READ ON NOW! PROMOTING RECREATIONAL READING HABITS FOR BASIC SKILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Linda G. Larabee
B.S., California State University, Hayward, 1976

PROJECT

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

EDUCATION
(Language and Literacy)

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

FALL
2009
READ ON NOW! PROMOTING RECREATIONAL READING HABITS FOR BASIC SKILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Project

by

Linda G. Larabee

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Cid Gunston-Parks

__________________________  
Date
Student: Linda G. Larabee

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the Project.

__________________________, Graduate Coordinator    ________________
Dr. Rita M. Johnson    Date

Department of Teacher Education
Abstract

of

READ ON NOW! PROMOTING RECREATIONAL READING HABITS FOR BASIC SKILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Linda G. Larabee

Statement of Problem

Proficient reading ability is a core requirement for success at college, but at least 30% of the new students enrolling in the local community colleges in California are underprepared to read and understand college level texts. Many students must complete basic skills reading classes in order to enroll in transfer level coursework.

Sources of Data

Survey data indicated that 60% of the sampled students enrolled in remedial reading classes read two or less books for pleasure in the last six months. The literature review of the benefits of reading for pleasure revealed that reading at least 20 minutes a day would aid in the development of fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and spelling skills.

Fifteen students who enrolled in the community college reading center classes, volunteered to participate in the field test for this project. The students received an
individualized orientation, an overview of the website features including viewing a
variety of video book/movie trailers related to the book inventory, and then selected a
book to read. Once the student finished reading their book, they were able to select
another. Some students provided student recommendations for posting in the website.

Conclusions Reached

This culminating project promoted the benefits of recreational reading for
community college students, provided a small Reading Center library, developed a
website with links to booksellers and related YouTube videos to encourage students to
locate books that match their interests and reading level in order to develop a habit of
recreational reading. Anecdotal feedback from the students indicated that having the
current leveled books available in the Reading Center and seeing the related video
media made it easy to select a book to read. Several students reported that they did not
want to put their book down and kept reading to find out how the book would end.
One student noted that it was the first book he had read all year and another student
said it was the first time in her adult life she made a habit of turning off the television
so she could read.

The positive reaction to the Reading Center library and website by students,
staff and faculty supports a more long-term continuation of this project to evaluate the
willingness of students to select books to read in their leisure time in order to help grow their reading skills.

________________________________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Cid Gunston-Parks

________________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank all my professors at California State University, Sacramento for their commitment to the Language and Literacy Program, but a special recognition goes to my advisor, Dr. Cid Gunston-Parks, who effectively steered our cohort through this challenging process.

I especially wish to dedicate the completion of this project to my parents, husband, Dave, and family who with their never-ending support allowed me to achieve this educational milestone.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter**

1. **INTRODUCTION** ................................................................. 1
   - Purpose .................................................................................... 3
   - Rationale .................................................................................. 4
   - Methodology ............................................................................ 7
   - Limitations and Delimitations of the Research ...................... 9
   - Definition of Terms ............................................................... 10
   - Organization of the Remainder of the Study ......................... 11

2. **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE** ................................. 12
   - Introduction ........................................................................... 12
   - Review of the Literature ....................................................... 13
   - Context of Project ................................................................. 15
   - Reading for Pleasure .............................................................. 16
   - Motivation ............................................................................... 31
   - Multimedia at the College Level ........................................... 36
   - Conclusion ............................................................................. 39
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Table Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Variation in Amount of Independent Reading</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Selected Statistics for Major Sources of Spoken and Written Language</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How Students Like to Spend Their Spare Time</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When You Read, Which of the Following do You Most Like to Read?</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Why do You Read Books?</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How Many Books Have You Read in the Last 6 Months?</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How do You Select a Book or Magazine to Read?</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What Types of Fiction (Stories) do You Like to Read?</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What Types of Nonfiction (Real Events/People) do You Like to Read?</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Age?</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gender?</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ethnicity?</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Is English Your First Language?</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The time honored approach to developing any skill-based task is to first learn the basics and then to practice the task repeatedly, mastering a level at a time. The challenge is to continue to increase the level of difficulty until one has reached the desired proficiency or goal. This general advice applies to exercise, learning a new hobby and even to developing a lifelong reading habit Guthrie (2004).

A synthesis of the research on the benefits of recreational reading is simplified by Allington’s (2006) statement that “…reading practice—just reading—is a powerful contributor to the development of accurate, fluent, high-comprehension reading” (p 35). Allington further emphasized that recreational reading develops vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills. In other words, reading is a way to exercise your brain while learning new skills through reading a fascinating tale of adventure, mystery or romance. “…reluctant reading tend to gradually lose some academic ground because wide reading is related to increases in general knowledge and reading comprehension (Worthy, 1996, p. 206).

However, many adults who never acquired a reading habit have discovered that the lack of developmentally appropriate reading skills was a stumbling block to achieving their college or career goals. ACT (2009) states,

This lack of college readiness also means a lack of career readiness: while not every high school graduate plans to attend college, the majority of the fastest-
growing jobs that require a high school diploma, pay a salary above the
poverty line for a family of four, and provide opportunities for career
advancement requires knowledge and skills comparable to those expected of
the first-year college student. (p. 1)

Proficient reading ability is a core requirement for success at college, but most
of the new students enrolling in the local community colleges in California are
underprepared to read and understand college level texts (Boroch, 2007.) Mastering
reading skills is a critical goal for most students since reading ability affects the
student’s comprehension of all courses in the college curriculum Wagner & Venezky
stating: “Globally, both within and across nations, the association of high engagement
with high achievement and low engagement with low achievement was repeatedly
observed” (p. 5).

Developing a reading habit means more than reading a book occasionally. It is
reading in sufficient volume that the number of words processed by the brain that
begins to pay cognitive benefits. Reading about 20 minutes a day exposes the reader to
approximately over 1.8 million words per year (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988;
Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). “Those who read a lot will enhance their verbal
intelligence; that is, reading will make them smarter” (Cunningham & Stanovich,
1998, p. 7). Given the benefits of reading, pursuing volume reading as a recreational
activity may allow students to develop and advance their reading skills through continued practice.

This culminating research project promoted the benefits of recreational reading and provided resources and processes to locate books that match interests and reading level for underprepared adult students enrolled in remedial reading classes at the local community college.

Purpose

The community college system was designed to accommodate all students who are high school graduates or age 18 and older as long as they demonstrate the capacity to learn. An entry placement assessment for reading evaluates the student’s ability to perform the following tasks: identify the main idea, reading comprehension, inferences, understanding tone and figurative language as well as vocabulary skills Goldstein & Perin (2008). However, approximately 60% or more of incoming freshman students are required to register in remedial English reading or writing courses (Fisher, 2007; Kirst, 2007). Student’s failure to acquire literacy skills impacts their future lifestyle:

Just as adults with little money have difficulty meeting their basic needs, those with limited literacy skills are likely to find it more challenging to pursue their goals—whether these involve job advancement, consumer decision making, citizenship, or other aspects of their lives (U.S. Department of Education (1993), p. 5).
California community colleges have responded to this need by developing preparatory basic skills classes to support students’ English, reading and math proficiency development (Huber & Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2008).

In addition, to basic skills reading classes, learning resource services are available at campus the Reading Center where students may enroll in self-paced reading skill development modules receiving feedback and instruction from tutors and instructors. Most students enrolled in Reading Center classes are reading at anywhere from about the 6th to 10th grade reading level. However, enrolling in remedial reading classes and supplementary reading center support modules will not make up for years of reading disengagement without a commitment to sufficient practice (Guthrie, 2004).

The initial question for this project is how can underprepared community college students develop reading skills outside the classroom? What are the most successful researched based techniques for selecting a book for recreational reading? What resources (classroom library) are necessary to facilitate reluctant readers to become engaged readers? What high interest adult themed text is available at lower reading levels?

Rationale

Students enrolled in Basic Reading classes at the community college will potentially benefit from learning techniques to locate books that appeal to their preferences and engender self-awareness that to become more proficient, they must
practice by reading more books. In fact, Cunningham & Stanovich (1998) in their research studies with college students have “found that reading volume made a significant contribution to multiple measures of vocabulary, general knowledge, spelling, and verbal fluency…” (p. 5). Although Allington (2006) discussed how the more you read the greater increase in your cognitive abilities, a key factor in motivating students to read for pleasure is for the students to select their own reading materials (Pressley, 2006). The readability level of the selected text should be aligned to the students’ independent reading level in order to facilitate fluency and comprehension. Reviewing the book selection process and exposing students to reading materials that are topical and current may help this student population realize that they can improve their reading skills by becoming volume readers.

Reading interventions such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), and a modification of SSR, Intensive reading, as well as Book Clubs (Collins, 2008; Pilgreen, 2000) are just a few of the various methods instituted at the elementary through high school settings to increase reading volume and interest in text. The research on these interventions and modifications of these programs reflect mixed results depending on the implementation and study populations (Krashen, 2004).

Numerous studies have referred to how a well-developed classroom library promotes elementary students’ voluntary reading habits (Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995). While Collins (2008) also indicated that children would read on a more frequent basis if they have free-choice and are able to discuss what they read. Further helping students improve their
selection of recreational reading materials attuned to their reading level is an important step to developing a sustainable reading habit (Krashen, 2004).

An expansive and varied classroom library plays a significant role in elementary students’ development as lifelong readers, but research is scarce on the topic of underprepared adult students and their exposure to books at home or in campus library. The process of selecting books from a library or bookstore is a skill that comes naturally to a lifelong reader. However, young adults who are struggling with reading have little practice with how to evaluate a book (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000). Another factor adults must take into consideration is whether the ease of readability matches their individual reading levels (Brabham & Villaume, 2002). Books written with high interest, low vocabulary text will allow the reader to develop fluency and comprehension of the content as they practice their reading skills (Spadorcia, 2005).

The role of the internet and how it impacted leisure time activities, yet engaged student interest was reviewed in the “Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds” Kaiser Foundation study conducted by Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout (2005). The explosion of social networking and the sharing of videos via YouTube is an ongoing phenomenon tied to student interest and motivation (Roberts et al.)
Methodology

Phase One: Identify Student Preferences

The initial step in this project was to determine the recreational reading habits, practices and a demographic profile for students enrolled in Reading classes at the local community college. A Reader Interest Survey instrument was developed by the author and disseminated to a sample population of 232 students enrolled in lower level reading courses. The summarized data provided a validation of the author’s hypothesis that the students had minimal experience with reading for enjoyment.

*Basic skills grant award.* In support of this master’s project, the author received a grant to fund the purchase of books for both the Reading Center library and development of the website. The Basic Skills Committee (community college campus wide cross discipline committee focused on supporting the needs of underprepared college students) received monthly expenditure and progress reports and a presentation of the outcome of this project will be made in December 2009.

*Reading Center library and website.* Based on the reading preferences evidenced from the survey responses, four genres plus a general “Popular Culture” category were identified as a basis for the types of books purchased. The next step in conducting the project occurred over the summer as the author conferred with professors, librarians, and booksellers to solicit input on book selections for the Reading Center library. Various websites that contained reviews of books
recommended by readers as well as award winners were consulted to locate an array of appealing and topical texts.

The Basic Skills grant award was used to purchase the reading materials, book display cart, and marketing materials. The range of reading levels chosen approximates the reading levels of the students enrolled in non-transferable Reading courses. If a Lexile rating was available for the book, it was noted. If not, a Flesch-Kincaid readability test (as incorporated in Microsoft Word software application) was applied to selected portions of the text to establish a readability level baseline. On the ReadOnNow! website, the reading level of the books was color coded. The tag line text displayed under the graphic picture of the book cover was either white text for books over the 8th grade reading level or yellow text for books at the 8th grade or under.

The design parameter considerations for the ReadOnNow! website were based on strong visual cues and ease of navigation with minimal text. The website content featured YouTube video book/movie trailers to provide the student with background information about the book. All books in the inventory were linked to the Amazon website which provided more detailed information about the book. Also included on the website were reference materials for developing a reading habit, a list of books by title and author, and student book recommendations.

Prior to start of fall, 2009 semester. The Reading Center Faculty Coordinator requested that the author make two presentations regarding how the field test would be
conducted and a sampling of the ReadOnNow! website features. The first presentation was for
the Reading Center staff and two days later there was another briefing for the Reading Center
faculty. (Appendix D) During these sessions the website features and sample YouTube
book/movie trailers were demonstrated and the attendees surveyed many of the new books in
the Reading Center library.

Phase Two: Student Participation in Study

The second phase of the project involved 15 students who participated during a 5
week field test period. Each of these students participated in an individualized orientation and
discussion about the type of book they would like to read. The author reviewed the website
content, and the student surveyed the available books and selected a text from the Reading
Center library. After the student finished the text, they had the option of providing a student
recommendation for publication on the website. If time allowed, students chose another text
to read. (Appendix F Book Recommendation Form.)

Limitations and Delimitation of the Research

There is a possibility that due to the short time frames for the project review
period of 5 weeks, the author may be unable to locate 15 students willing to
participate. The students may not be able find a book in the Reading Center Library
that appeals to their interests and is at their reading level. Students might select a book
but not return to complete follow up review.
Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this research, the following definitions will be used:

*Basic Skills*: “Basic skills are those foundations skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language, as well as learning skills and study skills which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work (Boroch et al, 2007, p. 13).

A book, article or piece of text gets a *Lexile text measure* when it's analyzed by MetaMetrics. For example, the first "Harry Potter" book measures 880L, so it's called an 880 Lexile book. A Lexile text measure is based on two strong predictors of how difficult a text is to comprehend: word frequency and sentence length (http://www.lexile.com/about-lexile/lexile-overview/).

*Readability*: the quality of written language that makes it easy to read and understand (WordReference.com, http://www.wordreference.com/)

*Recreational reading, voluntary reading, free reading, reading for pleasure, pleasure reading and volume reading* are all synonymous terms for reading for enjoyment. The reader selects a book of their choosing and reads outside of class for their personal gratification Krashen, (2004)

*Struggling reader, reluctant reader, disengaged reader alliterate reader* are synonymous terms for this project to describe the student who usually knows how to read but either prefers not to or has difficulty with reading fiction or nonfiction text.
Generally this person reads several reading levels below their grade level (Allington, 2006).

An underprepared student is a student who scores at the lower end of the community college entrance placement test, must first take preparatory (basic skills) classes before he/she can take transfer level courses.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 1 has presented a brief overview of the project scope, website and implementation of the field test. The literature review covered in Chapter 2 provides the basis for the project direction and execution covering the benefits of recreational reading, the success of reading intervention methods, determining text readability, the importance of the student self-selecting text and availability of hi/low interest reading materials. Chapter 3 covers the reporting and evaluation of the initial student survey results, the methodology for the research project, the grant to fund the Reading Center Library as well as the design and development of ReadOnNow! website. The substance of Chapter 4 is a compilation and analysis of the project data, project results, conclusions and recommendations for the continuation of this project to influence disengaged community college readers to start reading for pleasure.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Introduction

A segment of the students entering community college are underprepared to enroll in college transfer level coursework (Fisher, 2007; Kirst, 2007). Based on their entry level testing scores, these students are redirected through a series of basic skill courses in English, Reading or Mathematics, ESL, and/or study skills to build their academic proficiency to a collegiate level. Reading expertise is core to all course work and students enrolled in developmental reading classes focus on building skills to further their comprehension of text.

A survey of basic skill reading students conducted by the author in Spring, 2009, semester (Appendix A) indicated that over 60% had read from zero to two books for pleasure in the last six months. “All learners benefit from opportunities to develop the lifetime love of reading” (Sanacore, 2002, p. 67). Therefore, as a complementary enhancement to the skill-based reading program, this project proposed to field test a multimedia approach designed to encourage students while in the Reading Center to self-select books and read for 20 minutes a day.

Any type of skill development requires practice whether it is a sporting activity, learning to play a musical instrument, or even how to bake the perfect apple pie. This concept of practice is applicable to the skill of reading. Nevertheless, a difficulty arises when the practice activity is assigned, not chosen by the participant, or
the activity level does not reasonably match the abilities of the participant. This culminating project was designed to provide a process to encourage community college students’ free voluntary reading practices.

This chapter provides the research support for the protocols and materials incorporated in this master’s culminating project to promote recreational reading habits for community college students. The literature review will first define and provide a survey of the types of reading for pleasure programs and further delve into how these types of interventions were applied to the adult community college environment. Additional issues discussed are the preponderance of literature regarding the amount of time a student should spend reading to gain any benefit and whether it make any difference what types of materials the student reads. Many researchers have commented on the advisability of the student self-selecting reading materials, having those materials readily available to the student as well as various methods to determine the reading grade level of the text. Finally, there is an examination of the literature concerning using a multimedia approach to designing a website with graphics and video to engage the reluctant reader.

Review of the Literature

According to Kirst (2007) quantifying the percentage of incoming college students who need remedial education is difficult because the testing instruments, student population and data gathering procedures are not consistent within states, from state to state or at a even at the national level. However Kirst indicated that: “After
synthesizing data from many sources, I estimate that 60 percent of students ages 17 to 20 in two-year colleges, and 30 percent in four-year institutions, need remedial courses” (p. 2).

Fisher (2007) referred to an interview with the California community college chancellor, Marshall Drummond, who commented “that as many as 90 percent of incoming students test below college level in mathematics, and over 70 percent test below college level in reading and/or writing” (p. 1). Therefore, regardless of the proportion, subject area or age level, there are a substantial issue of students entering community college who are underprepared for college level work and in need of developmental programs in order to pursue their educational goals.

A recent Carnegie Foundation report by Huber & Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2008) about basic skills, challenges the community college faculty to respect the capabilities of developmental students and seek to “…engage students with the pleasures (and difficulties) of reading, writing, and fundamental mathematics, sustain their academic ambitions, and stimulate their critical and creative powers of mind” (p. 1). This commendable over-arching goal referred to a key element of this project: “the pleasures (and difficulties) of reading…” (Huber et al., 2008, p. 1).
Context of Project

Community College Background—Population of Underprepared Readers

According to the California Education Code Article 1, Sections 76000-76002 in order to be eligible to attend community college, a California resident or nonresident must have either graduated from high school (some high school students may attend with permission) or be at least 18 years old and show that the resident can derive benefit from an education. The local community college where this project was conducted is one of four community colleges within the Los Rios Community College District located in and adjacent to Sacramento, California. The district mission statement in addition to providing undergraduate education and transfer opportunities to four year colleges also states that the district will: “Provide educational services that address needs in basic skills, English as a second language, and lifelong learning” (Los Rios Community College District Mission Statement, 2009, para. 1.)

The community’s educational goals include career and vocational education, completion of the requirements to transfer to a four year institution, and developmental education in order “to achieve basic foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics, English as a Second Language, and learning and study skills which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work” (Boroch et al., 2007, p. 13). These courses are considered to be precollegiate basic skills courses and are preparatory in nature and non-transferable to a four year collegiate program.
In order to determine if students need to enroll in developmental education classes prior to enrolling in transfer level classes, most incoming freshman students are required to take a placement assessment examination. The College Tests for English Placement (CTEP) are entry placement assessments for reading and writing which evaluate the student’s ability to perform the following tasks with respect to reading: identify the main idea, reading comprehension, inferences, understanding tone and figurative language as well as vocabulary skills (Brown, Niemi, & National Center, 2007; Goldstein & Perin, 2008). According to the Environmental Scan: A Summary of Key Issues Facing California Community Colleges Pertinent to the Strategic Planning Process, “More than one of every three students in the community colleges enrolls in a basic skills class and the percentage of students enrolling in a given term has been increasing over recent years” (2005, p. 3). Students who took at least one basic skill course in their first semester were more likely to return for the second semester than those who did not. Driscoll (2007). In order for the student to have some success in college they must accept that “Reading is the critical core skill underlying all the curriculum areas Manzo (2006 p. 2).”

Reading for Pleasure

Free voluntary reading (FVR) as coined by Steven Krashen (2004) is one of many similar terms used in the professional literature. For example reading for pleasure, recreational reading and extensive reading all basically mean: reading self-selected materials for enjoyment. However, each term has some qualifications with
respect to the author’s approach. For free voluntary reading students are not asked to prepare a book report or to use a dictionary to check vocabulary words or even finish the text if it is not to their taste. The purpose is to read books for the fun of it. “When children read for pleasure, when they get “hooked on books”, they acquire, involuntarily and without conscious effort, nearly all of the so-called language skills many people are so concerned about. They will become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style, and become good (but not necessarily perfect) spellers (Krashen, 2004, p. 149).

Types of Interventions

Numerous examples of similar types of self-selected reading programs incorporated as part of the school day are: SSR (sustained silent reading), IR (independent reading), and extensive reading (Hunt, 1996; Krashen, 2004; Pilgreen, 2000). The common elements of these free reading programs are that the student self-selects the reading material and reads for a specific amount of time ideally at least 10 to 15 minutes as one component of the Language Arts curriculum (Pilgreen).

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

One of the original proponents of sustained silent reading programs Hunt (1996) termed his program: uninterrupted silent reading (USSR) and more recently Pilgren (2000) in her book on implementing an SSR program suggest that in addition to the student reading silently that the teacher should also model reading silently (not
perform administrative tasks such as grading papers). In Nagy, Campenni, and Shaw (2000) The students are allowed free rein in choosing their reading material and the option of reading or not reading as they would if they were outside of school. (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). Although Nagy et al. surveyed middle school teachers regarding SSR practices and found that 20% of those surveyed restricted the students to choose books from a school reading list. Further, Nagy et al. noted that “sixty-nine percent of the teachers discouraged certain types of reading material, such as comics, magazines, textbooks, and newspapers, as well as material on certain topics that they deemed unsuitable” (p. 4).

Modifications to SSR have evolved over time and practice based on the school environment and level of instruction. Many of the proponents of SSR suggest that it is important for the teacher to share what they are reading with the students and to have some discussion about what the readers find they enjoy about the books they are reading (Kelley, & Clausen-Grace, 2006; Trelease, 2006). In some Independent Reading Program (IR) self-selected reading or free reading programs there is also a designated time set aside for students to read books of their choice, but in addition the teacher conferences with each student to discuss his/her book choice. Extensive reading programs, while still including the period of time for reading silently, also may require a short written synopsis of the reading material.

The research on the value of SSR is mixed due to some inconsistencies in an often cited National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) report. Steven Krashen (2001) and
others extensive analysis of some of the inconsistencies of National Reading Panel’s
evaluation of the research concludes that SSR is supported by research (Garan &

Extensive Reading/SSR Program

The intervention of an extensive reading (ER) program/SSR was applied in the
past to ESL adults but not to L1 and L2 adults with low literate skills. As one of
several interventions used in a larger grant study, Rodrigo et al. (2007) discussed a
group of 43 adults who were reading at the 3rd to 5th grade level. These students
attended class two hours a day, four days a week for about 14 weeks. Students self-
selected books from a library with a cross section of genres and graded book levels. A
typical classroom session evolved into two 20-minute periods of sustained silent
reading interspaced (SSR) with book sharing. The instructor modeled SSR and spent
about 15 minutes a day reading a more challenging level text out-loud. The adult
students were measured pre and post but did not do skill-based drills to promote
comprehension, vocabulary development or phonemic awareness. The students read
85% of the 249 titles (Library: 817 books, 249 titles, 12 genres, and 8 reading levels)
during the 14 week period but reported that “they also want and need to see their
reading skills improve so that they can reach their job, family, and educational goals
(Rodrigo et al., 2007).

The adult population in Rodrigo et al.’s (2007) study was a similar cross
section of age and ethnic composition to the population under consideration. However
the reading grade level range was lower than the target grade level of 6th to 10th grade level in a community college environment. Rodrigo and her colleagues further emphasized the need for a wide array of books.

*College Level Intervention*

Paulson (2006) argued that the most common intervention approach of teaching underprepared college students reading skills consisted of word-attack drills, skill building exercises and textbook analysis which does not prepare students to become a lifelong readers. While these skill-building classes may be supportive, it is only a temporary solution to enable the students to complete the class. Paulson advocated for a lifelong learning approach that is based on what he termed “self-selected reading for enjoyment” (SSRE) to engender a “love of reading” (p. 52) which empowers the student to value reading and understand the downstream academic and personal benefits. Paulson noted that even though there is minimal research for developmental reading practice at the college level, he supported his contention for the application of voluntary reading programs to college student instruction. Referring to the work of Krashen (2004) among others, in which high school students who were part of a voluntary reading program scored on par or higher on comprehension tests than the control group under a conventional reading program. Finally Paulson indicated that making college students aware of the bigger picture of “reading above and beyond the class time frame” (p. 55) is key to expanding the scope of the college developmental reading curriculum.
In response to the NEA report Reading at Risk (2004) and reading issues observed among the college student population Long (2009) described a study conducted at two community colleges in Virginia entitled “Rescuing Reading.” The two-year study was designed to focus on the value of reading across all disciplines and to encourage reading for pleasure. Long noted that “Reading skill is a precondition of all the things that are central to a community college’s mission, including college transfer preparation and occupational/technical education” (p. 5). The interventions consisted of an email newsletter to the faculty and administrators about topical reading research; events on campus featured a reading theme with author visits; regular monthly Book Circles which were often partnered with a showing of a movie that tied into the book the group was reading, and publicizing what “current read” was on various stakeholders’ nightstands. Pre and post tests were conducted and tabulated reflecting gains in the amount of student literacy reading, the higher intrinsic value students placed on reading as well as the faculty’s greater awareness of how reading ability impacted all course instruction.

One very innovative idea highlighted in the second year of the Long (2009) study involved Susan Pongratz, an instructor in the developmental reading program, who sponsored a photo contest entitled “Catch Someone Reading.” The idea was for students to snap photos of anyone reading. Monetary prizes were awarded and the photos were posted for the entire college to view.
The author can envision how this idea would work at the local community college in Sacramento. With the advent of inexpensive digital photography equipment (even disposable digital cameras) and the proliferation of phones with a digital camera feature, the application of this concept of recording someone in the act of reading anytime, anywhere, any place can be facilitated (after the students learn how to email the picture to a central capturing point). Having all students participate in this type of contest, but especially developmental college readers gives the act of reading celebrity status. Reading is something you want to be caught doing. This positive reinforcement personalizes the value of reading and regardless of the student’s reading ability, they can participate and be “caught” reading.

Amount of Time for Recreational Reading

Cunningham & Stanovich (1998) cite the data from a study conducted by Anderson et al. (1988) to evaluate the reading habits of 5th graders and how much time the students reported spending reading outside the classroom.
Table 1

Variation in Amount of Independent Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Independent Reading Minutes per Day</th>
<th>Words Read Per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>4,358,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>1,823,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>1,146,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>622,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>432,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>282,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988)

Even though the population studied was 5th grade elementary students as opposed to college students, the reading level is similar for the lower end underprepared college students at the local community college. Neuman (2001) focused in her review of this data, on the relationship between the number of minutes the students read vs. their percentile ranking observing that “the highest achievers in fifth grade classrooms were likely to read over 200 times as many minutes per day (21
minutes) as the lowest achievers who read for less than one tenth of a minute per day” (p. 13). Anderson et al. (1988) made a conservative extrapolation of the data, calculating almost 2 million words a year encountered when reading for almost 21 minutes. Imagine the year after year impact exposure to 2 million words would have on the student regarding new vocabulary introduction, sentence structure models and grammar and spelling patterns while reading for pleasure as opposed to the student who reads for less than a minute a day.

Type of Reading Materials

Cunningham & Stanovich (1998) further analyzed the data from a study by Hayes and Ahrens (1988) who determined what sources of text be it from print, television or speech provided the greatest exposure to rare words.
Table 2

**Selected Statistics for Major Sources of Spoken and Written Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank of Median Word</th>
<th>Rare Words per 1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Printed Texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abstracts of scientific articles</td>
<td>4389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Newspapers</td>
<td>1690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Popular magazines</td>
<td>1399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult books</td>
<td>1058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comic books</td>
<td>867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children’s books</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preschool books</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Television texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Popular prime-time adult shows</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Popular prime-time children’s shows</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cartoon shows</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mr. Rogers and Sesame Street</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adult Speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expert witness testimony</td>
<td>1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College graduates to friends/spouses</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Hayes and Ahrens (1988)

This data revealed several interesting relationships. The first is that adult books and comic books have just about the same number of rare words. However, when you compare adult books to adult television there are 175% more rare words per thousand encountered in adult text versus the television script dialogue. Obviously it is a more vocabulary enriching experience to read the book as opposed to watching the movie.
The second is that while children’s books and cartoon shows have a similar level of rare words, the comparison of preschool books and Mr. Rogers and Sesame Street diverge with the television show only incorporating 2 rare words per 1000. Ironically the everyday speech of college graduates with respect to rare words in their vocabulary is on par to the number of rare word found in preschool books.

Applicability to Target Community College

Considering that most of the students in developmental reading classes at the target community college are disengaged readers, the first step is to provoke interest in reading whatever appeals to them. Obviously these students will need to expand their horizons by exploring other genres than popular high interest, low reading level text if they want to progress in college, but a first step toward developing a reading habit is to start small and work toward a goal. Therefore, when considering what the underprepared college students should read, it doesn’t matter what type of material they read (newspapers, magazines, adult books, comic books or even children’s books) they will be exposed to more rare words if they develop a recreational reading habit by reading 20 minutes a day.

Self-Selection

The survey conducted in the Spring, 2009 (Appendix A) at the target community college indicated that the adult students in basic skill development classes new the three most popular steps as noted by Rinehart, Gerlach, Wisell, and Welker (1994) and Reuter (2008) in determining whether to select a book to read: looked at
the cover of the book, read the title of the book and reviewed the synopsis of the book on the back cover or inside the book jacket. Even though the survey also reflected that 60% of these selfsame students had not read any or no more than 1 to 2 books in the last 6 months these students knew the obvious process to make a book selection, they just chose to do so very rarely.

Research conducted by Rinehart et al. (1994) evaluated whether the title, cover illustrations and “back-of-the-book” (BOB) summary would provide the student with sufficient information about the book plot to make a decision on whether or not to select the book. The study was repeated and extended with 8th grade students (25) who were interviewed about their book selection strategies, and then given a paperback book. They were asked based on their reading of the BOB summary to respond whether they would like to read the book based on the summary, how did they come to their decision about whether or not they would like to read the book and if there was any other data that influenced them. The students were asked to maintain literature logs while reading the book and then upon completion were asked to provide written responses to a series of questions on the process with a post interview to discuss their findings. The study findings indicate the importance of the BOB summaries in the student being able to determine the plot of the book.

Swartz & Hendricks (2000) considered additional aspects of book selection in their study involving middle school students. These included: “topic/ subject matter, author, writing style, cover/illustrations, characters, as well as back of the book
summaries” (Swartz & Hendricks, 2000, p. 609). The topic/subject matter information can be sometimes gleaned from the title or the BOB summary and is for most readers the most important factor. If a student likes a book, then students may wish to read other books by that same author or find books in a series whose character they become familiar with and want to see how the story develops (Kragler & Nolley, 1996). The writing style plays a role when the student is looking for an exciting page turner as opposed to a writing style that goes into elongated passages about clothes or architecture to set the scene. Kragler & Nolley (1996) noted that students were attracted to cover art. Jones (2007) discussed how teenagers made immediate decisions based on their impression of the cover art. Some students went so far as to disguise the cover if they wanted to read the text, but felt embarrassed by the picture/illustrations and didn’t want their peers to judge them by what they were reading.

A research study conducted by Stieve & Schoen (2006) evaluated college undergraduates’ book selection preferences when selecting books for academic study. The three most important evaluative factors were a review of the table of contents, how the book was organized and how easy would it be to read and extract the data for their report. What was rarely considered was the academic background of the author, the publication date or publisher. However, the researchers noted that when librarians are ordering books for the library, ease of navigation through the content is not one of the purchase considerations.
While the target community college library includes “Easy Reading” and Adult fiction categories, there are only a few dictionaries and reference books localized in the Reading Center. Numerous studies have referred to how a well developed classroom library promotes elementary students voluntary reading habits (Goatley et al., 1995) indicated that children will read on a more frequent basis if they have free-choice and are able to discuss what they read. As children grow older and become teens, the amount of text they read is reduced (NEA, 2004).

Paulson (2006) advocates that since the basis of the “self-selected reading for enjoyment” (SSRE) program is to build lifelong learning by encouraging recreational reading, then the next logical step is that students will need to have a range of reading materials close at hand. Numerous studies have shown that having entrée to both school and classroom libraries reflects an increase in the number of books students’ read for pleasure (Krashen, 2004; McQuillan, & Au, 2001; Neuman, 2001; Vardell, Hadaway, & Young, 2006). According to Yankelovich (2008) students between the age of 9 to 17 state that one of the foremost causes for failure to read for pleasure is that they are “having trouble finding books that I like” (p. 6).

Cunningham (2005) realized after she had taught for many years the necessity of a classroom library stocked with a wide range of reading materials including both fiction and nonfiction. In her experience working with children and having the option
in class for the students to select books on their own or with some guidance by the onsite teacher increased the amount of time the student spent reading.

The display of books in the library or classroom is a contributing factor to the number of pages read by students. Lawson (1983) conducted a study about the impact of book placement versus book advertisement had on 4th graders. Students who selected from a range of books displayed with the cover visible and grouped by topic highlighted in a separate area in the library exceeded the number of pages read from those books that the students in another group who received book talks (advertisements) as well as annotated book lists. The number of pages read also exceeded the control group who were not provided with any support on their visits to the library. The books on the cart allowed the students to zero in on one place rather than peruse the library looking for books on a list.

Beers (2003) echoed Lawson’s (1983) findings with a story about a visit to the library and urging students to go find “a good book.” Repeatedly some members of the class would be unable to find a book and just grab anything off the shelf at the last minute. Then as an experiment, Beers suggested that the librarian label a box “Good Books” and fill it with books that might appeal to members of the class. On the next visit when the students again began to wander around the library she asked the students what they were doing. They responded that they were looking for a “good book.” Beers indicated the box on the table labeled “Good Books.” Several students gathered around the box and happily pulled books from the box and checked them out.
On the next visit to the library the students found another box and it was labeled “More Good Books.” When the librarian heard a student who had selected mystery books from the box indicate her preference for this type of book, the librarian pointed to the huge sign hung from the ceiling entitled “Mysteries.” The student with a surprised look on her face because she had never seen the sign before happily moved over to select books from a whole wall of titles. The grade school student only saw books shelved with spines out and all the books looked the same until she sorted through the “good books” in the box and then she made the connection of genre and the shelving location of that genre.

Motivation

In an evaluation of the research on motivating reluctant readers to persist in their reading endeavors, McCabe and Margolis (2001) noted that reluctant readers maybe be apathetic towards reading, however “…students often exert considerable effort, tenacity, and discipline in activities they like and in which they feel self-efficacious, such as athletics or drawing” (p. 45). This result would seem to indicate that if the student believes in their ability to accomplish the task then they can succeed. The positive attitude toward reading is a vital first step words improving reading ability

Combating apathy or lack of motivation toward reading can leave the educator and student at a standoff. The instructor and or librarian believes they have gathered a collection of texts at various reading levels which are responsive across a wide range of genres and yet the students still do not have an interest in reading. Beers (2003)
when discussing this phenomenon states that “…unless we help them rebuild that confidence that’s been missing for many since second or third grade, then we’ve addressed only part of their reading struggles” (p. 260).

**Hi/Low Readability**

The issue for a basic skill reader at the college level is finding books that will maintain interest but not be at a juvenile level. The plot themes and the protagonists of the books have to appeal to an adult but the vocabulary for the students in the target community college Reading Center should range anywhere from the 5th to 9th grade reading level. Much of the research on Hi/Low texts is for higher elementary to middle school students who are reading at the very beginning levels. Spadorecia, (2005) points out that struggling readers need a literature based text with a balanced approach that includes high frequency sight words, decodable text in order for the reader to understand a meaningful story.

Hiebert (2009) in referring to readability formulas from Dale & Chall, (1948) and Flesch (1948) exemplified

…two variables—a semantic (meaning) measure, such as difficulty of vocabulary, and a syntactic (sentence structure) measure, such as average sentence length—were the best predictors of textual difficulty. Average number of words per sentence became the typical syntactic index, while the semantic component was measured in one of two ways. (p. 5)
Hiebert (2009) further clarifies that Dale and Chall (1948) referred to a specific list of words and Flesch (1948) calculated the syllables or alpha characters.

Over the years readability formulas have been criticized because institutions were using the formula to determine how to make the text pass a specific reading level or to determine whether or not to include a literature passage in a basal text based on its readability score. With the advent of computer technology within seconds anyone can paste in a passage and determine a readability score.

Another readability formula called the Lexile Scale as analyzed in Smith, MetaMetrics, Inc., & et al (1989) ended up becoming the defacto readability standard for all publishers of school textbooks. The scale indicates a range score which correlates to a grade level. The Flesch-Kincaid readability test can be applied to text in Microsoft Word and is used for English language texts Hiebert (2009). Note that the Flesch-Kincaid readability test only grades up to Grade 12. If the text is at college level, it will still reflect a score of no more than 12.

The Lexile score provides a guideline for parents, teachers and students to determine if a text is close to the reader’s grade level or reading level. If the reader has background knowledge of the theme of the text or has read several books by the same author, then the student may be able to read text at the higher end of their grade range. The Lexile scores grade level text from 0 to 16. Cardholders with the Sacramento Public Library system may access EBSCO Host Novelist Plus online and type in the
Hunt (1996) one of the first proponents of SSR strongly urged educators not to discourage readers who select books that are beyond their reading level as measured by the above scales. Hunt went on to say, “Strong interest can frequently cause the reader to transcend not only his independent but also his so-called instructional level. Such is the power of self-motivation” (p. 280). In this author’s view, reading books for pleasure is not about passing tests or knowing the definition of every word. Sometimes reading a book is like an E ticket ride at Disneyland, and the reader just does not want the experience to end. As long as the reader is satisfied with the time spent with a high interest book, then it may be that this book will cause the reader to investigate other text or media on a similar topic at a little more readable level.

**Difference Between Readability and Leveled Text**

Brabham & Villaume (2002) defined the term leveled text as it refers “to reading materials that represent a progression from more simple to more complex and challenging texts. Texts that have been leveled include books created for commercial programs, selections for basal reading anthologies, and children’s literature” (p. 438). Some of these texts are leveled based on a readability score or other factors such as predictable text based on grade level vocabulary or the substance meaning of the text. The level can be expressed as a numeric grade level or as an alpha level A, B etc. (Fountas & Pinnell, 1999). While leveled texts allow the reader to match grade level
with reading level and hence may make it easier for teachers and students to select
text, it should be considered a tool and not the only type of text a struggling read may
select.

With respect to the ReadOnNow! project the author referred to the Lexile
rating score if available or typed a sample of the text in the Microsoft Word processor
to determine whether the text met the under or over 8th grade range. Almost all texts
fell within this range, however other factors than the grade level of the text influenced
readers to select some books over others.

*Multimedia Approach to Literacy*

Many intervention programs provide students with time to read self-selected
material at a comfortable reading level that is of interest to the student (Krashen, 2004;
Paulson, 2006; Rodrigo et al., 2007). Even Vacca as far back as 1998 predicted that
the advent of the computer would be “transforming the way we communicate and
disseminate information” (p. 607). However O’Callaghan (2004) at the biennial
conference for the Australian Library and Information Association stated that
“…encouraging a love of reading in a Digital Age can also mean encouraging reading
in an age of sensory and informational overload, minimal leisure time, a sometimes
almost overwhelming load of work and family pressures and unprecedented constant
change” (p. 1). Optimistically, O’Callaghan chose to focus not on all the issues of
decline in reading but rather the increase of technology. This allowed information
about books and authors to be accessible at any time, a greater number of books were
purchased in Australia and more participation by patrons in a variety of programs sponsored by the library association such as the “One Book One Brisbane” where everyone in the community read the same book and discussed their reaction. This library community marketing outreach appealed to readers and non-readers by opening a wider net for example, to solicit parents to participate with their children in a summer reading program. Having the family select from texts on a similar theme, the parents and children were able to share the literary experience.

Multimedia at the College Level

*Internet*

Hull and Zacher (2004) in their discussion of after school programs which promoted new digital forms of literacy stated:

> The lives of young people, especially, are increasingly dominated by television, music, movie, images, and popular culture, often via the Internet and companion technologies like MP3 players and video games. Those of us who are interested in adolescent literacy must understand forms of communication other than writing and learn how youths value and use them. (p. 3)

Since this article was written you would have to add internet capable cell phones and social networking sites to this list of interactive media as additional modalities for exchange of information and data.
A study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation entitled *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds* Roberts et al. (2005) reflect the growing trend toward students that surround themselves with technology allowing them to be plugged into a worldwide internet community via social networks, entertainment sites as well as the academic community for research. The study sampled a pool of approximately 2,000 students noting that more students have access to computers in the home with internet connections (74%) and they spend on average six plus hours a day using some form of electronic or print media. The media multitasking exposure is at least 25% of the time which means the students are doing several things at the same time, for example: watching TV while reading or instant messaging while listening to music.

Regardless of their reading skill level, a certain percentage of the community college students are represent the Generation M student described in Roberts et al. (2005) are arriving on campus with requisite computer skills and aptitude. In order to engage this type of student, the educational system must speak to them on a level playing field, hence the ReadOnNow! website was designed to maintain the Reading Center library visual inventory of books that the student can access from their home computer or at school and view the related video material and view the student recommendations.
YouTube Background

One of the most often accessed video sharing web sites, YouTube, which according to their fact sheet (2009) was formed in 2005 and although purchased by Google Inc as of November, 2006, YouTube is an “independent subsidiary.” It was astounding to note that the company just reached a milestone of 1 billion views per day. A website entitled Alexa which monitors internet traffic indicates that for the last six months the average time users spend on YouTube web site was approximately 20 minutes each with the U.S. accounting for almost a quarter of the world internet traffic followed by Japan at 7% and England at 5%. The age demographics reflect the most likely viewer is between 18-24 years old and from the U.S. YouTube is the fourth most popular site to access on the internet. Therefore utilizing the power and appeal of YouTube seemed like an obvious way to appeal to a disengaged reader at the community college level.

YouTube and College Instruction

Advising instructors to include digital media in their curriculum, Ohler (2009) used YouTube video as an example of one of several internet media resources for university students who want to incorporate related video or create their own multimedia presentations to illustrate literacy projects. Trier (2007) utilized YouTube while teaching a cultural studies graduate course. As part of the review of the weekly discussion of the text about the impact of the media on the culture, student were asked to contribute video, music, text or pictures that might relate to the week’s reading and
discuss how the example media related to the reading. A Blackboard class chat application allowed the students and instructor to share the web link for the applicable YouTube video associated with the latest assignment. Students viewed these videos while in class as part of a group discussion or later at home for subsequent analysis. Students in the ReadOnNow! project also had access to the target community college reading website and emailed or contacted the author at the Reading Center with questions or book information.

Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter elaborated on the research studies addressing the issue of promoting recreational reading for adults in basic skills reading classes. The adult reluctant readers may potentially benefit by acquiring a habit of reading 20 minutes a day. The literature review discussed interventions that encouraged students to read books for pleasure, provided support for having books close at hand in a classroom library, understanding the role of motivating struggling readers, and using internet stimulate their engagement to read more books. Demystifying the book selection process and exposing students to books which are topical and current and conveniently located in the Reading Center may aid this student population to pursue reading as a recreational activity and thereby allow them to develop their reading skills through continued practice. Chapter Three provides a detailed examination of the methodology used to implement this project.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results and influences of student survey, provides a summary of the basic skills education grant awarded by the community college, and reviews how the books were selected and the reading level analyzed for the Reading Center Library. In addition, there is a detailed explanation of the ReadOnNow! website, including design philosophy, purpose and use of graphics and video to promote interest in developing a recreational reading habit.

Survey Overview

The purpose of this survey (Appendix A) was to determine the reading habits of basic skills students attending remedial reading classes at the local community college. The 12 questions that made up the survey encompassed three major areas: reading habits, genre preferences and demographic information. The first five questions covered reader interest, type of reading material preferred, number of books read in the last six months and what factors were foremost in the students’ minds when selecting a book to read. The next section asked the students to indicate which fiction/nonfiction genre they would like to read and if they had any additional comments to add. The final section of four questions requested demographic information regarding age, gender, ethnicity, and whether English is the student’s first language.
Approximately 42% of the students attending the basic skills reading classes completed surveys providing the author with a sufficient size data sample for analysis. The three basic skills reading classes (non transferable) selected to be surveyed were: Basic Reading Skills (3 units), Integrated Reading, Writing and Study Skills (6 units) and Proficient Reading English Reading (3 units).

Survey Distribution and Tabulation

The initial Reader Interest Survey was distributed to seven Reading professors who handed out and collected the survey responses from a total of 232 students during the 12th week of the Spring, 2009 semester at the target community college. The survey population of 232 students represented 42% (550 students) of the total students completing these classes at the end of the semester. The survey was dispersed to 11 of the 23 sections taught during the Spring, 2009 semester. The reason these sections were selected is because the author had previously worked with these professors in the Reading Center and knew that they would be amenable to distributing the survey. The professors were provided with a one page sheet of instructions and sufficient blank surveys to distribute to the students in attendance (Student Survey, Appendix A). (If any box or question was left blank, the author entered this non-response under the not applicable (N/A) category.) The completed surveys were returned to the author via the college interoffice mail system.

Due to the survey design used, the Likert scale categories (Often, Sometimes and Seldom) determined frequency of activities and requested the student to check all
criteria that applied. The tabulation of the responses from every survey with 12 questions expanded the recording of 125 possible discrete responses. The data was key-entered into a spreadsheet application (Microsoft Excel 2007) and the results calculated and validated using a database product (Microsoft Access, 2007). The results were displayed in decimals and ranked in descending order based on the “Often” column. The data discussion focused on the outer categories of “Often” and “Seldom” that would seem to reflect a strong positive or negative response worthy of review.

_List of Questions from Reader Interest Survey_

1. How do you like to spend your spare time?
2. When you read, which of the following do you most like to read?
3. Why do you read books?
4. How many books have you read in the last 6 months.
5. How do you select a book or magazine to read?
6. What types of fiction (stories) do you like to read?
7. What types of nonfiction (real events/people) do you like to read?
8. Additional Comments
9. Age
10. Gender
11. Ethnicity
12. Is English your first language?
Results

Table 3

How Students Like to Spend Their Spare Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listening to music</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visiting with</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends/family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internet sites</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching TV</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movies</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercising</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking on the phone</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sports</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hobby/craft</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pets</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer games</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total. Students were asked to check all answers that applied. Data sorted based on the highest percentage in the “Often” category.

The first segment of the survey includes 5 questions about reading habits. The purpose of the first question, “How do you like to spend your spare time?” was to determine where “reading” ranked on a list of common activities in which
underprepared community college students might participate during their spare time (see Table 3). The top three activities included: 58% listening to music, 50% visiting friends and 37% spent their spare time accessing the internet. Reading ranked one level from above the bottom of the list of 13 activities at 20% most often frequency and 29% ranked this activity as seldom. Surprisingly given the high ranking of using the internet (39% most often) only 9% indicated that they often played computer games.

Table 4

When You Read, Which of the Following do You Most Like to Read?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nonfiction books (true)</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internet</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiction books (stories)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspapers</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comic books</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio books</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total. Students were asked to check all answers that applied. Data sorted based on the highest percentage in the “Often” category.

Question number two: “When you read, which of the following do you most like to read?” was asked to verify the type of reading materials the students most preferred (see Table 4). The results were not surprising with nonfiction books at 39%
College students have a nonfiction text for almost every class except most notably some English or Reading classes where fiction texts are assigned or self-selected. This response relates to the highest response in the following Question 3 that asks “Why do you read?” and the highest response percentage is 70% read for school.

The next category is the internet at 36% and magazines at 30% rounded out the top three most types of materials read. Fiction rated a 29% with both comic books and audio books at 8%.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do You Read Books?</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleasure/entertainment</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-improvement</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal research</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total. Students were asked to check all answers that applied. Data sorted based on the highest percentage in the “Often” category.

The most frequent response to Question 3: Why do you read books? at 70% indicated that the most common reason students read books is for school (see Table 5). The second category dropped to 45% of the students who indicated they read for
pleasure. As can be seen on the following question, while this answer might appear to reflect that almost half of the students read for pleasure, their reading production for Table 4 were low.

Table 6

*How Many Books Have You Read in the Last 6 Months? (Do not include books assigned for school)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total.*

This question was asked on a 6 month basis rather than a year because the author thought it would be easier for the student to remember the number of books they read in the last 6 months as opposed to a year (see Table 6). Even though the author indicated that the students should not include books assigned for class, they may or may not have paid attention to this caveat. While 17% of the students indicated that they have not read a book for recreation, 13% noted that they have read 5 or more books in the last 6 months. The most often selected answer reveals that 47% of the students have read 1 to 2 books in the last 6 months. In aggregate, then, 60% of the
students have read either none or no more than 1 to 2 books in the last 6 months for recreational reading.

Table 7

*How do You Select a Book or Magazine to Read?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>read title of the book</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read the back cover or book jacket</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look at the cover</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw the movie, video or T.V. show</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask a friend for a recommendation</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read a couple of pages</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check length of book</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>note if on bestseller list</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total. Students were asked to check all answers that applied. Data sorted based on the highest percentage in the “Often” category.*

In Question 5: How do you select a book or magazine to read?, the results reflect a solid grouping of approximately half (50+%) of the students used the following three categories to evaluate a book or magazine: read the title, back cover or jacket and looked at the cover (see Table 7). The latter five options averaged about 25% and would indicate that there is little influence if the book was made into a movie
or T.V. show or listed on the best seller list. Recommendations from friends also ranked low on the list.

Table 8

*What Types of Fiction (Stories) do You Like to Read?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action/Adventure</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery/Crime</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horror</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Novels</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westerns</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total.*

The top four categories for fiction text in Question 6: *What types of fiction (stories) do you like to read?* signify that what students most like to read is:

Action/Adventure, Mystery/Crime, Romance and Humor (see Table 8). About one-third noted an interest in a natural grouping of Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction. At the bottom of the list were Graphic Novels, Sports and Westerns. The author was
surprised that Sports was not a more often selected category, however the gender
distribution noted in Question 10 may have a bearing on this response.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biography/History</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-improvement</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Health</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Philosophy</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art/Drama/Poetry</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Technology</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total.

In answer to Question 7 there is approximately 60% interest in the
Biography/History category of nonfiction followed closely by Self-improvement,
Science/Health and Religion/Philosophy (see Table 9). Sports was also rated near the
bottom of the list consistent with the responses to the previous question.

*Question 8: Additional comments.* In response to Question 8 which is the blank
area where the student could enter in any additional applicable comments regarding
the survey, there were only a few negligible responses. Since there were not any
notable comments added by the survey participants, it could be attributable to the fact
that the survey was handed out towards the end of the class and the students only had a limited amount of time to complete.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 20</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and over</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total.

This demographic Question 9 concerning the student’s age range in basic skills reading classes compared to the 2006 school census data is the same for the 21 to 24 age category (see Table 10). However the results indicate that there may be almost twice as many students age 20 and under in the remedial reading classes as there are in the school population. What is really intriguing is that only 8% of the students note their age to be over 40 while in the district there are over 17.5 % in this age category in the 2008 Los Rios Community College District Annual Report census data. In aggregate the under 18 through age 24 represent approximately 60% of the reading
students compared to 53.2% in the district. Since this assessment was one campus versus the district, these numbers are relatively similar.

Table 11

*Gender?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total*

The results for Question 10 regarding the student’s gender specify that 63% of the respondents are female and 34% are male while 4% did not answer (see Table 11). The district demographic data in 2008 Los Rios Community College District Annual Report indicated a 42% male to 58% female split in female vs. male students which was fairly similar to the population split of students inasic skills reading classes.

Table 12

*Ethnicity?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Question 11 the survey requested information regarding the ethnicity of the respondent (see Table 12). The results compared to the overall ethnicity 2008 results were similar for the White and Hispanic categories. Conversely, a slightly higher amount of African American reading students (13.3% versus approximately 8% for the 2008 Los Rios Community College District Annual Report) which suggests a slightly higher proportion of African American students represented in basic skills reading classes.

Table 13

Is English Your First Language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number students who participated in survey: 232 out of 550 total
The final Question 12 asks whether English is your native language and the responses show that for 42% of the students surveyed, English is not their first language (see Table 13). The author was a little surprised at this significant percentage because this factor must be considered when developing curriculum that scaffolds on the prior knowledge base of the student population. It also influences the types of books selected for the Reading Center library. This issue was not addressed in the 2008 Los Rios Community College District Annual Report.

**Highlights of Survey Data**

In summary, the survey provided a basis for exploring the question whether students in the target community college basic skills reading classes have a habit of reading for pleasure. Since 60% of the students responding noted they read either none or from one to two books in the last 6 months, there appears to be substantiation for providing basic skills students enrolled in the Reading Center classes access to varied collection of current, popular books to determine if there was interest in developing a recreational reading habit.

**Methodology**

**Basic Skills Grant Award**

In March, 2009 the target community college offered the opportunity for all staff to apply for a Basic Skills Mini Grant to fund a project to support basic skills students or faculty who teach basic skills classes (Appendix D). The concept for the
project had to be a new idea and completed within the project timeframe of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

This author’s project qualified and received an award of $1,500 which funded the book purchases, a library cart with three shelves on each side, the project website development and promotional materials. As part of the grant requirements, the author will be making a final report in December, 2009, about the results of the field test. This culminating project would not be as robust without the support of the administration, faculty and staff from the local community college.

*Book Selection Process*

The survey results provided the basis for the initial selection of books for the Reading Center Library. The top categories as indicated by the student survey respondents were: Action/Adventure, Mystery/Crime, Romance, and Nonfiction. In order to have a range of texts that appeal to all students, the author decided to have a fifth grouping category entitled “Popular Culture” that would include graphic novels, science fiction, sports and horror novels. While these categories did not rate highly with the student population, the author took into account that since these students were disengaged readers, they might not be aware of the new market trends in these categories. Exposure to these genres may be what sparks an interest in reading. The author’s overriding premise when searching for books that might appeal to the basic skill students was to have topical, current culture texts and not focus on the classics or the type of texts the students may have been exposed to and rejected in high school.
Resources Consulted for Book Selection

Selecting texts for this project involved conferring with professors from the community college English and Reading Departments, public librarians, booksellers and book review sources on the internet. These recommendations were weighed against the author’s knowledge of the student population in the Reading Center. Many times book recommendations were not at the right reading level or, if at the right reading level, too immature of a storyline.

Recommendations by instructors were varied and many were based on approved class book lists provided to students when selecting a book to read for class purposes. (Most basic skills reading courses require that the student read and analyze a class text; for example, *The Kite Runner*, or for lower level courses choose a book from a list of approximately 15 texts.) One professor who favors graphic and science fiction novels provided confirmation of several of books the author had already chosen as well as some further suggestions.

The author favored book recommendations voted by other readers as in those by The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). This website presents a valuable resource for teens who want up-to-date book recommendations. Teens vote online for their favorite books and the compiled results are available. The site displays all winners or an abbreviated top ten list in a variety of categories. Additionally, a list of award winners as in the ALEX awards named after Margaret Alexander Edwards Trust. Ms. Edwards, or Alex as her friends often referred to her, was a librarian in
Baltimore who proposed a list of books written for adults, but which would also appeal to the interests of young adults age 12 to 18. This list was helpful when looking for text that may be at a little lower reading level yet still at a reading level for the target adult student population. Three of the texts on the 2009 list of award winners were included in the book purchases. Another feature of the website are ALEX winner lists for the last 12 years making the book purchase budget stretch farther for good selections from prior years that can be purchased “used” at a discount.

The author visited several local bookstores and asked the staff if they encountered adults who are reading at below the 8th grade level and are interested in finding a book. The consensus of all the personnel contacted is that usually the individual has a name of a book when they come into the store. Occasionally if they do ask for help in finding a book at a comfortable reading level from the reference desk staff, the adult is shown to the Young Adult section or there is an Easy Reading section at both Borders and Barnes and Noble bookstores. The Easy Reading section consists of some classic texts that would be appropriate for the 6th to 8th grade level reader, however most of the books have younger people as the main characters of the story which may not appeal to the adult reader. This section is usually for the book store patron who is too old for the children’s section and too young for the Young Adult section.

Recommendations from Atwell
When selecting young adult fiction, the author measured the story plot against her knowledge of the community college audience to determine suitability. Atwell (2007) has provided the following list of suggestions for selecting award winning Young Adult Literature:

- ALA (American Library Association) Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults
- ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
- ALA Alex Award Winner
- New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- National Book Award Winner or Finalist
- Coretta Scott King Award Winner
- Michael Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature

Most of these lists were reviewed at the time of selection. Note: The Amazon website often notes award winner titles in the editorial review section of the website for the book under consideration.

**Readability Analysis**

In August, 2009 just prior to the beginning of the Fall semester 66 books were purchased and received using the Basic Skill Grant award. Approximately 90% of the books were new and the used books were all in very good condition. It was important to the quality of the project that the books from which the students had to choose were
attractive and clean so the students felt valued; they were not choosing cast offs, but
current books that ranged across cultures and topics (Appendix C).

As the books were received, each title was looked up on the Sacramento Public
Library website that allows public access to the EBSCO-Host Website, Novelist Plus.
(The ReadOnNow! website home page provides a link to the Sacramento Public
Library and with a library card number, members may access the EBSCO Host
Website, Novelist Plus.) The website notes the Lexile score (if available) or the library
categorizes the book as a book suitable for older children, teens, or gives an grade
range to an adult, for example, 5-Adult would mean that it is appropriate reading for a
5th grader to an adult. Based on this feedback and a review of the plot, the texts
ordered were designated above or below 8th grade.

Initially the author was going to label the books based on reading level, but
decided to let the students choose what they wanted since it was not up to the author to
judge their choice. The list of books organized by Title and Author (Appendix G) that
is located on the left-hand side of the home page has an asterisk for those books that
are above 8th grade reading level. This list may be printed out as a reference for the
student to take to the library or for educators who wishes an additional book list for
their class.

ReadOnNow! Website

This website was designed and developed to be a visual interactive multimedia
experience leveraging the power of the internet to entice basic skill readers to
investigate books. Since the audience for the website is under prepared community college students, graphics were used to ease navigation to book information, YouTube videos and student book recommendations.

The purpose of the website was three fold. First, the inventory of books will ebb and flow depending on the number of students participating. Obviously not all books will be available at all times because another student may have already checked out the book. Having a visual book inventory linked to the internet allows the student, who peruses the library cart and is unable to chose a book, to explore other selections. Seeing a YouTube video or reading a student recommendation may spark an interest to motivate the student to read the book. The total inventory is currently 66 books, 40 books of which or 60% have related visual or audio media (Appendix C).

Second, some students are visual learners with minimal prior knowledge and viewing a YouTube might provide contextual clues that will enable the reader to visualize an historical time period or another place in the world they have never visited. This will help the student create a movie in their head as they read the text.

Finally, navigating to the Amazon website to read the book data aids with developing library search skills (Appendix B). Both the community college campus library and public library have online websites and learning how to navigate and search for books is an important study and research skill that will benefit the students for many years to come.

*Website Overview-- “Hints on Finding a Book”*
The home page: http://www.someprofs.org/~llarabee/ reflects a narrow left-hand column with links to email the project’s author, a hyperlinked List of books (Appendix G) by title and author, a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Hints on Finding a Book” and links to library resources. The author suggests new users review this presentation for basic navigation information for this site (Appendix B).

The right-hand side of the screen has a graphic entitled “Where Will a Book Lead You?” with five hexagonal landscape pictures representing the following genres: Mystery, Romance, Action, Nonfiction and Popular Culture. A click on the genre graphic leads to the next screen that is similar but the hexagons have separated into individual graphics. Select the hexagon landscape picture labeled “Action,” for example, to arrive at a page with six book cover graphics. Some books have YouTube videos associated with the book or other visual/ audio media directly related to the text. The student can click on the YouTube logo to see the video. Note: they would use the browser’s Back button to return to the website. A yellow sticky note symbol indicates another student has read the book and provided a written recommendation. Click on the yellow sticky note another example at (http://someprofs.org/~llarabee/Types/Romance.htm) to view a written recommendation by clicking on a yellow sticking note which links to a student recommendation text file.

Reading Level Designation
Now the user is ready to examine more information about the book. First the user would note the few words below the picture cover graphic. If the text is yellow, it means the reading level is below 8th grade and if the text is white, then the reading level is above the 8th grade. The purpose of the color differentiation was meant to be subtle so the student user can see all the books by category rather than all the low level books and have to go to another link for higher level books. The designation of above or below the 8th grade reading level is a guide only and students may choose any book they wish regardless of their skill level. If students are intrigued sufficiently to try a higher level book, then if that spurs them to read, they will usually get something from their efforts. The author repeatedly assured all students that if they did not like the book they chose, regardless of the reason, to bring back the book and select another (Appendix C).
What Information is Available on Amazon?

If the user clicks on the book cover graphic, the link will take the user to the Amazon website location for that book. When the user arrives at the Amazon site, s/he would select the book cover one more time to view the front cover, the inside cover flap, the first few pages of the first chapter, the back inside flap text and finally the back cover information. This will allow the user to read a few pages to see if the book is at a comfortable level for the reader and determine if s/he liked the writer’s style. To the right of the book cover on the Amazon website is a link with the author’s name underlined. This link will take the user to a list of books by the same author.

To see published book reviews, the student would scroll down the page. Sometimes there is related media which might be a video of an author interview or a video book trailer. The ISBN number and number of pages as well as the physical dimensions of the book gives the reader clues about ordering information or the length of the text. The student could then use the browser’s Back button to return to the ReadOnNow! website. The user may look at a subsequent page of books by selecting the Next button on the top right hand corner of the screen. The picture of the “home button” in the top right hand corner of the screen will return the user to the home page or first screen (Appendix B).

Summation of Genres and Video Media on Website

To view the other genre areas, the student would return to the home page and select either Mystery, Romance, Nonfiction or Popular Culture. The Mystery section
features 12 books on two subsequent pages, the Romance section references 16 books on three pages, the Action section reviews 12 books on two pages, the Nonfiction area has 10 books on two pages and finally the Popular Culture genre has 16 books on three pages. This is a fairly even distribution of books across categories.

Conclusion

The methodology in Chapter 3 reviewed the initial reader interest survey, information about the Basic Skills Grant award, the book selection strategies and readability determination. Chapter 3 concluded with a step-by-step walk through of the ReadOnNow! website design and features. Chapter Four discusses the compilation and analysis of the project data as well as the results, conclusions and recommendations for research.
Chapter 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The following chapter details the ReadOnNow! project implementation process, reports on the progress during the field test and summarizes the results. The recommendations for future study and curriculum are made with the hope of continuing this project to support basic skill community college students to acquire a lifetime habit of reading for pleasure.

It has been established at this target community college and in the population in general that reading for pleasure while beneficial to skill development is not a practice enjoyed by 60% of the students in the Reading Center remediation classes. This project was developed to complement the existing reading skill development curriculum in the Reading Center with a program to encourage students to enjoy building their skills and read for recreational purposes.

The first phase of the project was to secure funding for the purchase of the book inventory and to select books appropriate for inclusion that would appeal to adults yet have a reading level that was either above or below the 8th grade level. The next step in this first phase involved the actual purchase of the books, library cart and verifying the readability level for each book. The website design and development provided an internet accessible visual library of the inventory of 66 books with the added feature of 62% of the books linked to YouTube videos or related media and/or student recommendations. The second phase of the project began the week before the
start of the Fall, 2009 semester and the recruitment of volunteers to participate in the field test to promote recreational reading habit of reading for pleasure.

Introducing Reading Center Library

The Reading Center faculty coordinator requested that the author present a summarization of the ReadOnNow! project and preview the website features at both the student tutor/classified staff meeting and the subsequent Reading Center faculty meeting. The author outlined the project and emphasized how promoting a field test for recreational reading would validate procedures and establish the protocol as a complement to the current Reading Center curriculum. The website was displayed on an overhead projector and the author provided a tour of some of the links where students could find out more information about a selected book, view YouTube videos related to the book and read student recommendations. The author showed the attendees the moveable library cart with 66 book inventory representing an array of cross cultural topics representing five genre categories (Appendix D).

The reaction from both the faculty and staff was very positive. There was a buzz of excitement generated as a result of viewing a sampling of video trailers promoting books or movie tie-ins and several staff members wanted to take a book home to read right away. The author demonstrated how the book cover graphic was linked to a page on the Amazon website. From that page the viewer could scroll down to read a short synopsis of the book, click on the book author’s name, see what other titles by that author were available, and view related media which might be a video
book trailer or interview with the author. Many faculty were unaware of the feature provided by online booksellers which allows the user to view a display of the front cover, the first few pages of the first chapter, the back flap and back cover. I explained how this feature provides students (if the book is unavailable) with a way to determine the readability of the text. By reviewing the first couple of pages, students can determine how difficult the vocabulary will be and whether the book cover and beginning of the story are appealing (Appendix B).

The author informed the faculty and staff that this was a field test and would be limited to 15 participants until the initial data gathering period was complete on October 2, 2009. After that date, the students could continue with their recreational reading and additional students could be added. More than a few of the faculty commented that they would be interested in sending some of their students in to sign up for the project. They were very complimentary about the project concept and website.

*Book Loss Concern*

The only concern voiced by the faculty and Reading Center staff was whether the books would be secure and what if students did not return the books they checked out. The author was aware of this concern about book loss and as a general precaution the books were stored on the library cart during the day and locked in a study room during the evening hours. Although this was a valid concern, the author did not feel it should discourage verifying whether there is a thirst for books that is not being
satisfied. Once the field test is conducted and the book inventory is verified, the necessity for security alternatives can then be appraised.

Project Orientation

The Fall semester began in the Reading Center on August 24, 2009. As students came in for their Reading Center orientation, the author was invited into the meeting to solicit participation in the ReadOnNow! project. Several students inquired about how to sign up. Other students were interested, but felt they had too big of an academic load to make the commitment to read 20 minutes a day. During the first week of classes, 15 students volunteered to participate. The fact that no college credit would be offered for their participation did not seem to matter or deter the students who registered (Appendix E).

Book Talks

Initially the author thought that it would be necessary to visit classrooms to request student participation in the project. The plan was to go to selected classrooms with a handout describing the project and the book cart library and pitch the program. This step became unnecessary because the author had more than sufficient students just from students enrolled in classes in the Reading Center. Short book talks occurred naturally as the students who were selecting books during the field test asked questions about particular books.
Student Orientation

The individualized orientation for the project was geared to the students’ time and interest and conducted at a Reading Center desk with a computer system. (The Reading Center has 22 computer systems available to students.) The author provided an overview of their commitment (Appendix E & F). Upon verbal agreement, the author had the student enter the following basic information into a computer database: name, the course code for the reading class in which they were enrolled, date of birth, email and phone number. The author pulled the library cart over to where the student was sitting at a computer in the Reading Center and asked the student if s/he read for recreational purposes. Most confessed no, but they would like to.

There are headphones for students to use, so at this point while the author was explaining the website features, the student could listen while they watched a few of the book/movie YouTube videos. For many students this was helpful, but at least a third of the students quickly picked a book off the shelf (the books were displayed face out on three shelves on each side of the cart) and held it possessively stating that this was the book they wanted to read. If there was a video associated with their selection, we viewed the video together. When asked how they decided so quickly, most commented that they had some prior knowledge about the book, the book’s author or the plot summary on the back of the book or internal book flap.
Following a short discussion about determining independent, instructional and frustrating reading levels, the author asked the students to open the book and see if the text was at a comfortable level for them to read. The author also informed the students that if they didn’t like the book after the first chapter to return the book and they could select another book. After the first week only one student returned her book and chose another. In addition, the author requested that the students keep a daily log indicating whether s/he read 20 minutes or more that day and what impressions came from the daily reading. While the main emphasis of the project was to establish a recreational reading habit, the log would facilitate understanding of the plot or character development if they wrote a few notes about the book on a daily basis.

Second Day Student Feedback

The website review with the students during the first week was minimal due to time constraints. Further review of the website occurred in subsequent weekly meetings. When the student wasn’t sure about which book to choose, viewing the website videos usually helped make up their mind. The author provided the students with the website address so they could peruse the video links at home. One student with a less than 8th grade reading level was very excited to see several videos and one video convinced him to read the book to find out what really happens. He didn’t care about the written reviews on Amazon, but the videos seemed to impact his reading decision.
The author informed each student about keeping in weekly contact regarding their progress by having them check in once a week in person or by email. When the students finish a book and write a recommendation, they may choose a new selection. The author provided the students with a one page form to complete when they finish the book so their recommendation can be posted on the website for future students to view. (Appendix F)

*Student Feedback during the field test period through October 2, 2009.*

After the second day, one student had come back in to the Reading Center proudly declaring to have read the first chapter and how much she loved the book. She showed the author her special notebook and how she recorded observations about what she had read. The author congratulated her progress and told her to keep the author informed as she advanced through the book.

Within the first week of the project, two students had finished reading their first selection and provided a written recommendation. Both recommendations were effusive about how much they enjoyed their book and they gave the book the highest recommendation. Another student, after getting off to a slow start with his daily reading ended up reading the whole book over the weekend and very proudly proclaimed how that was the first book he had read all year. He confidently selected another book that was both longer and at over an 8th grade reading level.

A different student who was the most prolific participant, read seven books and in her student recommendation for one of the initial books she read stated that this was
the first time she regularly turned off the T.V. and read for over an hour because she wanted to find out what happened next in the story. At the beginning she selected books below the 8th grade reading level that were less than 200 pages and most recently she read a book that was 384 pages and she is now selecting books in the higher reading level. Another item that came out in the student recommendations was that she shared the content of the books by often reading certain excerpts to her 15-year-old son. The author pointed out that she was a very positive role model for her son since she was in community college and working on improving her reading and writing skills.

With respect to another selection, the above student commented how she identified with the 19 year old male main character who was bullied by a neighborhood gang which reminded her of how she was treated as a teenager growing up in San Francisco’s Hunter District. She stated she understood his pain.

A mother of a 3 year old said she took time to read to her daughter but since high school had not read for pleasure herself. She liked her first selection, but was disappointed that there wasn’t a happy romantic ending that she had expected. Although she admitted that the ending twist surprised her because she had never personally observed an unselfish loving act and that the ending did make sense, she still wanted them to live happily ever after. At the conclusion of her second selection, she commented how she had forgotten how much she had enjoyed reading and how reading fiction had helped her mentally escape the stress of her personal life.
Students who Selected Books but Read less than Half of their Book

Several students when contacted or who came in the lab and when asked about their progress confessed that they were too busy to read or they had too much homework to do. The author or staff always replied, that was OK and they could start reading any time or maybe just start with five minutes a night rather than 20 minutes. The author would also check to see if the student wanted to exchange their selection for another book, but the answer was that they liked the book they selected, but just hadn’t gotten around to reading. The author observed that for some of these students it was their first semester at community college and a few of them had lost their jobs and were in school for retraining. They hadn’t attended school for a long time and were trying to acclimate themselves to the academic requirements. These individuals were experiencing so many changes in their lives that while they had good intentions at the beginning of the semester, they felt overwhelmed with keeping up with their homework assignments.

Another factor might be that some of these students have always disliked reading and do not know what Atwell (2007) refers to in her book as being in the “Reading Zone.” This refers to getting lost in a book or experiencing the high of visualizing a scene and being able to mentally see the characters move around the stage in your mind. In discussion with students in the Reading Center, many have not found a book that propelled them into this “Reading Zone” and since they have not
experienced this feeling it is almost impossible for them to imagine enjoying the act of reading an engaging book.

Reaction of Reading Center Staff and Faculty

The library cart filled with books was on display in the Reading Center during the day from 7:30am to 7:10 pm Monday through Thursday and a half day on Friday. Many additional students and staff were interested in borrowing books, but they were asked to refrain until the field test period for this project was concluded.

The library cart has become a focal point of discussion in the Reading Center. Tutors asked about books on the library cart, commenting that they would like to read several of the books in the inventory. One staff member shared how she accessed the website from home and viewed most of the YouTube videos, prompting her to reserve a few books at the local public library. The author has received feedback from a couple of Reading professors who have students in their classes who are participating in the field test and love to talk about the books they are reading.

Book Selection Statistics

Initially the author was going to limit the number of student participants to no more than 12 students, but the author couldn’t turn away the last few students who really wanted to read some of the books in the inventory. Finally the author realized that with the popularity of the program increasing, she had to draw the line at 15 students because of the need to have sufficient inventory available for the field test.
The first week of the Fall, 2009 semester (August 24 to 29) involved giving a brief overview of the program during the Reading Center orientation presentations and meeting with students individually to discuss the program and select a book to read. By Friday, August 29 there were 15 voluntary students signed up.

By the end of the field test period on October 2, 2009, the following is a breakdown of the students’ reading accomplishments: four students (27%) reading two books or more (one student read 7 books); five students (33%) read 1 or more books; four students (27%) read about one-half of their book and two students (13%) selected a book but had not read any appreciable amount of text. Therefore nine students read 1 or more books, four students read part of a book and two students did not make much progress for a total of 24 books selected from the inventory of which 17 were read completely.

Demographics

The age range of the students was from 18 years old to 53 years old and about an equal split of women (8) and men (7) participants. Approximately 73% of the students were enrolled in the Basic Reading class where the reading level is at the 8th grade level or below

Book Loss

The field test will continue until November 25th, the day before Thanksgiving Break. The books that are not on the library book cart have been accounted for as being checked out to a student participant. At this point it does not appear that anyone
decided to borrow a book without permission. At the end of the semester there will be
an accounting, but based on the contact the author has had with students, it does not
appear to be an issue.

**Consequences of Book Loss**

The author perceives there are two main issues of concern: loss of the book for future students to check out and the lack of funds to replenish the Reading Center Library. The Basic Skills Grant allocated $750 dollars to purchase books. The books were purchased through the college book store and a majority of the books were new books. If the Reading Center faculty coordinators wish to establish the library in the Reading Center as a regular part of the curriculum, then what funding methods are available? This will be a topic for discussion at the end of the semester when the data is complete.

**Student Contact and Journaling**

The author requested that students write a short comment or impression of the daily reading. While a few students liked journaling, many commented that it interfered with their reading. They were not used to journaling and found it to be an irritation. Based on that feedback, the author reiterated that the purpose of the program was to develop a daily reading habit. If the student found that they didn’t have the time or inclination to take notes, then it was more important that they read than anything else.
The Reading Center changed the student scheduling from previous semesters when the student would attend twice a week to the Fall, 2009, semester when the students are scheduled in the Reading Center once a week for a longer period of time. The author designated a few key experienced Reading Center staff to handle student participants requests if the author was not present in the Reading Center.

*Student Book Recommendations*

Three student recommendations were posted to the website and several more were received after the deadline which will be added as the semester progresses. At the beginning of the project the author envisioned students filming YouTube video recommendations. However as the website was being developed, the author found so many YouTube book trailers, movie trailers based on selected books and other video tie-ins that filming students recommendations didn’t seem necessary. In addition, there was a technical issue with the college unable to provide a website that would allow streaming video. The author, after several requests, went ahead and secured a website outside the English department in order to meet the timelines of this project.

*Website Feedback*

The ReadOnNow! website attracted some students with the YouTube videos who had never seen a video book trailer or realized that large booksellers with an online presence were trying to attract readers using videos. Several students said after watching the videos that they had to read the book even though they just viewed the
movie trailer. This surprised the author but the students went on to explain that there was so much more detail in the book and the movie went by too fast.

Anytime the website was viewed by a faculty member or outside representative, they commented on the uniqueness of the presentation and the YouTube videos. It appears regardless of whether or not one is a reader that the website can be used as a tool to excite book lovers and future book lovers to engage in reading.

Proposal for Continuation of Reading Center Library

The department could send an email request campus wide for faculty, staff and students to donate used books. Any used books that were not appropriate for the Reading Center library could be turned into local used bookstores for credit toward the purchase of books to increase the library selection. Federal work study staff could be trained to evaluate the books based on a set of criteria such as those reviewed in Chapter 2. If the current inventory of books is supplemented by donated text, then the Reading Center library might suffer a few book losses, but the inventory could be replaced at a lower cost. If a student kept a book, then the staff would have to assume that it was a favorite read and hope that the student will pass the book along to a friend that will also read and enjoy the book.

Community College Library

After the librarian, who participates on the Basic Skills Committee, reviewed the ReadOnNow! website, she indicated her support to partner with the Reading
Center and discuss what type of books might be added to the campus library selections. Currently the campus library is undergoing a remodeling that will be complete by the end of next year and the stacks are closed, but students may request books which can be picked up at the temporary library facilities.

Ease of Access to Reading Center Library

Although it is critical to have the campus library staff support recreational reading, providing students with books in a localized classroom library helps the students focus on a limited group of books, learning the selection process and then having some success at finding and reading books that appeal to their interests. The students may need some transition exercises on going from a classroom library to a school or public library, however armed with the information that librarians are very helpful people and love to aid patrons in locating books of their choice, the students will be able to utilize one of the best resources a community has to offer.

Once success has replaced their initial apathy towards books, then these students will feel more comfortable about going to the school library or public library. This issue is the same for struggling reading students in the K-12 continuum and well as the students in the community college. By providing a Reading Center Library at the community college Learning Resource Center, the basic skill reader can choose a book from a carefully selected group geared to an array of contemporary interests and achieve some success before moving on to the campus library or public
Recommendations

The author has been thinking about installing a library in the Reading Center for at least two years. Working with the students in the Reading Center is a very positive nurturing experience and the infusion of this project created an upbeat synergy among the staff, faculty and students. Everyone in the Reading Center loves good books, but although the curriculum emphasizes building reading skills, there was a void when it came to recommending books for pleasure reading.

The booklist handout in the Reading Center and posted on the campus library website is dated. If one is a reader then it doesn’t matter how “old” a book is, since if it is an excellent book, it will stand the test of time. Alternatively, the student population in the Reading Center (as noted previously in the initial survey 60% have read two or less books in the last 6 months) are looking for something to grab their attention and be engaging rather than the same old books they were assigned in high school. Reading can be painful if the books are of no interest or the vocabulary is too difficult.

Reader’s Bill of Rights

At the project’s conclusion, the author found the following Reader’s Bill of Rights by French author Daniel Pennac (1992) as cited in Nancie Atwell’s book, The Reading Zone. As part of this continuing field test, the author will hand out this list because it is important for disengaged readers to know that you don’t have to read
every word or not finish a book—it is all about choice. Recreational reading is not a job or a chore; it is reading for the fun of it.

*The Reader’s Bill of Rights*

1. The right not to read something
2. The right to skip pages
3. The right not to finish
4. The right to reread
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to escapism
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to not defend your tastes

by Daniel Pennac (1992)

*Suggestions for Future Research*

Based on this field test, the author would like to continue this project through the following semester to see if the initial students continue to progress with their recreational reading. With a longer time frame, students may be persuaded to give the books a try once they have that first semester under their belt.

Often the author is challenged when students confess that they hate to read or just the other day a 22 year old young man said he couldn’t remember the last time he
read a whole book. The author would like to have a more expansive list of books in
the inventory or in the campus library to find books that grab readers with their
exciting story line for these books might be the turning point to resurrecting a
student’s interest in reading. Based on the books the students selected, it appears that
more “Urban fiction” should be included in the inventory.

Reading Center Curriculum

At the outset of the this project, one of the faculty coordinators suggested that
in order for me to get sufficient participants that she would develop a reading center
module based on the concept of voluntary reading. The author, confident that there
would be sufficient volunteers, agreed that it would be a positive addition to the
curriculum but suggested that the field test results be reviewed at the conclusion of the
semester before there were any changes made. Balancing the concepts of voluntary
reading with the requirements to account for the students’ time spent to prove they
actually read the book will be a topic for discussion when developing this module for
the Reading Center curriculum.

Conclusions

The concept of providing Reading Center Students with ease of access to a
cross section of contemporary, cross cultural fiction and nonfiction texts anecdotally
appears to be a very influential experience for the majority of students who
participated in the field test. In a time of competing leisure media demands of
computer technology, movies, television, video games not to mention family and
financial pressures, learning to carve out some time for reading for pleasure can be
difficult at best for the habitual reader let alone a disengaged reader. The field test
with a selected inventory of books and a website that appealed to students through the
use of YouTube videos were tools to engage the students’ attention.

The Reading Center provided a very supportive, safe environment for the basic
skill students, who were admittedly disengaged readers, the opportunity to experience
“Reading in the Zone.” This self-discovery can be fed with exposure to more books
over a longer period of time which is why this field test and coordinating multimedia
website will continue through the latter part of November. The Reading Center staff
who already encourage students as they progress through their reading center modules
are interested in helping students who want to select books to read for pleasure at
home. This field test showed that even without the student receiving credit for their
time, they were willing to participate and while reading for their own enjoyment they
were applying the skills they learned from their self-paced work in the Reading Center
class modules.

A disengaged reader might be only one book away from finding that book
which kindles the spark to learn about “Reading in the Zone.” Reading for pleasure is
a transforming experience that can benefit every aspect of one’s personal, career and
family life. Reading is a gift that will provide hours of individual enjoyment, unlock
doors to academic accomplishment, and become a role model for establishing family
literacy.
APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix A. Reader Interest Survey ................................................................. 84
Appendix B. Hints on How to Find a Book ..................................................... 87
Appendix C. ReadOnNow! Website Screens .................................................... 98
Appendix D. Letter from Reading Center Coordinator ................................. 113
Appendix E. Project Overview ...................................................................... 115
Appendix F. Book Recommendation Form .................................................. 117
APPENDIX A

Reader Interest Survey
**Reader Interest Survey**

1. **How do you like to spend your spare time? Check (√) all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visiting with friends/family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internet sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hobby/craft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking on the phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening to music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **When you read, which of the following do you most like to read? Check (√) all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comic books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiction books (stories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonfiction books (true)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Why do you read books? Check (√) all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pleasure/entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **How many books have you read in the last 6 months? Check one (√)**

(Do not include books assigned for school)

- [ ] 0
- [ ] 1 - 2
- [ ] 3 - 4
- [ ] 5+
## Reader Interest Survey

5. How do you select a book or magazine to read? Check (✓) all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>look at the cover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read title of the book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask a friend for a recommendation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read the back cover or book jacket</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read a couple of pages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw the movie, video or T.V. show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check length of book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>note if on bestseller list</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other:

6. What types of fiction (stories) do you like to read? Check (✓) all that apply.

- Action/Adventure
- Fantasy
- Romance
- Graphic Novels
- Mystery/Crime
- Humor
- Historical
- Horror
- Science Fiction
- Sports
- Westerns

7. What types of nonfiction (real events/people) do you like to read? Check (✓) all that apply.

- Biography/History
- Self-improvement
- Business/Technology
- Science/Health
- Sports
- Religion/Philosophy
- Art/Drama/Poetry
- Hobbies

8. Additional Comments:

☐ Response to the following questions is voluntary and not required.

9. Age?

- ☐ under 18
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-24
- ☐ 25-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40 and over

10. Gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

11. Ethnicity?

- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Other ________
- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Pacific Islander/Filipino

12. Is English your first language?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank You!
APPENDIX B

Hints on How to Find a Book
What Information is Available from Online Booksellers?

How do you know a book is at a Comfortable Reading Level for you?
CHAPTER 1

ON A SPRING DAY in his twelfth year, Temujin raced his four brothers across the steppes, in the shadow of the mountain known as Deli’un-Boldakh. The eldest, Bekter, rode a gray mare with skill and concentration, and Temujin matched his pace, waiting for a chance to go past. Behind them came Khasar, whooping wildly as he moved up on the two leaders. At ten, Khasar was a favorite in the tribe, as lighthearted as Bekter was sullen and dark. His red-mottled stallion snorted and whickered after Bekter’s mare, making the little boy laugh. Kachiun came next in the galloping line, an eight-year-old not given to the openness that made people love Khasar. ¶

112 word passage.
Don’t Let Names & Places Slow You Down

CHAPTER 1

ON A SPRING DAY in his twelfth year, Temujin raced his four brothers across the steppes, in the shadow of the mountain known as Deltun-Boldakhi. The eldest, Bekter, rode a gray mare with skill and concentration, and Temujin matched his pace, waiting for a chance to go past. Behind them came Khasar, whooping wildly as he moved up on the two leaders. At ten, Khasar was a favorite in the tribe, as lighthearted as Bekter was sullen and dark. His red-mottled stallion snorted and whickered after Bekter’s mare, making the little boy laugh. Kachim came next in the galloping line, an eight-year-old not given to the openness that made people love Khasar. Of all of the brothers, Kachim seemed the most serious, even secretive. He spoke only rarely and did not complain, no matter what Bekter did to him. Kachim had a knack with the ponies that few others could match, able to nurse a burst of speed when the rest were flagging. Temujin glanced over his shoulder to where Kachim had positioned himself, his balance perfect. He seemed to be idling along, but they had all been surprised before Temujin kept a close eye on him.

Already some way behind his brother, the smallest and youngest of them could be heard calling plaintively for them to wait. Temudjin was a boy with too much love for sweet things and laziness, and it showed in his riding.
After you select a book, read the first chapter.

If the book doesn’t grab you, then let’s pick another.
APPENDIX C

ReadOnNow! Website Screens
ReadOnNow!

Mystery

Action

Romance

Nonfiction

Popular Culture

Where Will a Book Lead You?...
Select a topic & explore the ReadOnNow! catalog

Mystery

Action

Romance

Nonfiction

Popular Culture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mystery Page 1</th>
<th>Next</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSI crew and a serial murderer</td>
<td>Men &amp; Women = Werewolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spy in Eastern Europe with problems...</td>
<td>Short stories: N.Y. locksmith tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough times for L.A. valley lady</td>
<td>13 short stories from the dark side...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clever lady detective in Botswana

Could Nazi experiment affect students?

Female law firm is on the trail of...

The day started out bad-then got worse

Tried as an adult but not guilty

Steven King Short stories with a chill
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern adventure on the high seas...</strong></td>
<td><strong>College hoops &amp; the neighborhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heroic Tale</strong></td>
<td><strong>Genghis builds an empire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magic, SyFy &amp; Horror wrapped in one.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bad things happen to innocent people</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A scavenger hunt or your life... Hackers & terrorist attack in S. F.

Problems in Flint, MI Humorous but keeps you on the edge...

Bravery is necessary for this quest Family Drama with crazy mother--
Popular Culture Page 1

- Tough times in a valley town
- Chinese Cinderella

- It takes a graveyard to raise a child
- A girl who steals books...

- Impact of magic on a man’s life...
- Tell me a story in pictures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What if your talent was stolen?</th>
<th>What if you couldn't speak about “IT”?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The art of Persian rug making</td>
<td>What happened to the family in WWII?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teambuilding skills for sports & life

Job-hunting?

Quest to be a martial arts master

What can you do with duct tape?

Injured climber pays it forward

Graphic Novel set in Iran
So your husband is a time traveler...
Attracted to bad boy vampires?
Fall in love all over again.
Can love & winning the Lottery mix?
Will love turn a life around?
Life, love & tragedy overcome
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romance Page 2</th>
<th>Next</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For dog lovers who appreciate puppies</td>
<td>Family drama—kidnapped daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She wants to be a chef on T.V.</td>
<td>Rendezvous at the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters leave Shanghai for U.S.A.</td>
<td>Las Vegas, murder and a cat...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Romance Page 3

Author of Twilight goes supernatural

Tough lady stranded & needs help...

Pregnant & Abandoned at Wal-Mart

Vampires among us in boarding school
APPENDIX D

Letter from Reading Center Coordinator
September 22, 2009

Masters Project Committee, CSUS:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Lin Larabee, who developed and is currently implementing her ReadOnNow! project, designed to increase our students’ recreational reading. We are seeing wonderful results in our students’ reading comprehension, and most importantly, in their appreciation and motivation in reading for pleasure. I am not surprised with these favorable outcomes as Lin has invested a tremendous amount of time, energy and effort in her project.

In April 2009 Lin applied for a Basic Skills Initiative grant to assist in her purchase of high-interest books and a mobile bookstand. Impressed with her idea, rationale and plan, our campus Basic Skills Committee awarded Lin a $1500 grant for her project.

Lin gave two 40-minute presentations, one on August 19th to our Reading Center support staff - tutors and instructional assistant, - and another on August 21st to our Reading Center faculty during flex week. Initially I had planned on Lin only presenting to our support staff on August 19th, and then after watching her presentation, I would present her project to our faculty on August 21st. However, after I viewed her initial presentation, I was so enthralled that I told Lin that there was no way I could possibly convey her comprehensive web presentation with her style and enthusiasm.

During Lin’s first presentation, one instructional assistant remarked, “I’m going to the library to check out all these books!” Another tutor remarked, “I’d like to sign-up to take your project!” Needless to say, our support staff was as thrilled as I was, and at the conclusion of Lin’s web presentation, she received a grateful applause from our tutors and instructional assistants.

Lin was just as well received by our Reading faculty during her second presentation. Many instructors were excited about having their own students participate in Lin’s program. Additionally, instructors found Lin’s web presentation extremely innovative, posing questions on how she was able to incorporate Amazon’s book previewing segment. In fact, one instructor who didn’t know how to look up books on Amazon was appreciative that Lin opened another avenue for her.

Our student response has been so strong that Lin is making available a second ReadOnNow! session. Although a second session is not a component of her Masters project and will require an additional time commitment on her part, Lin is willing to give it because of her belief that students will become life-long readers when they discover that recreational reading is enjoyable.

Sincerely,

Judy Roller, Reading Center Co-coordinator
APPENDIX E

Project Overview
# ReadOnNow!

*Reading Center Project to Increase Student Recreational Reading*

**What?** Reading every day will help develop your reading skills. You can get “smarter” by reading about 20 minutes a day.

**How?** Learn how to:
- Find books that are fun and easy to read.
- Discover books that are exciting and interesting.

**Who?** Any student enrolled in the following Reading classes:
- ENGRD 12, 14, 15, 56, 116, or 117

**When?** Sign-up between Monday, August 31 and Friday, September 4, 2009
- Maximum of 15 students. Project will run from August 24 to Sept 30.

**Cost?** - Free
- No book purchase required
- Student may borrow Reading Center Library book or book from ARC or local public library.

**Your Part?**
- Meet with Lin Larabee in the Reading Center for an orientation.
- Select a book to read from the Reading Center Library or other library.
- Keep a Daily Literature Log.
- Meet or email Lin once a week to discuss your progress.
- When you finish the book, share your experience.
- If time available, select another book and repeat process.

**How do I start?**

Step 1: Make an appointment with Lin Larabee, Reading Center, in the Learning Resource building.

Email: larabel@arc.losrios.edu or go to the Reading Center and ask at the first desk if you can sign up.
APPENDIX F

Book Recommendation Form
# Share your Book Reading Experience:
Name:____________________
Title:____________________________________Author:___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rate the book on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the best.</td>
<td>Worst → 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ← Best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Was the book about what you thought it would be?</td>
<td>Yes No Comment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Did you learn any new words?</td>
<td>Examples from Literature Journal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Was it Easy or Difficult for you to read 20 minutes a day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>If you were writing this book, what would you change?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Would you recommend this book to another student?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Can we “YouTube” your views about this book?</td>
<td>Yes No (Lin will help with YouTube filming)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

Booklist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Challenging Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A la Carte</td>
<td>Tanita Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Summer to Die</td>
<td>Lois Lowry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch:</td>
<td>Matthew Polly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arctic Drift (A Dirk Pitt Novel, #20)</td>
<td>Clive Cussler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Kitty</td>
<td>Michele Jaffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball Don't Lie</td>
<td>Matt de la Pena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound</td>
<td>Donna Napoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucking the Sarge</td>
<td>Christopher Paul Curtis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buried Onions</td>
<td>Gary Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caught Stealing</td>
<td>Charlie Huston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Thieves</td>
<td>David Benioff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coraline</td>
<td>Neil Gaiman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear John</td>
<td>Nicolas Sparks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Of Buxton</td>
<td>Christopher Paul Curtis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Nouf</td>
<td>Zoe Ferraris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Love of the Game My Story</td>
<td>Michael Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genghis: Birth of an Empire</td>
<td>Conn Iggulden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's a Bird (Paperback)</td>
<td>Steven T. Seagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude</td>
<td>Kate Morgenroth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just After Sunset: Stories</td>
<td>Stephen King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keys to the City: Tales of a New York City Locksmith</td>
<td>Joel Kostman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer Smile</td>
<td>Lisa Scottoline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Brother</td>
<td>Cory Doctorow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovely Bones</td>
<td>Alice Sebold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marley &amp; Me</td>
<td>John Grogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnighters #1: The Secret Hour</td>
<td>Scott Westerfeld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million Dollar Dilemma: Love Me, Love My Dog #1</td>
<td>Judy Baer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistaken Identity: Two Families, One Survivor, Unwavering Hope</td>
<td>D &amp; S Van Ryn &amp; C&amp; W Newell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monster</td>
<td>Walter Dean Myers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sister's Keeper</td>
<td>Jodi Picoult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmares and Dreamscapes (Paperback)</td>
<td>Steven King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights in Rodanthe</td>
<td>Nicolas Sparks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Human Involved</td>
<td>Barbara Seranella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood</td>
<td>Marjane Satrapi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah's Key</td>
<td>Tatiana de Rosnay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Girls: A Novel</td>
<td>Lisa See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp Teeth: A Novel (P.S.)</td>
<td>Toby Barlow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Phoenix: Beyond the Kingdom of Xia</td>
<td>Cindy Pon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold</td>
<td>Patricia McCormick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak</td>
<td>Laurie Halse Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Something: You Can Make a Difference</td>
<td>Earl Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Voices</td>
<td>Ellen Dee Davidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stump the Duct Tape Guys (Paperback)</td>
<td>Jim Berg &amp; Tim Nyberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas</td>
<td>James Patterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 250 Job Interview Questions</td>
<td>Peter Veruki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arrival</td>
<td>Shaun Tan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bean Trees: A Novel (P.S.)</td>
<td>Barbara Kingsolver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blood of Flowers: A Novel</td>
<td>Anita Amirrezvani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(*) More Challenging Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Book of Lost Things: A Novel</td>
<td>John Connolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book Thief</td>
<td>Marcus Zusak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christopher Killer (Forensic Mystery)</td>
<td>Alane Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Giver</td>
<td>Lois Lowry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Graveyard Book</td>
<td>Neil Gaiman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Host: A Novel</td>
<td>Stephenie Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jumbo Duct Tape Book</td>
<td>Jim Berg &amp; Tim Nyberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Name of the Wind (Kingkiller Chronicles, Day 1)</td>
<td>Patrick Rothfuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency</td>
<td>Alexander McCall Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Rules of Survival</td>
<td>Nancy Werlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Time Traveler’s Wife</td>
<td>Audrey Niffenegger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Tourist</td>
<td>Olen Steinhauer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wave</td>
<td>Morton Rhue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The WD-40 Book</td>
<td>Jim Berg &amp; Tim Nyberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Change the World... One Child at a Time</td>
<td>S. Thomson, G. Mortenson, D. Relin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Camp: What the Best Do Better Than Everyone Else</td>
<td>Jon Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twilight (The Twilight Saga, Book 1)</td>
<td>Stephenie Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vampire Academy (Vampire Academy, Book 1)</td>
<td>Richelle Mead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Where the Heart Is</td>
<td>Billie Letts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


http://www.youtube.com/t/fact_sheet

YouTube official blog 1,000,000,000 views. (2009). Retrieved October 15, 2009, from
http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2009/10/y000000000utube.html