and Schiefele performed a structural equation analysis of a sample of 223 third-grade students and found that intrinsic reading motivation before the summer vacation contributed positively to both word and sentence comprehension. The researchers found no significant association between extrinsic reading motivation and end-of-summer comprehension scores. Although many researchers have investigated reading motivation, fewer researchers have looked at best instructional practices related to reading (Kolic-Vehovec et al., 2014). Schaffner and Schiefele demonstrated that readers with higher levels of intrinsic reading motivation were less likely than readers with lower levels of intrinsic reading motivation to suffer from a summer setback in reading competence.

Reading is an important function for third-grade African American boys because it develops their cognition for future academic success. Reading also strengthens students' reading attitudes, motivation, fluency, and comprehension. Proficient reading comprehension is crucial for success in every academic domain, particularly in courses focused on reading and literature (Wigfield et al., 2016). Flowers (2016) reviewed the research literature to explore plausible explanations for the achievement gap between

African American boys and White boys. Flowers found that researchers should consider focusing on research partnerships with local schools and other local-area educational agencies to motivate and strengthen the early language skills of third-grade African American boys.

Being an effective teacher requires implementing creative and innovative teaching strategies to meet students' reading needs. Prevailing wisdom regarding teachers motivating students to read used to be that any teacher who used effective teaching strategies that related to students should inspire them to read (Thompson & Shamberger, 2015). Teachers have applied many teaching strategies with literacy knowledge and motivation to engage students in reading (MacPhee & Sanden, 2016). Best instructional practices influence children's motivation to learn and develop (Hamre et al., 2014), but researchers have reported mixed results concerning which teaching strategies best promote children's academic and reading interest (Käsper, Uibu, & Mikk, 2018). Despite the recent increase in research on reading motivation, few researchers have investigated the motivation style of teachers in relation to students' motivation for reading (De Naeghel et al., 2016).

Teachers can use literature in different ways to help teach students to read and understand what they are reading. Literature for young people was afflicted for many decades with what Larrick (1965) called white supremacy and Myers (2014) called a disparity of representation. Educators have made some progress recently toward literary inclusivity by emphasizing the need for "multicultural" books (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016). This progress was due in part to Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) call for "culturally relevant pedagogy," which suggests that teachers can motivate

students of color to read by finding ways to make reading meaningful to them. With regard to African American boys, Foorman, Dombek, and Smith (2016) argued that literacy instruction must have value in students' current time and space if it is to attract and sustain their attention. Sciurba (2014) suggested that reading must address students' issues and concerns in a way that leads them to examine their own lives. African American boys in elementary school who perceive discontinuity between home and school cultures are less motivated to read and have poorer academic outcomes (Rouland, Matthews, Byrd, Meyer, & Rowley, 2014). Sciurba presumed that readers gravitate exclusively toward texts that mirror them does not sufficiently honor the complexities of racial, ethnic, and gender identities; nor does it take into account the complexities of the act of reading and responding to texts.

Reading skills are essential for students to gain an understanding across subject domains in school and hence strongly predict students' future socioeconomic success (Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2018). Investigators have consistently found African American boys to be less competent readers than African American girls (Wolter, Braun, & Hannover, 2015). Wolter et al. (2015) noted that becoming a skilled reader requires not only precursor competences but also a sufficiently strong motivation to read or learn to read. African American boys have typically described their motivation to read or learn to read as being less persistent than the motivation described by girls, especially among third-grade students (Whitney & Bergin, 2018). Students' motivation to engage in reading-related activities predicts the amount they read, which in turn predicts growth in reading competence during their primary schooling (Schaffner et al., 2016). Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, and Guthrie (2009) suggested that reading instruction focus

on comprehension skills as children progress through school. Motivation researchers have discussed how motivational and cognitive processes interact and how each affect achievement outcomes (Wigfield et al., 2016). According to Wolter et al., the lower reading attainments of boys relate to their supposed weaker motivation to read. My review of existing reading motivation literature strengthened the case for my study by confirming that student motivation is a key factor for successful reading.

Reading Among African American Boys

Debate has continued regarding the degree to which all children receive an equitable education in the United States. One of the most persistent and unresolved issues in education has been lack of reading achievement of African American boys (Guo, Sun, Breit-Smith, Morrison, & Connor, 2015). The NCES (2006, 2010) has documented the reading achievement gap between African American boys and other student groups. The NCES (2013) defined an achievement gap as students in one group outperforming those in another group, when the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant. Disparities in achievement have usually been between White and non-White students. Researchers have considered African American boys to help stakeholders understand issues related to racial disparities in educational achievement and practice (Pitre, 2014). Martin and Beese (2017) stated that African American boys have frequently found it hard to find their place in literacy classrooms. The NCES (2017) showed a clear and persistent discrepancy in educational achievement between groups of students, with African American, Latino, and American Indian student outcomes lower than those of other groups. Academic leaders have often failed to consider the whole child, and this has

created a chasm between school and student that has led African American boys to fail academically (Wood & Jocius, 2013).

Scholars and practitioners have often discussed disengagement in association with achievement of African American boys in reading. Many scholars have spent decades researching how to engage African American boys in reading and increase their educational performance (Ford & Moore, 2013). Despite the prevalent view that achievement matters, researchers have provided only modest evidence of the effects of disengagement among African American boys in the early grades (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). Although samples of reading-engagement studies have typically included some African American boys in prekindergarten through Grade 5, few researchers have examined the factors that contribute to reading engagement in this group alone (Husband, 2014).

Commentators have often lumped underachievement, low achievement, and other school issues together under the umbrella of the achievement gap. Dwarte (2014) noted that African American boys were among the most at-risk subgroups educated in American public schools. Pitre (2014) suggested reading strategies to educators and families for closing the achievement gap and increasing the reading achievement of African American boys. Effective reading instruction in the classroom is essential. Another crucial influence on children's early reading ability (as well as later reading achievement) is home literacy environment (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Dwarte said students can attain high achievement when educators are formally prepared to be culturally competent, when families are supported and empowered, and when efforts focus on improving students' academic potential and identities.

A number of political, social, and economic indicators have indicated ongoing challenges for African American boys in reading. Gopaldas and Deroy (2015) stated that researchers and media outlets have been quick to elaborate on the reasons why African Americans consistently fall behind their White counterparts. For African American boys, lower achievement appears to have more significant consequences for future development of social identity, cognitive ability, emotional capacity, and social competence than for other groups: Each of these outcomes is negatively influenced by poor schooling experiences and society (Wang & Eccles, 2013). According to Anderson (2015), poor schooling and society has had harmful effects on the academic, psychosocial, and socioemotional outcomes of young children. Clayton et al. (2016) stated that scholars and researchers have generally understood that environmental and cultural factors have a profound influence on human behavior, including academic performance. My extensive review of the literature on reading among African American boys strengthened the case for my study by providing tools to help educators deliver best instructional practices to third-grade African American boys.

The Role of Culture in Education

A culture consists of the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people. Culture shapes students' learning and problem-solving in several ways—through culture-specific knowledge and skills, through values that mold motivation and beliefs, through organization of information (cognitive architecture), and through use of contextual cues to guide behavior (Rouland et al., 2014). Wu (2015) determined that culture means shared motives, values, and beliefs from common experiences that are transmitted across generations. According to Vygotsky (1978), culture and cognition are

entwined because learning, thinking, and problem-solving are socially situated and mediated by culture. To prevent African American boys from failing in the public education system, school officials must understand protective factors and processes in students' lives, such as family, school, and community, that make it possible for students to thrive academically (Williams, Greenleaf, Albert, & Barnes, 2014). Researchers have shown that African American boys perform significantly better in school when they can learn in a style that reflects their home culture rather than in the style associated with traditional classrooms (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Wolter et al. (2015) stated that findings from later studies showed that African American elementary students who perceive discontinuity between home and school cultures are less motivated and have poorer academic outcomes.

Culture influences specific content and goals. Motivation across cultures and languages influences reading behavior (Schwabe, McElvany, & Trendtel, 2015). A reader's disengagement with texts not related to his or her culture has a direct impact on that individual's reading success (Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017). Researchers conducting a study involving six focus groups of K–12 public school teachers showed that developing parental involvement, cultural influences, and teacher instructional strategies could improve reading engagement for K–12 African American boys (Center for Public Education, 2014; Long, 2014). Long (2014) concluded that a student's learning depends strongly on his or her cultural background.

Reading is a complex process entailing many skills that must develop simultaneously. Interest in reading supports academic achievement, and lack of interest in reading is detrimental to student motivation (Maulana & Opdenakker, 2014). Lack of

reading motivation, limited access to books, limited exposure to general literacy, and low economic status may contribute to low reading achievement of African American boys (Rubie-Davies, Flint, & McDonald, 2012). Teachers and administrators need to be aware of cultural differences and develop learning environments that encompass economically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds to promote engagement of reading within their schools (Orrock & Clark, 2018). Without awareness and understanding of these factors and processes and their impact on the educational success of students, well-intended school policies, programs, and curricula will likely be ineffective (Williams et al., 2014).

Reading Engagement

Reading engagement is a key element of a student's success. Few researchers have investigated how to increase reading engagement of African American boys in elementary contexts (Ladd, Ettekal, & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2017). When African American boys do not master reading skills in the early grades, gaps in literacy development form and widen throughout their academic careers (O'Connor, Cappella, McCormick, & McClowry, 2014). Educators and scholars addressing reading engagement have sometimes overlooked the perspectives of African American boys on their own powerful experiences with texts (Tatum, 2015). Mori (2015) found, based on Day and Bamford's (2002) 10 principles of extensive reading, that reading is an inherently effortful activity that involves choice and that motivation is essential for extensive reading. Educators wishing to gain insight about African American boys must acknowledge the complexities of African American boys' identities and the complex ways in which these boys establish themselves as readers (Sciurba, 2014). Husband

(2014) noted that strategies for teachers across the curriculum and across school contexts should increase reading engagement of African American boys. Engaged readers develop the foundational reading skills and proficiencies necessary for participation in everyday learning activities in the classroom. Mori noted engaged readers have also performed higher on national assessments in reading than less engaged readers. Attention to reader engagement and motivation is important because increasing these factors increases reading proficiency and achievement in school (Guthrie & Klauda, 2015).

Teacher–student relationships can positively or negatively affect a student's academic performance. Showing African American boys that teachers value all of their attributes—including those related to race and culture—is a critical step in helping them feel welcome, connected to their teachers, and engaged in their schooling (Wanless & Crawford, 2016). Wood and Jocius (2013) argued that at the beginning of each year, teachers should plan to not only implement culturally responsive lessons but also create culturally responsive libraries. Doing this allows students to find texts they can relate to. According to Thompson and Shamberger (2015), nonrelatable resources and low teacher expectations cause student apathy. Thompson and Shamberger also stated that teachers who have low expectations of African American boys assume they are incapable of reading engagement. Gershenson et al. (2016) discovered that teachers have significantly lower expectations of the educational attainment of socioeconomically disadvantaged and racial-minority students. Dee (2015) found that teachers probably play an important role in shaping students' beliefs about their own academic prospects.

Reading is only a part of a school's curriculum, but it is a foundational one. Thornton and Holiday-Driver (2013) identified African American boys as "at risk" in

reading. The NCES (2017) has documented an achievement gap in reading for African American boys that begins in primary school and continues through postsecondary education. Baumert and Kunter (2013) found that a combination of good engagement and lack of stress-management skills made up a risk factor for reduced well-being and performance of students. Tatum (2015) identified culture-specific coping mechanisms that may negatively impact African American boys in education, such as acting tough, failing to retreat from violence, and avoiding self-disclosure. Tatum (2006) also suggested that external factors related to structural racism, community patterns, and socioeconomic status may affect reading for African American boys. Thornton and Holiday-Driver said African American boys have been more likely to underachieve or disengage academically and experience concomitant educational challenges.

Race in Education

Racial inequities produce unequal opportunities for educational success. Education researchers have not sufficiently examined race, class, and gender intersections in schools and how they influence the schooling experiences of various populations (Howard, 2016). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) contended that race has been undertheorized. Thompson and Shamberger (2015) took a critical look at the historical barriers to learning for African American boys attending public schools. Howard (2016) noted that African American boys have continued to be one of the most academically challenged student groups in the United States. Dwarte (2014) focused on the academic underperformance of African American boys and how their underperformance has continued to limit their academic, career, and life opportunities and widened the achievement gap.

Tatum (2015) revealed that numerous researchers have documented the reading deficits of African American boys at school. The reading performance of African American boys has continued to worry community members, school officials, and policy makers (Dwarte, 2014). Tatum stated that neither effective reading strategies nor comprehensive literacy reform efforts would close the achievement gap unless culturally relevant texts were at the core of the curriculum; introducing such texts could boost reading motivation and reading performance. Ford and Moore (2013) focused on the achievement gap and devoted attention to underachievement and low achievement among African American boys in urban school contexts. My review of existing literature regarding race in education supported my choice to use CRT in the framework of this study by addressing the racial inequities in education.

Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' perspectives identify their understanding of teaching. Although many researchers have investigated reading motivation, relatively few have focused on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about their student's motivation for reading and their teaching behaviors based on those beliefs (Unrau et al., 2014). Taylor et al. (2014) explored teachers' perspectives of students' intrinsic motivation for reading from the perspectives of SDT and reading achievement. Taylor et al. found that teachers held opinions about motivation aligned with the SDT approach to motivation and achievement. Bates, Dagostino, Gambrell, and Xu (2018) demonstrated that students who were reading high achievers had more intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation to read. Taylor et al. found teachers perceived reading low achievers to be motivated by extrinsic factors such as activity-based and hands-on instruction. Locke and Schattke

(2018) argued that SDT explicitly confounds intrinsic motivation (enjoying the task) and achievement motivation (pursuing goals and challenges). Locke and Schattke also claimed that extrinsic motivation can be inside or outside the self-depending on the degree of self-determination relative to a specific goal.

Linnenbrink-Garcia, Patall, and Pekrun (2016) argued that teachers' perspectives on motivating students are about connecting activities with students' interests and making activities fun. Peterson, Schreiber, and Moss (2011) highlighted the importance of teacher-education experiences with their finding that teachers' perspectives reflected particular motivation theories when learning experiences provided opportunities to examine principles in educational courses. Teachers have been aware of the critical role of motivation in students' learning and behavior (Mansfield & Volet, 2014). Gil-Arias, Claver, Práxedes, Villar, and Harvey (2018) found that teachers advocated motivational strategies designed to support students' autonomy and enhance intrinsic motivation rather than strategies that relied on extrinsic motivation. Mansfield and Volet (2014) argued that promoting knowledge and understanding about motivation is critical in teacher education. It is critical because teachers' understanding of motivation influences their instructional decisions and enhances their students' learning and achievement.

Teachers interpret events in a variety of ways depending on their experiences, beliefs, students, and school culture. Teachers' perspectives are a key component of their professional competency (Fives & Buehl, 2012). According to Hur, Buettner, and Jeon (2015) teachers' perspectives have recently become a focus within early childhood education as an important component of teacher quality. Hur et al. also found that a teacher's quality significantly impacted his or her interactions with children, which may

correlate with children's learning. With respect to pedagogical content, teachers' perspectives have been evident in instructional behavior that influences student achievement (Behrmann & Souvignier, 2015). Boylan, Barblett, and Knaus (2018) found that identifying teachers' perspectives can benefit policy makers, teachers, and children; teachers' perspectives aid development of skills in children to enable them to become successful learners equipped for the 21st century.

Teachers make many decisions and facilitate dozens of interactions between themselves and their students. Giles and Tunks (2015) examined the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding children's reading achievement in an attempt to gain a picture of best instructional practices. Teachers' interactions with children are resources that foster social, behavioral, and cognitive development in the early years of schooling and beyond (Hamre et al., 2014). Giles and Tunks found teachers' perspectives on teaching and learning have a critical impact on best instructional practices. From a young age, students can identify teachers who have high and low expectations by observing the behavior of their teachers (Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, & Sibley, 2016). Many African American struggling readers have risen from one grade to the next despite reading far below grade level (Thompson & Shamberger, 2015). According to Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2015), the cultural and racial differences between most teachers and students of color may lead teachers to rely on the media, including popular and easily accessible images in movies, social media, and music. These sources indicate that their students do not share their own racial and cultural backgrounds. Effective teaching comes from teachers who embrace students' cultural backgrounds.

Teacher support can assist students to read in several different ways. Silinskas et al. (2016) focused on identifying teachers' support for reading and how children's reading skills could advance with their teachers' help. Peterson et al. (2016) mentioned that teacher's expectations of achievement exemplify beliefs that the teachers hold about their students' academic abilities and subsequent achievement. Silinskas et al. also focused on teachers' support for reading correlated positively with reading skills for children who were initially interested in reading and showed low levels of externalizing problem behavior. Peterson et al. explained that the amount students learn depends on the learning opportunities provided by their teachers, differential expectations potentially exacerbate preexisting achievement gaps. Thompson and Shamberger (2015) stated that gaps in reading scores between African American boys and White boys indicated that the U.S. public school system has continued to underserve African American boys.

Teachers who teach foundational reading skills allow students to get the most from their education. Thompson and Shamberger (2015) suggested that to improve students' reading skills, teachers must teach them to decode and comprehend a variety of texts. According to Bowman, Comer, and Johns (2018), teachers should establish peer-support networks to support African American boys while engaging them in reading in and out of school. Thompson and Shamberger said nationwide, countless teachers who received training in good teaching strategies have failed to address the academic needs of many third-grade African American boys. Teachers should consider many resources and strategies for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. My review of existing literature on teachers' perspectives supported my application of the theory of

social constructivism in this study by focusing on the interdependence of social and individual processes in the construction of new knowledge.

Teachers' Attitudes

A teacher's attitude is important because it affects students in many ways and can shape their learning experiences. Teachers emerge as key figures in the implementation or sustainability of classroom-based programs and curricula (Humphries, Williams, & May, 2018). Vučetić (2016) discovered that teachers' attitudes about motivation corresponded to gradual development of students by improving their motivation for learning. Akbari et al. (2017) found that readers' attitudes are important because they affect reading success. A significant perspective considers reader attitude and its role in reading understanding (Hurst & Griffity, 2015). Although early reading educators have not reached complete agreement about how children should be taught to read, they have agreed that there is no single quick and best method for developing the skills of beginning readers (Ihmeideh & Coughlin, 2015). My review of existing literature on teachers' attitudes strengthened the case for the study because teachers' attitudes are important for fostering positive attitudes toward reading in students.

Teachers' Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is key to thriving in culturally diverse classrooms and schools, and teachers can learn and practice it to better serve a diverse range of students and their families. Researchers have examined the role of cultural diversity in early school years (Adair & Fabienne, 2014) and the cultural perspectives of veteran teachers and teachers in training (Prochner, 2016). Ihmeideh and Coughlin (2015) reviewed studies of teacher education and found they indicated that teacher qualifications, teaching

experience, training programs, workshops, and conferences were all ways to influence pedagogical behavior. In the field of teacher education, researchers have found that teachers' prior knowledge and experiences shape their perspectives on child development and their best instructional practices in their early years of teaching (Lin-Siegler, Dweck, & Cohen, 2016).

In many classroom contexts, teachers have not often given African American boys opportunities to read texts that reflect the boys' cultural and communal lived experiences. Educators working and teaching in schools have been exposed to deficit discourse with regard to African American boys (Goings, Smith, Harris, Wilson, & Lancaster, 2015). Although conversations aimed at supporting educational outcomes for African American boys have been increasing, African American boys have remained at the bottom of all scales of achievement (Gay, 2015; Harris & Marsh, 2010; Shockley, 2011). Teachers have been searching for strategies and practices to change the outcomes for African American boys. Tatum (2015) pointed out that many African American boys have not read because the texts available to them have not been socially and culturally consistent and authentic. Goings et al. (2015) said that the application of CRT improves academic achievement, fosters student engagement, and provokes student motivation.

Summary and Conclusions

I reviewed existing literature directly associated with reading motivation and reading among African American boys. Researchers have noted that motivating African American boys to read has been difficult. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016) stated that a crucial factor affecting reading among African American boys is home literacy environment; a positive literacy environment at home correlates with children's emergent

literacy skills and later reading achievement. African American boys have tended to disengage from reading and fail to master reading skills in the early grades, which causes gaps in literacy development throughout their academic careers (O'Connor et al., 2014). Reading performance of African American boys, and the achievement gap between African American boys and their White and Asian counterparts, has continued to cause concern among community members, school officials, and policy makers (Dwarte, 2014). Various internal and external factors have contributed to this problem, including teachers' perspectives and African American boys' lack of interest in learning and reading. The issues that teachers have associated with motivation to read among African American boys could be resolved by understanding teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating students to read. My review of existing literature indicated that few investigators have conducted qualitative research in this area. I identified a gap in existing literature regarding the best instructional practices for motivating African American boys to read and investigation of those practice from the perspective of teachers who teach third-grade reading. I designed this study to uncover new knowledge and explore, using semistructured interviews, teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Chapter 3 includes a full description of this design and the details of how I investigated the gap in existing literature using basic qualitative research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Exploring teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices helped me to identify their understandings, feelings, and concerns regarding the motivation of third-grade African American boys when learning to read. In this chapter, I describe the research method for the study, including details of the research design and its rationale, the role of the researcher, the methodology used, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The two research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are teachers' perspectives on reasons third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read?

A basic qualitative research design was appropriate for this study because I intended to uncover knowledge of perspectives and techniques (see Kozleski, 2017). I conducted interviews to understand teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Given the focus of this study, a phenomenological design, which would have explored lived experiences, would not have supported my intention to identify teacher knowledge and perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The purpose of a phenomenological study is to understand the essence of an experience (Kruth, 2015). Phenomenological research is not used to examine processes, so I decided to conduct a

basic qualitative study. A basic qualitative study can uncover strategies, techniques, and best instructional practices of highly effective teachers and administrators. I decided that a basic qualitative study using semistructured interviews was the best way to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

I considered a variety of other research designs before choosing the basic qualitative design. For example, a mixed-methods design involves initial data collection with a quantitative instrument followed by qualitative data collection that builds directly on the results of the quantitative phase (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Because I did not use any quantitative methods, the mixed-methods design was inappropriate. Ethnographic research was another approach that I considered for this study. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), ethnography has its roots in cultural anthropology, where researchers immerse themselves within a culture, often for years. Because I would not be immersed in this study for a long time, an ethnographic research design was inappropriate. I also considered a case study as a qualitative research design. A case study develops a detailed understanding of a single case or a number of similar cases by examination of the case or cases from multiple perspectives (Kruth, 2015). The quality indicators for a case study require more than one source of data to ensure validity. Because interviews were the only data sources for this study, a case study design was inappropriate.

Role of the Researcher

As the sole researcher, I was responsible for all aspects of the study. I served as a third-grade teacher for 10 years. During my years as a classroom teacher, I was a professional-development facilitator, data-analysis-team member, teacher leader, and

grade chairperson. These experiences prompted my interest in developing this study. I conducted this study in a school district in a northern state. I had no teaching experience in this school district. I established a relationship with the administrators at the study site solely for the purposes of this study. I had no personal or professional relationships with participants, and I did not engage in any relationships involving a power differential with the participants.

I recognized that some biases formed through my experience as a third-grade reading teacher. To minimize and manage cultural biases, I showed unconditional positive regard and remained cognizant of my cultural assumptions. I minimized wording bias by transcribing participants' words verbatim. As a teacher, I made a conscious effort to disregard my experiences and thoroughly examine and understand the perspectives of the study participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Participants selected for the study were teachers who taught third-grade African American boys. At the time of the study the state in which the study was conducted required that third-grade students take a reading assessment. Other states did the same, which allowed for nationwide comparisons of standardized testing scores for third-grade students. I did not include lower grades because the state did not mandate reading assessments for them. According to Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora, (2016), selection of five to 10 participants with diverse experiences should provide sufficient information to answer research questions. There was a total of 10 teachers who taught third-grade students at the selected school. I used a purposeful sampling strategy to invite all 10

teachers to participate and share their teaching experiences motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The criterion for participant inclusion was that the participant taught reading to third-grade African American boys. Selecting participants based on specific criteria reflects a purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2015). Potential teacher participants received a detailed letter of invitation and consent form via e-mail so they could understand the study before deciding whether to take part. By replying "I consent" to the e-mail, participants acknowledged they agreed to be interviewed for 30–60 min. I conducted all interviews at the local library.

Sampling

Sampling refers to the decisions researchers make about the setting and the individuals from whom they collect the data needed to answer their research questions (Maxwell, 2013). I solicited 10 teachers and moved forward only when I had recruited at least five participants. The rationale for this minimum number of participants was my desire to obtain data even in the event that five teachers declined to participate. I recruited potential teacher participants once I had contacted the assistant superintendent of operations of the school district via e-mail and formally requested permission to conduct my study (see Appendix A).

Instrumentation

The researcher is usually the primary research instrument in qualitative studies (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013), and such was the case for this study. I conducted a semistructured interview with each teacher participant. Each participant received a copy of the same letter of invitation and consent form and interview protocol document (see Appendix D) to maintain consistency among participants. The primary

data were the responses of the participants, which I recorded using an Android Galaxy S9 phone. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that recording interviews allows for an accurate analysis of responses.

The data collection instrument was my set of interview questions (see Appendix C). I used my own interview protocol form (see Appendix D) to gather demographic data, record minor details, inform the participant of expectations, and ask the interview questions. I asked the questions in the same order for each participant. I added probing and clarifying questions, if deemed necessary, to clarify limited responses (see Appendix D).

I created the interview questions to learn about teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for teaching reading to African American boys. I created the interview questions based on my own experience as a third-grade teacher who had taught African American boys. Interview Questions 1, 3, 4, and 8 helped to answer Research Question 1. Interview Questions 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 helped to answer Research Question 2. Every year at the school where I taught, third-grade African American boys received the lowest scores from the state-mandated reading assessments. This caused me to consider what best instructional practices might help motivate these students to read. The responses to the interview questions answered my research questions and might provide other teachers and school administrators with ideas to help them initiate new procedures, strategies, and programs for reading. I established validity by assuring that the interview questions measured the targets of the research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The study sample consisted of five teacher participants. I recruited participants based on their roles in teaching reading to third-grade African American boys. The schools selected were appropriate for the study because of the district's high population of African American boys.

Recruitment. To gain access to participants for this study, I e-mailed the assistant superintendent of operations of the district to introduce myself and request permission (see Appendix A) to conduct my study at the elementary schools within the school district. The district's policy was that I make a formal request to the school district, on Walden University letterhead, stating the specifics of the study, its participants, and its duration. Following the district's policy, I contacted the building principal of each school where I wanted to conduct the study. The district permitted only one researcher. The school district provided no data or staff assistance for the study. According to the school district's rules, participants had to volunteer, and the identity of the participants and schools had to remain confidential.

I attended a community meeting at one of the elementary schools in the district where I intended to conduct the research. At that time, I identified the schools in the district having a predominately African American population that included boys in third grade for whom teachers were involved in enhancing the school's reading program. To gain access to the third-grade teachers, I e-mailed each building principal explaining my intentions and requesting permission to conduct the study (see Appendix B), and I also submitted a copy of the letter of invitation and consent form that I would provide to potential participants.

Participation. Upon receiving approval from the Walden University institutional review board (IRB) and the superintendent of the school district, I contacted the building principal via e-mail about the study. Because school was out for the summer and teachers were at home, I asked the building principal if I could have the third grade teachers' e-mail addresses so that I could contact about participating in the study. I e-mailed each third-grade teacher the letter of invitation and consent form so they could understand the study before deciding whether to participate. Each teacher who wished to participate had to reply "I consent" to before would schedule an interview an interview with the teacher. Participants received no incentive for participating in the study.

Once I had received participants' e-mailed replies, I e-mailed the participants options for specific days and times to meet for the interviews. When I met each participant, I asked him or her the interview questions (see Appendix C). I created the interview questions and asked two non-participant third-grade teachers to review them. The reviewers assessed the interview questions for clarity and decided whether they would answer the questions in a study. The teachers who reviewed the questions did not otherwise participate in the study. One of my university research reviewers suggested maintaining and extending interview interest (see Appendix D). I scheduled, conducted, and recorded an individual interview with each teacher participant. I uploaded the recordings of the interviews to an online transcription service.

Data collection. Using qualitative interviewing, researchers explore in detail the experiences, motives, and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I conducted the interviews at the local public library. Each interview was one-on-one, and the interview notes and audio

recordings were confidential. I recorded the audio of each interview using an Android Galaxy S9 phone. Creswell (2013) posited that data collection is a series of interrelated activities with the aim of gathering high-quality information to answer emerging research questions. To achieve the objectives of the study, I conducted interviews with five certified third grade teachers. Their responses were detailed descriptions of their perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. I added probing and clarifying questions, if necessary, to clarify limited responses (see Appendix D). Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that putting together descriptions from separate participants allows researchers to create portraits of complicated processes. Data collection lasted 2 months.

The three different types of interviews are unstructured interviews, structured interviews, and semistructured interviews. Unstructured interviews have very few, if any, interview questions. Several rounds of interviews must be conducted with participants to gather all information needed for a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Structured interviews adhere strictly to an interview protocol that guides the researcher (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). With this approach, there is no opportunity to probe and explore topics that may arise during an interview session. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that a structured interview gathers exactly the information needed, so there is no need for follow-up interviews. I gathered data using semistructured interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that semistructured interviewing captures change through retrospective interviews and repeated interviews across time. I used the interview protocol as a guide for the conversation between me and each participant. This interview method allows a great deal of flexibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview protocol served as an

instrument of inquiry for obtaining participants' thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding third-grade African American boys' motivation to read.

I organized interview times and dates based on the availability of the participants. Before each interview, I reviewed the procedures with the participant and assured the participant of the confidentiality of the study. I coded the identity of each participant to protect the identity of the participants. I reiterated that the audio of the 30–60-min interview would be recorded, and used the interview protocol to ensure that I asked each participant the same questions in the same order. I did my best to make participants feel comfortable with me and asked if they needed any clarification.

During debriefing, I reminded the participant that interview responses would remain confidential. I asked the participant whether he or she had any questions regarding the interview process. If the participant did not have any questions, I thanked the participant for his or her time and participation. I did not conduct follow-up interviews. I documented each step of the data collection process in detail in case there was a need to verify the data with the participants and to monitor and maintain the thoroughness and quality of data collection.

After completing each interview, I sent the audio recording to an online transcription service. After transcription, I proceeded with initial data analysis of themes and categories. I followed these steps with successive participants until I had saturated the themes or categories. At that point I had transcriptions from interviews with five teacher participants.

Data Analysis Plan

I uploaded the audio recordings of the interviews to Rev.com, an online transcription service. Each resulting transcription included a full, accurate, word-for-word written summary of the corresponding interview (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used the qualitative analysis program Quirkos v2.2 to analyze the transcribed interview data. Quirkos helped me manage, sort, code, and understand the data. I used Quirkos to identify words and phrases to find relationships between them.

Data analysis is the process used to answer research questions (Morse, 2015). The answers took the form of categories or themes (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After I used Quirkos v2.2 to find similar words and phrases, I developed themes by coding the data. I created codes representing the meanings of the interviews, then grouped codes with other codes that shared similar meanings. I used axial coding, also known as analytical coding, to group codes that seemed to go together (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In doing so, I moved from coding chunks of data to starting to see how the resulting codes came together to form themes within which I situated constructs to make arguments and develop findings (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) said that analytical coding relies on interpretation and reflection on meaning.

Potential themes for the research questions included best instructional practices, reading strategies, and motivation for third-grade African American boys. I applied codes to the responses by placing an appropriate code in brackets after each phrase. In the final step, I reread the coded responses to determine whether any excerpts did not fit the chosen codes and determine whether the data justified the codes created. I shared a two-page summary of my findings from the study with the participants.

I used Microsoft Word 2016 to record participants' demographic information and details about the interviews such as when and where each interview took place. I recorded any notes that were relevant during the interview. Chapter 4 contains the results of the study in the form of a conversation organized in sections based on the themes that emerged (see Sutton & Austin, 2015). I included quotes of participants' responses from the interviews in the report of the results to provide insight into the lived experiences of the participants.

I coupled adequate time spent collecting data with purposefully looking for variation in understanding of the content (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Patton (2015) argued that credibility hinges partly on the integrity of a researcher, and one way to deal with this issue is for the researcher to look for data that supports alternative explanations. Using peer debriefing, I reviewed some of the participants' responses and noted all discrepancies that with the patterns and themes derived from data analysis. Member checks provided the same opportunity. More specifically, I presented the participants with a two-page summary of my findings and, if necessary, discussed with them their responses. I sought clarification and worked to identify any discrepancies, which I reported. Discrepant findings can point a researcher to potential flaws in the construction of instruments, flaws such as unintended ambiguity or insufficient depth in participants' responses (see DiLoreto & Gaines, 2016).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness and validity of a basic qualitative study depends on what the researcher sees and hears. Ravitch and Carl (2016) noted that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are all important for establishing trustworthiness. One

way a researcher can ensure credibility and transferability is to ensure that those interviewed have the experience to discuss the subject matter the researcher seeks to explore (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). I used the audio recordings of the interviews and notes of body language as a form of credibility. Credibility is the establishment of results from qualitative criteria that are credible from the perspective of the research participants (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I used member checks as a form of validity. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that a researcher solicits feedback on his or her preliminary or emergent findings from some of the interviewed participants. For member checking, I shared a two-page summary of my findings with the participants. This allowed me to take my preliminary analysis back to the participants and ask them whether my interpretations were accurate. Member checks are a way of ruling out misinterpretation of the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspectives they have on what took place (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Member checking contributed to dependability.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), one goal of confirmability is to acknowledge and explore the ways that researchers use data to interpret personal biases and prejudices and to mediate those to the fullest extent possible through structured reflexivity processes. One way to establish confirmability is to ensure no researcher bias. It is important that a researcher interprets what the data tells the researcher in an unbiased way. I had the interviews transcribed by an online service and manually coded them, which helped ensure a deep understanding of the interview content and participant intent. With regard to confirmability, I kept a reflexive journal in which I recorded notes and memos during data analysis and just after each interview (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that reflexivity is how a researcher affects and is affected by the research process. Probst and Berenson (2013) noted that reflexivity is an awareness of the influence a researcher has on what is being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process affects the researcher. Ravitch and Carl (2016) understood that a researcher's reflexive data generation process includes the researcher asking a series of questions of him- or herself regarding his or her impact on the data and study overall. Reflexivity implies that qualitative research is a dialectical process that affects and changes both participants and researcher to some extent (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative studies are dependable if they are what Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) described as consistent and stable over time. In qualitative research, researchers seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it. Dependability is the qualitative counterpart to reliability in quantitative research. Ravitch & Carl stated that reliability entails having a reasoned argument for how data are collected and data that are consistent with that argument. To establish reliability, I made sure that data from the interview questions were reliable in the sense that they answered the research questions. I compared the data collected from the participants with their different perspectives. A researcher must abstain from making suppositions, focus on a specific topic freshly and naively, construct a question or problem to guide the study, and derive findings that provide the basis for future research and reflection (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of a basic qualitative study generalize or transfer to other contexts or settings (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The most commonly mentioned strategy is the use of rich, thick descriptions. Thick

description refers to description of the setting and participants (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). From my explanations of the context, setting, and participants of the study, future researchers will be able to judge the appropriateness of transferring my findings to future research. To ensure transferability, I included detailed descriptions of the data so that readers can make comparisons with other contexts based on as much information as possible. Readers can adopt aspects of the study's design and findings by taking into consideration contextual factors instead of having to replicate the entire study (see Creswell, 2013).

Ethical Procedures

I received approval from the IRB (09-05-19-0632756) to ensure that the study protocol included only ethical procedures. After the university research review (URR) phase began, I completed an online request for IRB guidance regarding which forms or documentation I needed for the study's particular data sources and partner sites. The IRB provided written preliminary ethics feedback until the materials met Walden University's ethical standards. The IRB's goal was to help me work out ethical challenges in advance to minimize the correspondence and revisions needed during the official IRB review. Shortly after proposal approval was submitted my electronic portfolio Taskstream, the IRB contacted me and my chairperson to ask whether any of the data collection procedures or sites described in the forms needed updating as a result of changes made during the final URR/defense steps. I received IRB approval once the board approved the changes.

I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative in January 2019. I mastered the following courses: History and Ethical Principles, Assessing Risk, Informed

Consent, Privacy and Confidentiality, Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research, Belmont Report and Its Principles, and Research with Children. I protected all rights of the participants involved in this study. I followed the ethical requirements of Walden University's IRB. If I had had any ethical concerns related to recruitment materials or data collection, I would have completed an Adverse Event Reporting Form and sent it to Walden University's IRB.

Participants could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or penalty. Participants' information would remain confidential regardless. Before beginning data collection, I e-mailed the letter of invitation and consent form to each potential participant. Participants replied explicitly indicating their consent. The e-mail also described procedures for the collection of data, confidentiality protection, and time required for the interview.

I kept all data confidential between me and each participant. I used coded identifiers for all participants to protect their identities. I stored all data from the semistructured interviews in my home office on a password-protected computer. All data will be erased after 5 years, following final approval by the research committee, to minimize any future risks to confidentiality.

Summary

Chapter 3 included an overview of the methodology of the study with justification for why I chose to conduct a basic qualitative study rather than use a different research design. I explained in detail my role as the primary researcher and how I controlled for researcher bias. The chapter also included a description of recruitment, participation, instrument, data collection, and data analysis. I also discussed issues of trustworthiness

and ethical considerations. In Chapter 4, I present the results, including the setting, participants, data collection and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The assistant superintendent of the research school district granted me permission to solicit participants to interview. I e-mailed potential participants and attached a copy of the letter of invitation and consent form to inform them about the study. Those who wished to participate replied "I consent." When I received the replies, I sent another e-mail to each participant to set a day and time for the participant's interview. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix D) to conduct semistructured, face-to-face interviews in a private room at the public library. I recorded the audio of the interviews, uploaded the audio interviews to Rev.com to be transcribed, and analyzed the transcripts to extract patterns and thematic structures. I used NVivo (version 12) qualitative analysis software to identify codes, themes, and patterns.

In Chapter 4, I present the results divided into four sections where I discuss the following: (a) the data collection process, (b) participant demographic information, (c) data analysis, and (d) findings of the analysis.

The two research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. What are teachers' perspectives on reasons why third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read?

Review of the Data Collection Process

I ensured that data collection procedures corresponded with the research questions and data collection plan, as detailed by Babbie (2017). The participants were five teachers from one urban elementary school in a metropolitan area in a northern state. No unplanned occurrences affected the interpretation of the study results. Data collection included (a) a series of semistructured face-to-face interviews with five elementary school teachers to collect personal narratives related to individual perpectives on best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read and (b) transcription of the interviews followed by coding and analysis using NVivo, version 12.

Demographics

The five study participants were certified elementary (kindergarten through sixth grade) teachers with at least five years of classroom teaching experience with third-grade African American boys. All of the study participants taught reading. I assigned participants codes A–E to protect their identities.

Participant A. Participant A was an instructional coach and third-grade teacher with 20 total years of teaching experience in English language arts. All 20 years of teaching took place in the studied school district. Participant A held a current childhood education professional teaching certificate, a master's of administration, and was principal certified.

Participant B. Participant B was a third-grade teacher with two master's degrees in educational leadership. Participant B had 10 years of teaching experience in early child development and 6 years of experience teaching third-grade students in reading. Participant B held a current teaching certificate in childhood education.

Participant C. Participant C taught third-grade students and had been a certified teacher for 8 years. All 8 years of teaching took place within the studied school district. Additionally, Participant C held a master's degree in teaching and a current teaching certificate for early childhood education.

Participant D. Participant D taught third-grade students and had taught third-grade students for 6 years. Participant D had 13 years of teaching experience and 3 years of experience within the studied school district. Participant D held a current teaching certificate in early childhood education.

Participant E. Participant E was a third-grade teacher and had a 19-year career in education. Participant E had a bachelor's degree in elementary education and was certified in English as a second language. Participant E held a current teaching certificate in early childhood education.

Semistructured Interview Process

The data I collected through semistructured interviews addressed the research questions developed for the study. During the semistructured interviews, I probed individual attitudes, concerns, and opinions held by participants, who taught reading to third-grade African American boys. I used a reflexive journal to document participants' comments and insights. The transcripts and notes I took made up a dense collection of information related to teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

Interview questions. There were eight open-ended interview questions designed to engage participants in a dialog focused on discovering their perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. I began

each interview by asking the participant to sign the release form. I informed the participant that I was the only person privy to the recordings of the interviews, which I would eventually destroy after transcribing them. The participant signed the release form to meet the human subject requirements. I asked general questions about the length of the participant's service in education and teaching of third-grade students, as well as any professional background or experiences they wanted to share. I recorded the audio of each interview. Table 1 presents the two research questions and eight interview questions associated with each.

Table 1

Interview Questions Corresponding to Each Research Question

Interview questions	
	RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives on reasons why third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read?
1	How would you describe a typical reading session in your classroom working with African American 3rd grade boys?
3	What is your understanding of the impediments 3rd grade African American boys face in learning to read?
4	What are your concerns regarding motivating 3rd grade African American boys to read?
8	What reading programs(s) or interventions do you feel are effective to support 3rd grade African American boys' success in reading? Why?
	RQ 2: What are teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read?
2	What are your expectations for African American 3rd grade boys in reading?
5	What motivational techniques/strategies do you presently use to support 3rd grade African American boys read?
6	What best instructional practices have you tried to increase 3rd grade African American boys' motivation to read that were successful for those students?
7	What resources do you keep in your classroom to motivate 3rd grade African American boys to read?
8	What reading program(s) or interventions do you feel are effective to support 3rd grade African American boys' success in reading? Why?

Data Analysis

After transcription and participant review, I printed each interview so that I could review it line by line. I paid careful attention to the interviews and I used NVivo (version 12) to delineate emergent themes.

Organizing the Data

I used Rev.com to transcribe each interview. I organized the transcripts in the order the interviews took place. I saved electronic copies of the interviews on the computer and later uploaded them into NVivo, version 12. I classified the transcripts using codes related to dominant perspectives that emerged. After I completed the first step of the analysis process, I read each transcript again and paid attention to recurring words and phrases. This allowed me to structure the emergent themes. I color-coded similar responses and perspectives to indicate similarity and assist with the coding process. I coded responses to help transform the raw data into a collection of themes representative of the lived experiences of teachers relating to the identification of their perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. During this coding process, I identified concepts and found relationships between them.

Data Coding

I coded the interview data after reading the transcripts several times to identify emergent themes related to teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. I summarized, synthesized, and sorted codes along with comments made by participants during the interviews. I used axial coding to code the data.

Axial Coding

Axial coding is a process of going from coding chunks of data to starting to see how those codes come together. I read a copy of each transcript closely, highlighting

common words, phrases, and references to support converting the initial codes into categories more suitable for deeper consideration.

NVivo Coding

I categorized, coded, noded, and sorted the transcripts into prevalent themes from the participants' responses. Using NVivo (version 12), I created word trees to delineate emergent themes. This provided a visual representation of perspectives that emerged from the research questions. I highlighted and stored evocative passages as nodes in NVivo prior to creating word-tree matrices and further narrowing themes and subthemes within the entire data spectrum.

Depicting Thematic Categories

Shaded words, phrases, and statements shared by participants' narratives of their lived experience merged into the essential themes. I captured each theme through the analytic line-by-line reading, coding, noding, categorizing, and thematic organizing. I identified extracted words and phrases and sorted them using a color-coding schema in NVivo, version 12. Following the creation of the word trees, I created themes for significant words and phrases identified in NVivo. I had identified five tree nodes in NVivo. I created 10 cases from the five nodes after sorting, categorizing, and coding reassignment. The following three themes relevant to the study emerged from the five tree nodes: (a) best instructional practices, (b) motivation for reading, and (c) classroom resources.

Data Analysis Findings

I identified three central themes and 10 coordinating subthemes in participants' responses. Table 2 summarizes the findings in order of importance based on frequency of

reference during the semistructured interviews. The three themes corresponded to the research questions developed for the study. Two themes were associated with Research Question 1: (a) best instructional practices and (b) motivation for reading. One additional theme was associated with Research Question 2: classroom resources.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes Identified from Participants' Semistructured Interviews

Theme	Subthemes
Best instructional practices	Type of instruction (whole, small group, etc.) Reading strategies/programs Interventions
Motivation for reading	Rewards Incentives
Classroom resources	Freckle.com Tumblebooks iRead

Theme 1: Best instructional practices. Best instructional practices are ways to keep instruction in the classroom environment lively and stimulating (Ermeling et al., 2015). This theme contained three specific subthemes connected to what teachers perceived as crucial to the successful implementation of best instructional practices for reading in the classroom. According to the perspectives shared by the interviewed teachers, implementation of different types of instruction, interventions, and reading strategies provided opportunities to motivate reading. Participant A described how instructional practices are incorporated throughout the day with students, particularly third-grade African American boys:

> "So, for me to make sure that the children are on point with reading, that my third-grade boys are engaged, that they're doing it, I am guiding reading small group. We are reading, we're scaffolding the material. We're working on vocabulary and we're only in groups of four to six students. So, we're building vocabulary, and this is one-on-one time with me. The other students are working at other centers where they're also working on skills, whether it's a computer related, a technology-based assignment, a graphic organizer, but they're also working in groups. And so, they're feeding off of each other. Third-grade boys listen to third-grade boys."

Three of the five participants perceived an increase of best practices that they felt were successful for student reading. Exposure to new instructional practices offered opportunities to engage students in new ways of learning. Participant C shared:

> "I like to always start off with an interesting anticipatory set when we do reading. So, I love vocabulary, something to engage them. So, it's like a rap song. They rap about different skills, and I noticed that it gets my boys very engaged. A lot of them learn the rap songs and along with the rap songs it teaches them about the skill."

Theme 1a: Type of instruction. Participants said that opportunities to implement best instructional practices provided flexibility to use different types of instruction during reading. Participant B expressed similar ideas of best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read:

> "Definitely a lot of small group instruction and also finding books of high interest. You do a student survey, and based off your student survey, you get information

about the books that they like to read. So, we try to have them bring those books in or get them stocked in the library."

There was discrepancy among the participants regarding best instructional practices. Four of the five interview participants stated that best instructional practices are designed to increase the efficacy of lessons for students and it is important to incorporate new practices as often as possible. Although some teachers are involved in professional development and focused on implementing new practices, others are content with using traditional skills to teach reading. Participant D stated that best instructional practice for an everyday skill is rote learning:

> "So, if I'm teaching story structure, I'll go over character, setting, plot, all the language that goes with the skill that I'm teaching. After we go over the academic language and over what it means and examples and stuff, I do. . . We have something called projectables in our program, and that's where you can model the skill. So, it's a shorter read, and it has the setting, characters, the plot, where you go over the beginning, middle, and end, problem, solution, all that stuff. So, they each get a projectable, and I have it on the smart board. I project it up there. It has a short story, and it has all the academic language I went over, and then I do it with them. It's guided. Then after that, the next day when I introduce it again, they get their own projectable, and it's with the story that's actually in their desk. It's with the textbook, and they take what they learned with me and apply it with that story. Some is guided, some is on their own, and it's kind of something like that. It's kind of like the, "I do, you do, we do" type thing with the reading. So, going over the language ahead of time, going over what character, setting, and

> plot is with the projectable that I project, and then using it to help them now find that character, setting, plot in the book we're doing in class, if that makes sense."

Participant E described similar best instructional practices but took a different approach when assisting African American boys to read:

> "Definitely differentiating. I definitely have to search through and find passages that are either on a first- or second-grade level or I sometimes will partner them with somebody who can read a little bit better. Once this instructional practice has been tried as an introductory lesson, I would take a different approach with a new collection of books. So, I remember last year, they enjoyed graphic novels and they enjoyed just regular novels that featured black boys. We read a novel last year called Junebug. They really enjoyed that book because it was a black boy who didn't have a father and he was the main character and they looked forward to me reading that to them and I would give them the shorter passages in the story to read."

All five participants stated that small group instruction was an important factor for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. They said that whole group instruction with relatable stories and novels allow students to see themselves and motivates discussion in reading. Four of the five participants mentioned the type of instruction used to motivate third-grade African American boys to read. Participant C said:

> "We do whole group activities on phonics, grammar and then we work on the skill for the week. After that we break up into small groups. I like my students to move around a lot. My classroom is set up every corner there's a specific center. I

> put them into small groups and then in the back I have a small group where I work with, a small group of students' one on one. A lot of group instructions keeping them very much so engaged throughout the entire lesson."

Participant A had a similar response:

> "Third-grade African American boys are more attentive and more effective in small group instruction because they get a little more attention. They're more comfortable expressing their needs, whether it's any deficiencies, or if they aren't being challenged enough. So, in my experience, they've been more comfortable in small group, and obviously, during the interventional one-to-one tutoring."

Small-group teaching is more effective than whole-class instruction because usually students in a small group make larger learning gains (Pritchard, 2018). Participant B said, "We definitely use small-group instruction. So, you have your guided reading or you may have your lesson, your small-group lessons, because not all students need guided reading."

Theme 1b: Reading strategies/programs. According to Foorman et al. (2016), the selected textbook of an effective reading program in the elementary grades is a critical step for reading development. The reading program that the participants discussed was their current textbook, Journeys. The strategies incorporated through their reading program did not meet the needs of the students in reading. The participants all stated that the program was ineffective. Participant A explained:

> "Our current reading series, Journeys, by Houghton Mifflin is completely ineffective. It does not address the reading needs of our students in [the city in which the study was conducted]. It is not rigorous. It provides little to no support

> for the teachers in terms of supplemental materials, or something that actually addresses the needs of the students."

Participant E concurred:

> "I am not a fan of Journeys, and I'm sure everyone said that, because we all talk about how we hate Journeys. The stories are just . . . I don't know what it is. I'm just not a fan of it, and I don't find them motivating, and I don't find them pleasant. Something about them, I just don't think they're great books."

Participant D discussed reading strategies using computer programs were more beneficial to the students because they gravitated toward them faster:

> "I think just the whole online version of learning is motivating more to them, but in the same token, when it comes to answering questions, that's the biggest problem. So yeah, we could have everything online, but they still have to go back in the story, and they still have to answer the questions. So yes, it will motivate them maybe to read more."

Theme 1c: Interventions. Participants said that shared reading, guided reading, and one-to-one interventions were good for strategizing reading programs. Interventions focus on instruction in reading, which helps with foundational skills. Participant D said:

> "I think what's most helpful is guided reading, because they get to be with me. They get that time individually to discuss things and ask questions." Participant B referred back to a computer program used for reading intervention: "Freckle is an intervention program and it scaffolds based on the student's level." Participant C explained:

> "We have the guided reading intervention, so it's just the same thing with center. But while the other kids are working, we work with a small group for guided reading in the back. So whatever level my students are on, if we're working on phonics, I'll have work that pertained to phonics or if you have those students who are on a higher level, I'll give them work, that's on their level. So, it allows me to work with those students. About five, four to five students. I'm in a small group for about 15 to 20 minutes a day and just really work on those skills that they need improvement on."

Figure 1 shows teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices they feel are best for motivating third grade African American boys to read.

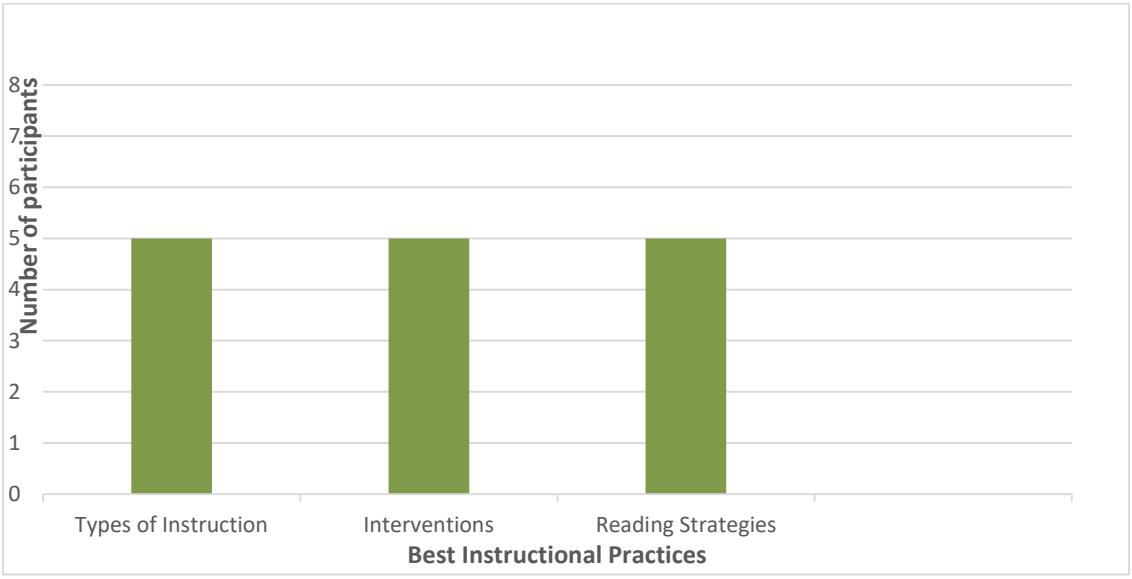

Figure 1. Best instructional practices.

Theme 2: Motivation for reading. Motivation is the general desire or willingness of someone to do something. Deci and Ryan (2008) stated that motivation is what moves individuals to think, act, and develop. Students' intrinsic reading motivation, which occurs when students read for pleasure or out of perceived personal significance,

positively contributes to their reading comprehension. Extrinsic motivation correlates positively with good grades in reading but is less likely to positively influence reading comprehension. The participants expressed many concerns with regard to motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Participant D said:

> "I thought of motivation for students as it has to come from within. So, it depends on the nature of the child. It depends on the habits that they're learning at home. It depends on the environment you've created at home with reading."

Participant A said:

> "My major concern is that often they are simply overlooked. If a child is not a behavior problem, and he tends to just sit there quietly, then often they are overlooked. Because either they are ignored for behavior problems, or they are, I guess ignored for the brighter kids that are participating. And sometimes the assumption may be, oh, they're just quiet, but they're getting it. Maybe if I give him or her a treat to participate in the lesson that will tell me what I need to know. Or they are a behavior problem, and because of that, you don't even address their needs and give them anything. Hence, they continue to become a behavior problem. So, one of those parts, that they're ignored."

Participant B presented a slightly different perspective but expressed a similar sentiment:

> "One of my concerns is I don't want them to become too far behind and they're trying to play catch up. Because once a deficiency starts, it grows. So, it's best to target the students early and address their areas of deficiencies. You don't want them to lose interest in school as well, because then they start to misbehave. By giving incentives, it would possibly get them to participate in the lesson. But I

> would first love to see how they engage and interact on their own without incentives."

Participants clearly stated their frustration related to motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Participant D also explained:

> "Here's the thing. I find what's most motivating is when it's books that make them laugh, books that are about their interests. But the reality is that's not life when it comes to school, that's not the reality. You're not always going to read things that you like. You're not always going to read things that interest you. You're not going to always read things that are your cup of tea. So as far as making them a reader for academic purposes and being able to get through life and pass tests and do what they need to do, honestly there's only so much control I have over that. Just I can teach them, I can show them, I can talk to them, but no one's going to be there to hand you a reward because you read a book. It has to come within. You have to be intrinsically motivated to read things that don't always interest you."

There was discrepancy among the participants when discussing motivation strategies. Opportunities are always present in classroom to inspire and motivate students to do their best (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Four of the five interviewed participants expressed an interest and desire to give incentives and rewards to motivate students to read. Participant B said:

> "I like to give the students incentives such as free time, extra computer time, positive notes home, no-homework passes, and things like that. Anything that will give them encouragement to read, I will give it to them."

Participant E concurred with giving incentives to motivate those students:

> "They knew at the first of the month we would have a small celebration and it would just be like fruit roll-ups. But if your name was, if I got an e-mail about you either being a top reader or your Lexile level improving or you read the most articles, we would do a round of applause and the kids would get a fruit roll-up or a special pencil."

Participant D felt that students should not be rewarded for doing what they are supposed to do. Participant C did not feel the need to have an incentive program for her class. Participant C believed that students' willingness should come from within themselves. Participant C stated:

> "That's a tough one because I'm not into extrinsic support. I don't do gifts. I don't do stickers. I don't do that. I don't reward children for doing what they're supposed to do. Now if a child does something extraordinary, then I will. So, I've had things where, say at the end of each marking period, I'll reward my students. Not necessarily honor roll, but students that have shown growth, who have done well on testing, have improved. Or have like, we call it a Friday and a movie. And so, I'll put something on a smart board, and we'll have snacks and things in the classroom, and I'll escort my other students somewhere else for the time. So that's one basic reward that I have done. I've also done things where you can have lunch with me if you showed that you're working hard in reading. So, I reward those types of things."

These responses indicated that teachers recognized an acute need for incentives for students to motivate them in reading. There was some discrepancy when it came to

discussing incentives as a motivation strategy for student reading. Figure 2 shows participants' perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

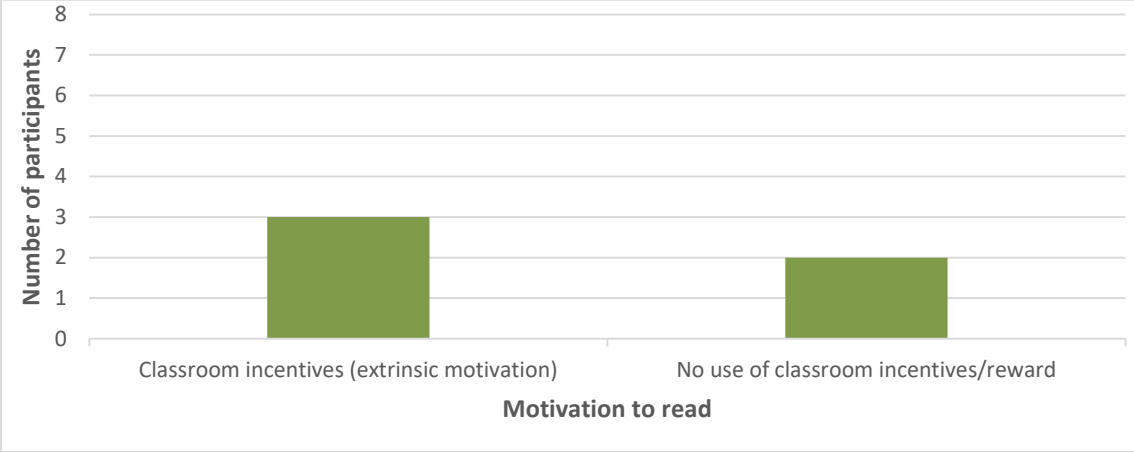

Figure 2. Motivation to read.

Theme 3: Classroom resources. All five participants had classroom resources to assist with reading instruction. The desire to develop a beneficial reading block within the classroom was important for all participants. Participants discussed their classroom resources, which all took the form of technology. They had access to laptop carts for the entire class, so they used the resources weekly when they had the cart. Participant A said:

> "I know that we use supplemental programs, like iREAD. It's an online program that has been successful for the third graders that challenged my students. It builds up phonemic awareness, basic reading skills, foundations skills. We use a program called freckle.com now, and it works with comprehension and fluency, and its ELA [English language arts], math, social studies, and science, information texts. The online usage makes it fun and engaging for the children. So, they're reading, they're doing math. They get like little prizes, and stuff on the computer."

Participants B, D, and E used similar resources. Participant B explained:

> "Freckle.com is very beneficial to my students and I also like the flip lesson plan. So, with the flip lesson plan, you see what your students know already and focus on the things that they don't know. What foundational reading skills that they know already and then you focus on those things that they don't know. So instead of teaching everything, you know what to narrow down."

Participant D also used technology as a classroom resource to access reading materials for students:

> "There is a website I used called Tumblebooks. That was a website that I do on there, and they can read them. They love those books. I also have a collection of my Robert Munsch books. He's phenomenal. Every time we read them; they laugh. It's so funny. He has the greatest books ever. They're easy to understand, and they're hilarious."

Participant E explained:

> "Freckle.com is a pretty decent resource I use because it meets students' needs for reading, math, science and social studies. And it gives them online articles and online activities that I can either gear toward them on their level or on the third-grade level. It allows them extra practice. I also use a program called Achieve 3000 or it's also known as KidBiz. I like that one because it's all nonfiction articles where kids had to answer questions and it meets them where they are reading level wise. Then they can see their growth overtime. Using the Achieve 3000, I could post on the smart board, for the month, the children whose Lexile level increased at the most."

Providing quality instruction depends on appropriate classroom resources. Seasoned teachers are skilled at finding and using resources that enhance student learning. Securing a wide variety of quality classroom resources allows teachers to differentiate instruction, adjusting what and how he or she teaches to different skill levels. Participate C had a method for differentiating her classroom resources:

> "I organize my books based off of the genre. I have mystery books, humor books, adventure books, so whatever, whatever they take to the most fantasy books. I noticed my boys love coming over here. This whole tent that I have in my library, they love it. They love to just go in the tent. Even the ones that, to be honest that can't read, just want to come over here just to be in the tent or pick up a book just so they can hang out because it's just a comfortable place for them. I do this because reading doesn't have to be so tight. So, a lot of my boys asked to come over here actually just from the setup, having the tent, having the comfy couch, having the little chairs, and having the big carpet. For my structured boy students, they have a session of guided reading with me or an independent reading activity from our reading textbook, Journeys."

Interviewees indicated that incorporation of classroom resources motivated third-grade African American boys to read. Their responses signified the students' willingness to engage in reading activities based on the incorporation of technology and different genres of reading material available. Figure 3 shows participants use of resources that motivates students during their reading block.

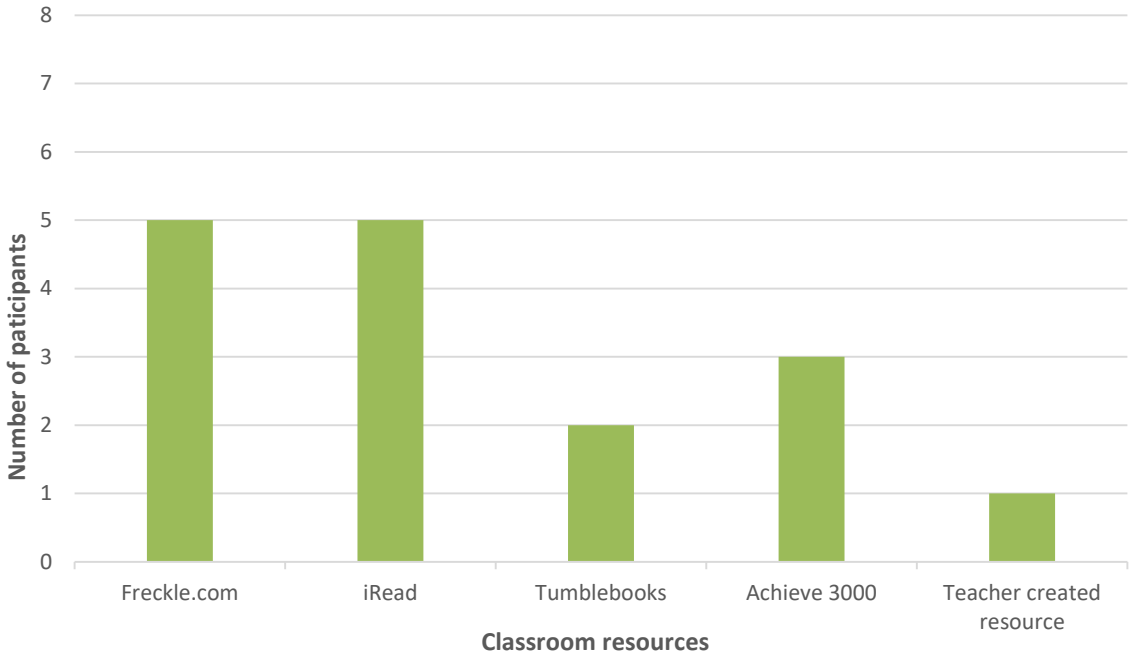

Figure 3. Classroom resources used by participants.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is achieved in part by showing that selected participants are informed about the research concerns and can be expected to be knowledgeable about the research topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In my study, I interviewed five teachers who each had at least 7 years of professional experience teaching third-grade African American boys to read. Each teacher shared the best instructional practices he or she used to motivate these students to read. For member checking, I shared a two-page summary of my findings with participants.

Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative counterpart to reliability. Reliability entails having a reasoned argument for how data are collected and data are consistent with that

argument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability includes describing the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of the findings. To ensure dependability I kept careful records throughout the study. I used audio recordings, my laptop, and field notes to be certain of capturing all data accurately. I also kept a reflective journal to record my thoughts as the study progressed and to limit interference with data analysis from personal bias.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research generalize to other contexts, settings, or populations. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the most common strategy to ensure transferability is the use of rich, thick descriptions. Thick description refers to description of the setting and participants of a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A thick description describes not just behavior and experiences but their context as well, so that the behavior and experiences become meaningful to outsiders. I endeavored in this chapter to fully describe participants' responses and the contexts of those responses so that readers can assess the transferability of the results to other situations.

Confirmability

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), one goal of confirmability is to acknowledge and explore the ways that researchers use data to interpret personal biases and prejudices and to mediate those problems as much as possible using structured reflexivity processes. Reflexivity is used because there are so many ways in which researcher bias could affect the study, from the creation of data gathering tools, to collecting the data, analyzing it and reporting it. Confirmability is the degree to which

other researchers can confirm the findings of a study. Because each participant brings his or her own unique perspective to a study, confirmability depends on whether participants' perspectives can be corroborated. I related all findings to the themes and related the themes to the two research questions. I contributed reflexiveness through my attentiveness, openness to receive information, and my appearance.

Summary

With this basic qualitative study, I explored teachers' perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. In Chapter 4, I presented the emergent themes derived from analysis of data collected via semistructured interviews of five third-grade teachers from an elementary school in a metropolitan area in a northern state. The basic qualitative approach of exploring lived experiences shared through the interview process guided the research and data collection processes.

At the start of each interview I collected pertinent information regarding the number of years participants had been teaching, their grade level, their subject area, and their level of education. Each semistructured interview consisted of eight open-ended questions designed to engage participants in discussion of their perspectives on best instructional practices in alignment with the research questions. I recorded the audio of the interviews and had the recordings transcribed. I also uploaded and stored my notes in my password protected computer. I analyzed both transcripts and notes using electronic and manual data-management tools. I coded and analyzed each interview using NVivo (Version 12) through multiple coding levels to arrive at the most precise thematic representation of the data possible.

Based on the first research question, the reasons third grade African American boys are or are not motivated to read are the incentives and classroom resources used to motivate students to read. The teacher participants mentioned that incentives played a role in motivating them to read; but also keeping in mind that there is little content that students see themselves in as characters in books. Having relatable content in books for third grade African American boys may motivate them to read. According to the second research question about teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read, participants said it is based on the types of instruction implemented in the classroom. The participants all stated that small group instruction motivates the students to read as well as guided instruction.

The following three themes emerged: (a) best instructional practices, (b) motivation for reading, and (c) classroom resources. Subthemes provided finer-grained insight into teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third grade African American boys to read.

Theme 1: Best Instructional Practices- Two participants determined that using a number of best instructional practices can motivate students to read. For example, the participants used small group instruction, guided reading, and intervention sessions throughout the reading block to motivate students. These different instructional practices allowed students to feel comfortable asking questions and an opportunity for guided reading.

Theme 2: Motivation-Three participants concluded that giving incentives motivated students to read and participate during the reading block. An example of this, participants would give students sweet treats if their Lexile score increased over a

weeks' time. Other participants felt that students should not be rewarded for doing what they are supposed to do; however, they saw the enthusiasm if incentives were given. All of the participants agreed they would first love to see how they engage and interact on their own without incentives.

Theme 3: Classroom Resources- Three participants determined that using relatable book content and technology resources were beneficial in motivating students to read. For example, some participants used websites as a classroom resource for reading, three times a week, to motivate the students to read. Others bought African American book collections for students to use in the classroom during reading time to motivate them. Securing a wide variety of quality classroom resources allows teachers to differentiate instruction.

Chapter 5 includes conclusions, recommendations, interpretations of the findings for each theme, and suggested topics for further study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third grade African American boys to read. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), a qualitative design with interviews is especially appropriate when the purpose of a study is to develop an in-depth understanding of experiences and perspectives from individual participants. This study was relevant and necessary because few researchers had investigated teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read (Marshik, Ashton, & Algina, 2017).

Overall, the participants felt that their experiences teaching third grade African American boys had contributed to their understanding of the best instructional practices in reading. The participants also found that using different types of instruction, motivation for reading, and classroom resources played a major role in their perspectives on what motivates third grade African American boys to read. However, all of the participants felt that more research could be conducted with teachers in different demographic areas regarding what best instructional practices are used in motivating third grade African American boys to read.

Interpretation of the Findings

Throughout the interpretations of the findings of this study, I considered the literature I gathered. The study was based on two research questions. Research Question 1 allowed for exploration of teachers' perspectives on reasons third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read. Research Question 2 allowed for the exploration of teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for

encouraging third-grade African American boys to read. I used the CRT to concentrate on African American boys which is stated in both research questions. I used SDT to focus on third-grade African American boys' motivation to read. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of the studies discussed in Chapter 2, including those that used Ladson-Billing and Tates' CRT, Ryan and Deci's SDT, and Hirtle's theory of social constructivism, and all of which identified interactions that involved cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

The themes of this study suggest that teachers use many strategies and techniques for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. Participants agreed that their current reading program textbook, "Journeys," did not meet the needs of their students. This had led them to search both collaboratively as a grade-level team and individually to find best instructional practices for motivating third grade African American boys to read. According to Hamre et al. (2014), best instructional practices influence children's motivation to learn and develop; however, researchers have reported mixed results concerning which teaching strategies best promote children's academic and reading interest (Käsper et al., 2018). Participants reported that using different instructional practices influenced student motivation. I found that teachers must learn about their students each year to discover whether they are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to read. I also learned that teachers assumed that using different types of instruction for reading differentiated their instruction.

Third grade African American males are currently scoring lower than every other ethnic group in reading on state assessments annually. The NCES (2017) showed a gap in reading proficiency between African American boys and Caucasian boys. This gap in

reading proficiency indicated a need for bold and creative ways for schools to motivate African American boys to read (Howard, 2016). Participants in this study agreed they had to find creative ways, as educators, to motivate students in reading because third grade is a state mandated test grade. Existing literature states that teachers have applied many teaching strategies with literacy knowledge and motivation to prepare students for reading tests (MacPhee & Sanden, 2016). It is important to understand teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices to provide ideas and creative ways to motivate third-grade African American boys to read. The participants in this study all agreed that using different instructional practices allows them to find out the best instructional practices to use to motivate third grade African American boys to read.

My findings were consistent with reports in existing literature that although best instructional practices influence children's motivation to learn and develop (Hamre et al., 2014), researchers have not agreed which teaching strategies best promote children's academic and reading interest (Käsper et al., 2018). Participants used different instructional strategies to engage and motivate third grade African American boys to read. McGeown et al. (2016) found that children's reading motivation correlated with their degree of engagement in a variety of reading activities that teachers implemented in the classroom. Participants in this study reported that children are more motivated to read when they have relatable reading content. Tatum (2015) stated that neither effective reading strategies nor comprehensive literacy reform efforts would close the achievement gap unless culturally relevant texts were at the core of the curriculum; introducing such texts could boost reading motivation and reading performance.

Teachers with extensive knowledge of the most effective instructional practices can succeed only to the extent that their students are motivated to learn and use those practices (Wigfield et al., 2016). Some participants said they use incentives to motivate the students to participate in reading lessons. Educational studies of the effectiveness of incentives in education have yielded mixed results (Guryan, Kim, & Park, 2016). There were also mixed results for incentives mentioned by the participants. Participant D and E said that the students should not be rewarded for things they were supposed to do. Participants A, B, and C said that sometimes using incentives was beneficial to motivate third grade African American boys to read. Woolley and Fishbach (2015) believed the value of incentives may depend on whether they engage a student in an activity. Although two participants felt different from the other three participants, all participants agreed that incentives were useful to motivate third grade African American boys to read. To summarize, the results of this study are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that using incentives may be valuable as best instructional practices.

Lin-Siegler et al. (2016) noted that teachers' prior knowledge and experiences shape their perspectives on child development and on the instructional practices they use in their early years of teaching. The participants indicated that using best instructional practices allowed them to see if there was a need for reading interventions. Wanzek et al. (2016) said the intent of reading interventions is to accelerate reading achievement and assist students in meeting grade level expectations. Participants used interventions such as guided reading and one on one instruction. Intervention provides explicit and systematic instruction, increasing opportunities for student feedback and increasing instructional time (Cho et al., 2015). Wanzek et al. noted the effectiveness of

interventions in reading has shown overall improvements in reading outcomes. To summarize, the results of my study are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that interventions help with foundational skills in reading.

One unexpected finding was that participants had not deciphered whether students were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to read. Corpus et al. (2016) said that intrinsic motivation was learning for the sake of learning and extrinsic motivation was based on outside incentives. Participants did not treat this distinction as a factor regarding students' ability to read. However, participants D and E expressed that students' cultures and home environments influenced their motivation. Wu (2015) determined that culture means shared motives, values, and beliefs from common experiences that are transmitted across generations. The other participants expressed the students could be motivated to read regardless of culture. Teachers and administrators must be aware of cultural differences and develop learning environments that encompass economically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds to promote motivation of reading within their schools (Orrock & Clark, 2018).

The SDT is a macro theory of human motivation that differentiates between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The theory has been applied to predict behavior and inform behavior change in many contexts including: education, health care, work organizations, parenting, and sports, as well as many other areas. According to Deci & Ryan (1985), extrinsic motivation versus intrinsic motivation involves wanting to read for enjoyment or wanting to read because it can lead to rewards and incentives.

Research Question 1 asked what teachers' perspectives were on reasons third-grade African American boys are motivated or not motivated to read. The SDT explains people's innate psychological needs for self-motivation, personality integration, and the conditions that foster those positive processes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Findings related to Research Question 1 were significant and consistent with Ryan and Deci's (2000) SDT theory, which asserts that examined factors enhance, rather than undermine intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being. Participants had years of teaching experience that contributed to this study. The participants viewed their students as a whole, but when implementing instruction, they all agreed there were individual instructional practices that had to be used for African American boys. McGeown et al. (2016) found that children's reading motivation correlated with their degree of engagement in a variety of reading activities. Throughout the interviews, participants felt that more small group instruction activity and guided reading activity had to be used when motivating third grade African American boys to read.

Individuals experience heightened motivation once their psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are met (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The results from this study were consistent with this theory in two regards. First, regarding competence, participants identified the lack of successful reading textbooks purchased for the reading curriculum for the school district. Students must become competent readers, committed, and motivated to read throughout elementary school which will increase academic achievement (De Naeghel et al., 2016). Participants expressed their concern on how the current reading textbook did not go in depth in order to motivate them with the basic reading skills. In this study, one teacher stated that during the reading block, students

who could perform reading tasks well were generally more engaged and motivated during reading. Secondly, relatedness was consistent with the findings in the study as expressed by the theme of classroom resources. According to the participants, low-performing students often felt detached from the reading block, because the reading content did not relate to them. Most of the participants took it upon themselves to purchase reading materials that would relate to the African American boy students. One participant responded to this problem by teaching reading themes based books specifically identifying young African American boys.

Participants in this study noted that their classroom environment was designed with the idea to motivate students to read. The participants created cozy corners, decorated classroom libraries, and "poem" trees to get the students interested in wanting to read. As part of the conceptual framework, SDT proposes that learning environments play a significant role in determining students' inner motivation for learning (see Ryan & Deci, 2000). Likewise, Baroody and Diamond (2016) stated that environmental characteristics (e.g., the literacy opportunities within the classroom environment) and children's individual characteristics (e.g., children's interest in an activity) are likely to play a role in children's academic achievement. Participants stated they knew the rigor of the reading curriculum for third grade students because of the state assessment. This prompted participants to create a positive environment to motivate reading. Participants stated they use content that related to students as well as small group sessions.

CRT in education focuses on the interconnection of race, school, and educational outcomes (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT posits that racism is endemic in society and in education, and that racism has become so deeply engrained in society's and

school's consciousness that it is often invisible. Ladson-Billings and Tate's theory (1995) was applied to research in education as an alternative way of viewing educational institutions and the difficulties facing people of color within these institutions. Participants discussed how they made accommodations in reading for all students; particularly African American males. The more we discussed these particular students, the more confident the participants felt with identifying instructional strategies used for motivating them to read.

Research Question 2 asked about teachers' perspectives on the best instructional practices for encouraging third-grade African American boys to read. The CRT enables scholars to ask, in unique ways, the important question of what racism has to do with inequities in education. Third grade African American boys were identified as the grade level, race, and gender in this study. Findings related to Research Question 2 were significant and consistent with Ladson-Billings and Tate's CRT theory, which asserts that there is a different way uncover how third grade African American boys are taught in the classroom. This theory elucidates how race operates in society and education at both the structural and local, everyday levels. The participants were very open in the interview process discussing third grade African American boys.

The results from this study were consistent with CRT about growing concerns that emerged as a way to analyze the pervasiveness of racism in society (Howard & Navarro, 2016). According to all participants, it is specifically important that African American boys are taken into consideration for best instructional practices in reading because of education attainment, or lack thereof, of African Americans in the area. One participant discussed most African American male students in the participant's classroom deal with

fathers incarcerated, hygiene problems, and being responsible for the family. According to Participant D, because of these factors most students are just trying to survive and reading is the last thing on their minds.

The theory of social constructivism describes human development as socially situated and knowledge as constructed through interaction with others. Vygotsky's (1978) learning model affirms that social interactions are primary functions of cognitive development. I used the theory of social constructivism in this study to socially construct new knowledge from the semistructured interviews conducted. The findings supported social constructivism as a theory of knowledge that enables teachers to promote meaningful learning and intrinsic motivation in their students. I applied the theory of social constructivism to motivating third grade African American boys because of its relevance in learning and motivation.

Limitations of the Study

Possible limitations in this study included sample size, participants dropping from the study, participants' unwillingness to participate, and researcher bias. The first limitation was the sample size. I limited data collection to one school. I extended an invitation to three schools in the study's school district. More teachers may have participated if the interviews had occurred during school hours rather than after school hours. The second limitation was participants dropping from the study. I used a purposeful sampling strategy to invite all 10 teachers to participate and share their teaching experiences on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. According to Malterud et al. (2016), selection of five to 10 participants with diverse experiences should provide sufficient information to answer research questions. I

explained to potential participants the time necessary for the interviews, which would be after work hours, so they could decide whether to volunteer for the study or not. Participants were volunteers who could withdraw from the study at any time with no ramifications.

The participants' willingness to participate was the third limitation. A number of factors possibly influenced participants; such as a shortage of classroom resources, classroom management, and classroom assistance. Potential researcher bias was the fourth limitation. I am a former third grade teacher with 10 years of classroom experience. My passion and interest for teaching third grade African American boys drove this study. It was important that I did not manipulate the participants' responses to the interview questions. Addressing the limitations of the study allows the reader to determine the level of transferability of findings. Several techniques were utilized to minimize the limitations of this study. A reflexive journal allowed me to document participants' comments and insights. A transcribed copy of interviews helped to avoid bias, misrepresentations, and omissions.

Recommendations

I recommend that this study be replicated in public schools in different geographic area to better understand teachers' perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read. More teachers may yield additional information. A replication of this study in a different geographic area would reveal best instructional practices that differ from those that I gathered and may add teacher perspectives missing from the present study.

I suggest that this study be replicated in a school or schools in which there are male teachers. Attitudes toward best instructional practices may be different in schools with men on staff. Further research may uncover additional information about male teachers' perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

I also recommend that a study be conducted that solicits the opinions of third-grade African American boys themselves. Evidence gathered in this study suggests that their input may be important when trying to find the type of instruction that could motivate them to read. Systematic analysis of third-grade African American boys' opinions would contribute to the literature on reading motivation.

Implications

Results of this study indicate that teachers of third-grade African American boys may benefit from implementing different types of instruction in their classrooms to motivate these students to read. This study may promote positive social change by providing information to administrators and educational leaders regarding teachers' perspectives on best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. This may lead to the implementation of successful instructional strategies for reading that use small groups, guided reading, and one-to-one interventions during reading blocks. Instruction in small settings may increase reading motivation for third-grade African American boys. Small-group instruction gives students more of the teacher's focused attention and chances to ask specific questions (Begeny, Levy, & Field, 2017).

One methodological implication of this study concerns my method of recruiting participants. Only teachers in one school accepted my invitation to participate. I sent

invitations to three schools to gain participants for this study, only participants of one school accepted. This may have affected the study results because data came from teachers at a single school and all were women. For this reason, in any future research I plan to be more aware of soliciting as many participants as possible in a geographic area. This will give me more than enough participants and enough time to prepare if participants decline to participate.

My review of existing literature revealed that best instructional practices should be explored for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. An opportunity exists to expand the theoretical foundations underlying motivation of third-grade African American boys by comparing different types of reading instruction. If, as researchers have demonstrated (Kolic-Vehovec et al., 2014), the best instructional practices related to reading have not been well explored, then exploring different types of instruction and reading strategies is imperative. It is critical to gather data from teachers regarding how they implement instructional practices in their classrooms and what motivational resources they anticipate needing to motivate third-grade African American boys to read. A large-scale study of third-grade teachers, both men and women, could give a more extensive viewpoint about teachers' perspectives on motivating third-grade African American boys to read.

I interviewed five teachers who had experience teaching third grade African American boys in reading to see what types of instructional practices they use in motivating them to read. The participants were excited about expressing their perspectives to motivate this group of students. Throughout the study, I continued to

express how their honesty would benefit the research study. Participants stated the types of instruction that they used and how they based it on how well they knew their students.

The participants confirmed that using different types of instruction was helpful and using types of instruction could pinpoint whether the instruction motivated the students in reading. I was surprised to learn that there are some teachers who strictly use the resources suggested by the curriculum maps and rubrics, not researching and bringing in outside resources for the students to use in the classroom. I was also surprised to learn that one out of the five participants who taught for 13 years, blamed parents for most of the students' lack of motivation to read. There seemed to be no teacher accountability for this participants' actions. It is true that as educators, there is nothing we can do for the students' home environment. As teachers, it is our job to do what we can to help the students succeed.

This study was significant because it allowed teachers to express their understanding of best instructional practices for motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The findings of this study may guide the planning and implementation of reading curriculum strategies and teacher training. The participants' perspectives provided new insight into the challenges teachers face motivating third-grade African American boys to read. The study also has implications for positive social change. It suggests that individual teachers can improve their instructional practices for third-grade African American boys.

In the future, third grade teachers may benefit from data collected from male teachers or directly from third grade boys. Further research may uncover additional information about male teachers' perspectives on motivating third-grade African

American boys to read. Data gathered in this study suggests that third grade African American boys' input may be important when trying to find the type of instruction that could motivate them to read.

Conclusion

The results of my study filled a gap in the literature. Third-grade African American boys have consistently scored low on reading assessments. This piqued my interest and drove me to ask what could motivate these students to read. The results of this study indicate that best instructional practices are important when determining how to motivate third-grade African American boys to read. Teacher participants indicated they used different types of instruction, incentives, and relatable reading content for students as best instructional practices for motivating third grade African American boys to read. Overall, small-group instruction had the greatest impact on motivating third-grade African American students to read, because in small-group instruction these students received almost one-on-one attention. This knowledge may provide school administrators and educational leaders with important knowledge that could support the initiation of policies, strategies, and procedures to motivate third-grade African American boys to read.

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Appendix A: Permission to Conduct Study

July 12, 2019

[Superintendent]
Phone:

Dear [Superintendent]:

My name is Jamilia Howard and I am pursuing a doctorate degree in Early Childhood Education at Walden University. For my doctoral dissertation, I would like to conduct a study with third grade teachers at Langston Hughes Elementary School. My dissertation is entitled “Teachers’ Perspectives of Best instructional practices in Motivating Third grade African American Boys to Read.”

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perspectives of best instructional practices in motivating third grade African American boys to read. Encouraging teachers to share their perspectives of instructional practices may help me identify their understanding, feelings, and concerns regarding the motivation of third grade African American boys.

The data I will collect will be the responses to semi-structured interview questions. I will interview five to ten teacher participants for 30 minutes to an hour one-on-one session at the East Orange Public Library. Since school is out for the summer and teachers are at home, I will ask the building principal if I could have the third grade teachers’ email address to contact them to potentially participate in the study. I will use a Samsung Galaxy S9 to record each interview that will be transcribed verbatim.

The results of my study may benefit students, teachers, and educational stakeholders in local communities. Through my research, my goal is to contribute to a greater understanding of what motivates African American boys to read.

Sincerely,

Jamilia R. Howard

Appendix B: Permission to Access Teachers

August , 2019
[building principal]
Phone:

Dear [building principal],

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with third grade teachers of _____ Elementary School. I am currently enrolled in the Doctor of Education program at Walden University, and am in the process of writing my Doctoral Dissertation. The study is entitled Teachers' Perspectives of Best Instructional Practices in Motivating Third Grade African American Boys to Read.

I hope that the school administration will allow me to conduct interviews with five to 10 teachers from the school. Since school is out for the summer and teachers are at home, I would like to know if I could have the third grade teachers' email address to contact them to potentially participate in the study. Potential participants who are interested in participating will receive a letter of invitation/consent form to view and understand the study before deciding whether to take part. If they decide to move forward, they would need to reply "I consent" to the email.

The interviews will take place at the East Orange Public Library and should take no longer than 30 minutes to an hour. No costs are incurred by either your school or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study is greatly appreciated. I will follow up with an email in two days and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address.

If you agree to provide me with the third grade teachers' email addresses, please reply "I consent." Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamilia Howard, Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Teacher Participants

1) How would you describe a typical reading session in your classroom working with African American 3rd grade boys?
2) What are your expectations for African American 3rd grade boys in reading?
3) What is your understanding of the impediments 3rd grade African American boys face in learning to read?
4) What are your concerns regarding motivating 3rd grade African American boys to read?
5) What motivational techniques/strategies do you presently use to support 3rd grade African American boys read?
6) What best instructional practices have you tried to increase 3rd grade African American boys' motivation to read that were successful for those students?
7) What resources do you keep in your classroom to motivate 3rd grade African American boys to read?
8) What reading program(s) or interventions do you feel are effective to support 3rd grade African American boys' success in reading? Why?

Possible follow up prompts that I will keep visible as I interview each participant:
What did you mean by…?
Tell me more about….
You mentioned…. Tell me more.
What do you mean by….?
Please give me an example of when that… worked/didn't work.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol Form

Faculty Interview Protocol

School: _____
Participants (Title and Name): _____
Interviewer: _____
Survey Section Used:

_____ A: Interview Background
_____ B: Interview Questions

Other Topics Discussed: _____
_____
Documents Obtained: _____
_____
_____
Post Interview Comments or Leads:
_____

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate the documentation of my interview, I would like to audio record our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, I am the only person privy to the recordings, which will eventually be destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet the human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information is held confidential, (2) your participation is optional and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.
I have planned this interview to last 30 minutes to one hour. During this time, I have questions that I would like to cover.

Introduction

You have volunteered to speak with me today. You have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about instructional reading practices that you use in the classroom. My research study focuses on teachers' perspectives of motivating third grade African American boys to read. My study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn more about the instructional strategies and best instructional practices for reading, and hopefully this will provide school administrators and educational leaders with critical knowledge that may be beneficial in their efforts to the initiate procedures, strategies, and reading programs.

A. Participants Background

How long have you been
_____ teaching reading 3rd grade?
_____ at this school?

Interesting background information on participants:
What is your highest degree? _____
What is your field of study? _____

B. Interview Questions

1) How would you describe a typical reading session in your classroom working with African American 3rd grade boys?
2) What are your expectations for African American 3rd grade boys in reading?
3) What is your understanding of the impediments 3rd grade African American boys face in learning to read?
4) What are your concerns regarding motivating 3rd grade African American boys to read?
5) What motivational techniques/strategies do you presently use to support 3rd grade African American boys read?
6) What best instructional practices have you tried to increase 3rd grade African American boys' motivation to read that were successful for those students?
7) What resources do you keep in your classroom to motivate 3rd grade African American boys to read?
8) What reading program(s) or interventions do you feel are effective to support 3rd grade African American boys' success in reading? Why?

Possible follow up prompts that I will keep visible as I interview each participant:
What did you mean by…?
Tell me more about….
You mentioned…. Tell me more.
What do you mean by….?

Please give me an example of when that… worked/didn't work.