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KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE: AN INTERPRETATIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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by

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ABSTRACT

HOW CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCE READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Heidi B. Grimshaw

According to Hudson, Koh, Moore, and Binks-Cantrell (2020), The National Assessment of Educational Progress's (NAEP) 2019 testing data revealed that 32% of U.S. fourth-grade students are reading below basic levels. This issue calls for interventions to increase reading achievement levels for elementary students. One way to accomplish this is to increase studies regarding what motivates caregivers to read to children. This present study examines how caregivers perceived the at-home read-aloud experience for children in primary grades: kindergarten through second grade. This study employed Bandura's observational theory. The study consisted of a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis of 20 caregivers of students from kindergarten through second grade. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of the caregivers. The data were coded and interpreted to connect themes. The findings will help guide future read aloud interventions.

Keywords: read aloud, interpretative phenomenological analysis, Bandura

DEDICATION

To my husband, Kyle, for his unending support throughout this process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem/Problem Statement

In 1985, the Commission on Reading drafted the report *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (National Academy of Education & Anderson, 1985), highlighting the importance of parents reading aloud to their children. The report concludes that the best way to improve a child's reading is to read aloud to them. It is well documented that reading aloud to children provides them with myriad benefits, including increased vocabulary (Trelease & Giorgis, 2019; Walther, 2019), improved background knowledge or ability to make sense of ideas beyond those they see in the moment (Laminack, 2019; Trelease & Giorgis, 2019), a foundation for further learning (Walther, 2019), and a sense of joy from reading (Trelease & Giorgis, 2019). When it comes time for school, these skills offer an advantage for children who have been reading aloud consistently (Gurdon, 2019). The American Academy of Pediatrics states: "Reading regularly with young children stimulates optimal patterns of brain development and strengthens parent-child relationships at a critical time in child development, which in turn, builds language, literacy, and social emotional skills that last a lifetime" (High & Klass, 2014, p. 404).

Despite these reported benefits, the Scholastic (2019) *Kids and Family Reading Report* found that 42% of 3–5-year-olds and 55% of 6–8-year-olds are not being read aloud to 5 to 7 days a week. The Read Aloud 15 Minutes National Campaign Survey (2018) reports even more concerning statistics. The survey found that only 30% of parents reported their children were read aloud to from birth. Of those 30%, only 14% spent at least 15 minutes a day reading aloud (The Read Aloud 15 Minutes National

Campaign Survey, 2018). On an even bleaker note, in Great Britain, the number of preschoolers being read aloud to has dropped 20% in the past 5 years (Gurdon, 2019).

It is apparent that while some parents have recognized how reading aloud impacts their children, and so read regularly, a significant number of caregivers do not read aloud to their children consistently. Children not read aloud to have a distinct disadvantage in school (Gurdon, 2019). This disadvantage is particularly evident in children from low-income households. Specifically, for households that earn less than \$35,000 annually, only “39% of households with children ages 0-8 read aloud 5-7 days a week, while 62% of families with incomes over \$100,000 or more read aloud 5-7 days a week” (Scholastic, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

Given the clear and well-established benefits of reading aloud to children, the question becomes “why”? Why is it that more caregivers do not read aloud to their children? The following study investigated caregivers’ perceptions of the act of reading aloud. Reading to children daily requires a significant time commitment. Why do some caregivers read to their children while others do not? How do caregivers perceive the experience of reading aloud with their children? This analysis of caregivers’ beliefs about read-alouds is viewed through a sociocultural lens. Vygotsky suggests that to understand a person’s cognitive development, one must understand the context from which the person comes (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). Thus, to understand how caregivers find motivation to read aloud, this study considered the context of the parents by exploring the social, historical, and cultural experiences of each caregiver to understand better what motivated them to read aloud to their child (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013).

The study further explored how caregivers interpret the experience of reading aloud to their children. To do this, this study employed a social justice perspective. There is a disparity in the statistics regarding families with lower incomes and those with higher incomes in terms of which students are read to regularly. This disparity is evidenced in the difference found between low- and high-income families in the Scholastic (2019) Kids and Family Study, which revealed a more than 20% difference, based on income, regarding students read aloud to. It is evident, therefore, that students from lower-income homes are more likely to enter school at a disadvantage. This study also considered the factors leading caregivers to read aloud in the hope that the information gleaned can be used to change the paradigm for other caregivers and lead to more children being read aloud to consistently.

Significance/Importance of the Study

Discovering what motivates caregivers to read aloud and what benefits they experience while reading aloud can help researchers know what can be done to encourage more caregivers to read aloud to their children. Although there have been many studies that have focused on the importance of reading aloud and the associated benefits, a gap exists in the literature regarding what motivates the caregivers who do read aloud to their children. Do they read to their children out of a feeling of responsibility? Peer pressure? Love? Pride?

Historically, reading aloud has been the subject of many studies, particularly during the late 1980s through to the early 2000s (Edwards, 1992; NAE & Anderson, 1985; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). More current research has focused on some of the benefits of reading aloud but has not

addressed the motivation for reading aloud (Araújo & Costa, 2015; Barnes & Puccioni, 2017; Massaro, 2017).

Reading aloud has a variety of benefits, both academic and social. One of the most obvious benefits is an increase in vocabulary (Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Massaro (2017) found that children listening to a read-aloud are approximately three times more likely to encounter a new word type than they would be to hear it in conversation. Thus, children are far more likely to experience new words if they are read aloud to from picture books (Massaro, 2017). Reading aloud also helps familiarize children with the language used in school. Children familiar with the language in books are less likely to have trouble learning to read (Duursma et al., 2008). Reading aloud also helps students to acquire a variety of emergent literacy skills, such as recognizing letters, print awareness, phonemic awareness, and story structure (Duursma et al., 2008). Additionally, there are social benefits to reading aloud. Reading aloud can affect the child's social emotional competence or how they feel about themselves and how they feel about reading, and it can improve quality of life (Xie et al., 2018). The benefits extend to the caregiver doing the reading also, as it can improve parent self-confidence about parenting, their attitudes about reading, and can improve their relationship with the child. Finally, reading aloud can reduce stress and depression (Xie et al., 2018).

Unfortunately, these emergent literacy skills are underrepresented in children from low-educated families and immigrant families (Barone et al., 2020). However, one method to alleviate the opportunity gap that affects disparate socioeconomic groups and racial and ethnic groups is to foster parent involvement in emergent literacy. One of the

easiest and cheapest ways to do this is to help parents recognize the importance of reading aloud and encourage them to participate in it (Barone et al., 2020). Barone et al. (2020) found that when an intervention was employed to help low-income families in Paris, where books were provided for families to read together, as well as written information explaining how to participate in shared book-reading and why, the intervention increased the amount of shared book-reading taking place in those households. Helping caregivers understand the importance of reading aloud and providing them access to books allows families who have historically been at a disadvantage in school to decrease that gap. Encouraging families to participate in reading aloud promotes justice and equity.

Studying caregivers who do read aloud to their children consistently has provided researchers with insights into what factors increase the likelihood of reading aloud and what can be done to improve the chances of those factors occurring. Armed with the knowledge of what motivates caregivers to take the time to read aloud, researchers will be better prepared to encourage other caregivers to read aloud regularly.

Increasing the number of caregivers who read aloud to their children is important to society as a whole because it could lead to a reduction in the opportunity gap. Students who are not read aloud to regularly enter school at a disadvantage (Gurdon, 2019). Poverty has academic consequences for children, especially regarding their cognitive and language development. However, when exposed to consistent enriched literacy (being read aloud to, told stories, and talked to about the alphabet), children from low-income homes were able to perform similarly to children from middle- and upper-income homes, suggesting that reading aloud regularly can be a way to mitigate some of the gaps

between low-income and high-income students (Rodriguez et al., 2009). Historically, researchers have concluded that reading aloud to children from birth is one of the most beneficial activities to prepare a child for school (National Academy of Education & Anderson, 1985). However, many caregivers neglect to read aloud regularly to their children. If researchers can determine what motivates caregivers to read aloud, this would begin to level the playing field so that fewer children would enter school at a deficit.

Research Questions

The researcher endeavored to examine caregivers' beliefs regarding the experience of reading aloud to children. The primary question driving the research was as follows:

- How do caregivers perceive the at-home read-aloud experience for children from kindergarten through second grade?

The researcher explored the phenomenon of read-alouds using the following sub-questions:

- What motivates caregivers to read to their children?
- What are caregivers' perceptions of the role of read-alouds in children's literacy development?
- What factors inhibit or facilitate caregivers' desire to read aloud to children?
- Do background and culture play into the practice of reading aloud?

Definition of Terms

Caregivers: any person who has primary responsibility for the care of a child
reading aloud: the interaction a caregiver has with a child with a book in hand
(Needleman & Silverstein, 2004)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study was Bandura's observational learning theory. Bandura suggests that children can learn new behaviors, both positive and negative, from watching another person. Observational learning is influenced by three factors: environment, cognition, and behavior. These three factors work together to determine how a person functions (Bandura, 2008). This study focuses on the experience of reading aloud and how caregivers interpret the experience of the read-aloud. Bandura's observational learning theory is reflected in the idea of the read-aloud because, as children are read aloud to, they experience learning from watching another person (the reader). The environment of the child can positively influence the learning that occurs by being conducive to reading, such as in a quiet room. The child must then think about what they are reading in order to learn. Both these factors work together to create the child's behavior, which is when he or she chooses whether to engage with the book.

Historical Trajectory

Born in 1925, Albert Bandura came from a small town in Canada (Ferrari et al., 2010). Bandura went to graduate school in Iowa, where he was originally influenced by Skinner's radical behaviorism; however, he was also affected by information-processing theory. The combination of these influences led him to pioneer social learning theory. Although the idea of social learning follows closely with that of classical conditioning, Bandura adds that learning is affected by both the environment and what one is able to learn through observation (Grusec, 1992). This idea of learning through observation is at the heart of social learning theory.

Observational learning theory is the act of learning by watching another person. Bandura noted several factors that influence observational learning. A person is more likely to be imitated if:

- They are loving and nurturing
- They provide incentives for behavior
- They have rewarded the behavior in the past
- The person doing the imitating is not confident in their abilities
- They are in an authoritative position
- They are similar to the person they are imitating
- It is someone they admire
- The situation is confusing (Bandura, 2008)

Bandura suggested that children are able to learn new behaviors, both positive and negative, from watching another person. As such, observational learning is influenced by three factors: environment, cognition, and behavior. These three factors work together to determine how a person functions (Bandura, 2008). From this, it is evident that learning is influenced by social context (Grusec, 1992).

One of Bandura's most famous experiments involved an inflatable "Bobo doll" and preschool children. Some of the children were exposed to an adult playing aggressively with the inflatable doll, hitting it and punching it. After the adult left the room, the children were given the opportunity to play with the inflatable doll. Other children were shown an adult who played in a nonaggressive way with the inflatable doll. The children who observed the aggressive behavior were more likely to play with the doll aggressively themselves compared with the children who observed the nonaggressive

play. The study provides evidence that behaviors can be learned through observation (Bandura et al., 1961).

The Bobo doll experiment can be related to reading aloud because, when a child is being read aloud to, they are observing an adult in a similar manner to the way the children observed the adult playing with the Bobo doll. Children can then copy the behavior of the adult reading to them. This point is exhibited when children begin to recognize that the words on the page have meaning and that we read from left to right.

Key Tenets of Social Learning Theory

Tenet 1: Learning is a Social Process

One of the key tenets of social learning theory is that learning occurs as a social activity and is a cognitive process. Reading aloud is a social activity engaged in by parents and children. Young children learn during a read-aloud how to hold a book and that books go from left to right and that print represents sound.

Tenet 2: Learning Through Observation

Observation is a key way that learning can occur. Research has demonstrated point this regarding the behaviors demonstrated by children who play violent video games (Anderson & Dill, 2000).

Tenet 3: Learning is Not Always Visible

Learning can occur without a visible behavior change, as is evident when children learn vocabulary from a book. Children may take in the knowledge of the new vocabulary word, but there may be no visible change in behavior. Finally, the learner does not merely receive the information, he or she undergoes a process that involves cognition, environment, and behavior conditions. For example, the learner must think

about what is being taught and then decide to act on that information, which may depend on the environment (Grusec, 1992).

Contemporary Scholars

Many scholars have used Bandura's observational learning theory as a basis for understanding how learning occurs. Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018) used observational learning theory to examine how medical students learned from role models. They explored Bandura's idea that learning is social and can take place through modeling. They delved into Bandura's idea that there are four stages of observational learning:

1. Attention: students must see the action they are learning.
2. Retention: learners must be able to internalize what they have learned.
3. Reproduction: students need the opportunity to reproduce what they have learned.
4. Motivation: which is influenced by different types of reinforcement

(Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018).

These stages fit also fit with the idea of children learning observationally from reading aloud.

Observational learning and learning through specific consequences have become integral to people's knowledge base and, thus, are not discussed regularly because they are considered such a basic concept (Grusec, 1992). However, many scholars through the years have studied social learning theory, which has long been used to provide an argument for why playing violent video games is harmful (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Lin, 2013; Teng et al., 2018). The idea of video games being observed and learning occurring

via that observation is similar to how a child observes an adult reading aloud and learns from that observation.

Social Learning Theory and Reading Aloud

The act of reading aloud to a child is one way of providing the opportunity for that child to learn through observation. When a person reads aloud to a child, he or she is not explicitly teaching the child; instead, the child is watching the adult and learning from what the adult models. For example, after being read aloud to, a child may start to recognize that the adult turns the pages from right to left or that the words are read from left to right.

The factors that Bandura (2008) provided that influence whether someone is likely to observe another person also hold true in many ways for reading aloud. Children respond well to incentives and rewards, even if the reward is just praise for listening, which applies to reading aloud. A child being read to may not be confident in his or her own reading abilities and can observe the reader for ideas of how to improve. Finally, learning to read can often be confusing for a child, so they are more likely to learn through observation from the person reading aloud to them (Bandura, 2008)

Reading aloud is a situation in which environment, cognition, and behavior work together to create a functional experience. For example, reading aloud requires a somewhat quiet environment. If the child is actively engaged, he or she must be thinking about the story. Finally, the environment and cognition work together to create the child's behavior, whether he or she will engage with the book and the reader or not. Reading aloud can also be influenced by culture. Some parents are very comfortable reading

aloud, perhaps they enjoy reading, whereas other parents may dislike it. Some parents may have grown up being read aloud to themselves, whereas others never were.

Bandura's Bobo doll experiment relates strongly to reading aloud because it reveals how malleable children can be. When they observe an adult doing something, children are much more likely to imitate that behavior. This point is true with both negative and positive behaviors. By modeling a positive behavior such as reading aloud, parents are providing their child with the opportunity to learn through observation.

The key principles of Bandura's that this study explored are as follows:

- The idea that reading aloud is a social activity and cognitive process.
- The idea that reading aloud leads to learning through observation.
- That learning, both visible and invisible, can occur through observation.
- That reinforcement can affect what is learned from reading aloud.
- That cognition, environment, and behavior influence learning.

Counter-Arguments

Barnes and Puccioni (2017) suggested there is a debate regarding how effective reading aloud is and what skills are improved through reading aloud. However, Grusec (1992) stipulated that social learning theory is so widely accepted that it is rarely discussed. One expert has gone as far as to suggest that reading aloud is unnecessary for learning to read and is merely a way to place blame on low-income parents (Edwards, 1992). The other theory considered by this researcher is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. This model states there are five systems that explain how a child's environment interacts with the child to explain how they learn. The idea is that there are five ecosystems a child is involved in, starting with the microsystem, which includes the

family and moves to broader society (What is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, 2020). Although the idea of a child's learning being influenced by the microsystem fits well with the read-aloud experience, there is more to this theory than just the microsystem: there are four other ecosystems, and they do not fit well with reading aloud; therefore, Bandura's observational learning theory is a better fit.

Some have argued that trying to force reading aloud on families is, in a sense, taking away from their heritage. Critics have suggested that we should not try and make families adapt to our someone else's cultural ideals. However, UNESCO, a division of the United Nations, declares that education is a fundamental right. UNESCO posits that each individual should have an equal opportunity for education (UNESCO, 2019). How is that education equal if some students are given the advantage of being read aloud to and others are not? By training families to take advantage of reading aloud, educators are beginning to equalize educational opportunity in a small way. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics posits that reading aloud regularly with children improves relationships and builds literacy skills. The Academy believes reading aloud is important enough to make it an essential part of pediatric care (High & Klass, 2014).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Related Research

This study focused on investigating caregivers' perceptions of the act of reading aloud. The study was accomplished using interpretative phenomenological analysis of caregivers' experiences with reading aloud. The themes examined in this literature review are the academic benefits of reading aloud, the social benefits of reading aloud, the opportunity gap surrounding reading aloud, and how parents and children view reading aloud.

History of Reading Aloud

According to van Kleeck and Schuele (2010), in Western society there has been an evolution of who is allowed and expected to read and write. For many years, only wealthy boys were taught to read. It was not until the invention of the printing press that learning to read became something that many had the opportunity to do, but even then, it was most often boys, and rarely were the poor taught to read. It was not until the latter half of the 20th century that it became the norm to expect high levels of literacy for all students.

In 1966, Durkin (as cited in Jones, 2008) published an influential study of early readers. Durkin's study was unique because it included students from a variety of ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. The main difference Durkin discovered between the families of early readers and the families of students who were not early readers was the parents' attitudes toward reading. Parents willing to help their children with reading early on were more likely to have children who read early. The implications of this study

are that what parents do regarding reading at home make a difference to their child's reading (Jones, 2008).

In 1974, Durkin (as cited in Wan, 2000) made it clear that family has a distinct influence on reading. She pointed out that, at one time, reading was more likely to be taught in the home than at school. However, reading aloud to children did not become a focus until the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to Wan (2000), some believed that reading to preschool children would cause harm for a variety of reasons, from hurting their eyesight to causing excessive boredom. Several researchers have been influential regarding beginning to explore emergent literacy in young children, including Marie Clay (Wan, 2000).

Clay's early work, as cited by McNaughton (2014), consisted of a longitudinal study of children's reading. At this time, there was not a belief that reading was a developmental process. Her study provided indications that learning began before school (McNaughton, 2014). This concept of emergent literacy led to more of a focus on parents and children's books (Wan, 2000). As research regarding story-reading progressed, it became evident that the results supported reading aloud at home and at school (Wan, 2000). Several major researchers contributed to the research base on reading aloud in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One researcher was Cullinan (1989), who was a supporter of the whole-language movement, which led to a more focused use of authentic literature in classroom reading programs. At this time, the battle between whole language and phonics was raging. The whole-language movement focused on the idea that children learn by reading, which led to more of a focus on books and increasing children's enjoyment of reading. The research of this time period was leading educators to discover that children

who read more frequently were better readers. In addition to this discovery came a line of research exploring the effects of reading aloud. Some of the key players in this research were Delores Durkin, Robert Thorndike, Margaret Clark, Dorothy Cohen, and Carol Chomsky (Cullinan, 1989).

By 1981, it was clear that although there was no agreement on how to teach reading, there was agreement it was important to read aloud to preschoolers. Teale (1981) was one proponent and researcher making a difference in reading aloud at this time. Teale (1981), determined through correlational studies that there was a link to being read to and success in school. However, Teale did not believe this was sufficient; he called for more studies about reading aloud that would provide more than correlational data (Wan, 2000). He felt there were several aspects of reading aloud that needed to be studied further. He wanted descriptions of how the activity of reading aloud went. He also wanted more specifics on what type of relationship there was between reading aloud and literacy development (Teale, 1981).

In 1982, the first edition of *Jim Trelease's Read-Aloud Handbook* was published. Trelease was interested in the study of reading aloud as he read to his own two young children and volunteered in a sixth-grade classroom. He noticed that some students were reading frequently while others from other teachers' classes were not. He saw that students from classes in which the teacher read aloud regularly were more interested in reading than those from classes in which the teacher did not read aloud. This observation resulted in years of gathering research on reading aloud, which led to a book about the importance of reading aloud. Trelease's book is now in its eighth edition and has guided many parents over the years about the read-aloud process (Trelease & Giorgis, 2019).

Trelease also spent significant time traveling to schools and promoting reading aloud (Cullinan, 1989).

Heath (1982) added to the discussion about reading aloud. Her study of three communities in the southeastern United States caused researchers to consider cultural differences in reading-aloud practices. The three communities Heath studied had distinctly different ways of sharing literacy with their children. Heath started a conversation regarding cultural practices in reading aloud that continues today.

In 1983, as the battle over whole language and phonics continued, the National Institute of Education (NIE) asked the National Academy of Education's Commission on Education and Public Policy to create a panel of reading experts to study the most current reading research. The committee consisted of eight well-known professors, one first-grade teacher, and one person from the Department of Education. Their work culminated in the publication of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* in 1985 (Kim, 2008). One of the salient points made in the report is that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (National Academy of Education & Anderson, 1985, p. 33). This report led to a newfound focus on reading aloud.

In the 1980s, doctors in the primary care clinic at Boston City Hospital discovered many parents of their patients were not reading aloud to their children and did not have access to children's books. The parents shared multiple reasons for this problem, such as they themselves not being read to as children, disliking reading, and books being too expensive. In 1989, Robert Needleman, MD, developed a program called Reach Out and Read. The program comprised three parts: first, doctors were trained to offer

developmentally sound advice about reading; second, they distributed developmentally appropriate books to each patient at their well-child checks from ages 6 months until 5 years; third, they provided models in the waiting room that demonstrated how to read books to children (Zuckerman, 2009). Now, more than 30 years later, over 6,000 medical clinics use this program. According to Zuckerman and Needleman (2020), it is estimated the program reaches approximately 25% of children from low-income homes. The Reach Out and Read program has helped literacy promotion become an integral part of pediatric care today (Zuckerman & Needleman, 2020).

In the 1990s, research began to focus on the connection between vocabulary development and reading aloud. Sénéchal was instrumental in this area. Sénéchal and Cornell (1993) studied whether children could learn new vocabulary from just a single story-reading. They also wanted to assess whether how the parent reads made a difference. Their study found that receptive and expressive vocabulary are developed differently. They also determined that interactions between parent and child did not increase the vocabulary development, reading a book verbatim was equally effective (Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993). Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) found a positive relationship between storybook reading and receptive vocabulary as they researched how familiar kindergarten and first-grade children were with popular children's literature and what types of vocabulary skills they had developed. Sénéchal and LeFevre's study resulted in an understanding that being read aloud to is associated with the development of receptive vocabulary. To further these studies of vocabulary development and reading aloud, Sénéchal (2006) investigated whether she had similar results with students who spoke French as their first language. In this study, parents were asked how frequently they read

books at home with their children. Students underwent a variety of reading tests in kindergarten, first-, and fourth grade. Students were also surveyed regarding how much they read for pleasure. The study found that comprehension is indirectly related to book exposure. The study also determined a relationship between being read aloud to as a child in kindergarten and time spent reading for pleasure as a fourth grader (Sénéchal, 2006).

Another important study was Bus et al.'s (1995) meta-analysis of parent preschool reading aloud and the outcomes. The meta-analysis determined that book reading was related to language acquisition, emergent literacy, and reading achievement. All these positive results from studies led to an increased focus on its importance in education (National Academy of Education & Anderson, 1985; Teale, 1981; Zuckerman, 2009).

Over the decades, there has been more of a focus on identifying which students are not benefiting being read aloud to and who may be entering school at a disadvantage. Heath's (1982) work revealed that reading aloud was regarded differently in different communities and was particularly affected by socioeconomic status (SES). These observations have continued to be the focus of other, more recent studies. Araújo and Costa (2015) used data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRILS) to determine whether shared book-reading affected literacy skills. Then, the researchers examined whether there were differences between parents with high education versus parents with little education. They found that parents with less education read to their children less frequently, and that their children's reading test scores were lower, whereas parents with high education tended to read to their children more and the children had higher test scores. The study was conducted in the European Union, but the results are consistent across multiple countries.

The current research on reading aloud includes focusing on the youngest of children. Leveque et al. (2018) conducted a study incorporating the Reach Out and Read program in the neonatal intensive care unit. The program was successful with parents and nurses, and the long-term outcomes continue to be studied. In addition to focusing on younger children, some research is considering the social benefits of reading aloud for both parents and children. Xie et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of studies of reading aloud and found it helped increase student self-confidence and social emotional competence and even led to an increase in quality of life.

Academic Benefits of Reading Aloud

In 2018, the International Literacy Association presented a brief focused on the power of read-alouds. The authors suggest that reading aloud to a developing reader is one of the most effective ways to improve literacy skills (International Literacy Association, 2018; Gunning, 2020; Marchessault & Larwin, 2014). Read-alouds provide students with many academic benefits, from increased vocabulary and listening comprehension skills to understanding story structure. Reading aloud also promotes a love of literature and helps students become lifelong readers (International Literacy Association, 2018). Finally, reading aloud is something most students enjoy participating in (Wright, 2018).

There are many academic benefits to reading aloud. The PIRILS lists several important factors regarding reading aloud and reading achievement scores. First, there is a positive relationship between fourth-grade reading achievement scores and the time parents spend engaging in literacy activities with young children before they enter school (Araújo & Costa, 2015). Building on these data, Araújo and Costa (2015) examined the

relationship between shared book-reading and literacy achievement scores, looking specifically at the differences between parents with a high education and parents with little education in the European Union. The study's population included fourth-grade students from 22 European Union countries who also participated in the 2011 PIRILS. This population included 54,593 students divided into two groups: parents with high education and parents with low education. The study was conducted employing four pairwise combinations using the survey results of how often families engage in shared book-reading at home and whether they had high or low education. T-tests were used to compare the results. The results of the study were that parents with less education had children with lower reading achievement scores. For all the countries considered, parents with more education read to their children more, and these same children had higher achievement scores (Araújo & Costa, 2015). Araújo and Costa stand out in this field of research because their research extends the idea that both low-income students and those from higher-income homes can benefit from being read aloud to. Sénéchal suggested that low-income students could benefit more heavily from being read aloud to regularly than higher-income students (Araújo & Costa, 2015), but this was only partially confirmed by Araújo and Costa as the results were mixed, varying by country.

Sénéchal has been integral in determining exactly what the academic benefits for reading aloud are. She led a series of studies over a number of years to determine whether children learned new vocabulary from being read aloud to (Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Sénéchal and Cornell (1993) assessed whether children learned new vocabulary from a single reading of a book. They also wanted to observe the teaching behaviors of parents during read-alouds. The study

consisted of 80 four-year-olds and 80 five-year-olds from middle- and upper-middle-class families. All the families spoke English. A wordless picture book was used to create text with 10 target vocabulary words it would be unlikely the children knew. The study used a 2x4 factorial design. The researchers pretested the children on the vocabulary words, read them the book, then post-tested to see how many words they learned. Children were also asked different types of questions when the vocabulary were introduced to see whether these influenced the understanding of the new words. The results indicate that a single reading increased receptive vocabulary. One of the most interesting findings from the study is that using specific questioning techniques with the book did not increase the vocabulary the children learned; reading the book verbatim was equally effective. The study led to a better understanding of the specific benefit of improved vocabulary for children who are read aloud to (Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993).

Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) continued Sénéchal's previous work in their seminal study on whether storybook reading increased students' receptive vocabulary, determining that the two are positively related. The study consisted of two kindergarten cohorts ($N = 110$) and one first-grade cohort ($N = 58$). These groups were middle- and upper-middle-class students from three schools in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. For the study, parents completed a series of questionnaires about their home literacy experiences, specifically focused on what children's books and authors they were familiar with. These questionnaires helped the researchers determine how much reading aloud the parents did with their children. Children were also asked to identify books and authors they were familiar with. Children were tested for receptive vocabulary using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised. Additionally, listening comprehension was assessed using a

subset of the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT). The study found that informal experiences with print, such as being read aloud to, are associated with the development of receptive vocabulary (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Sénéchal (2006) undertook another study of 90 kindergarten children (56 girls, 34 boys) from five Canadian schools. The goal of the study was to take the home literacy model, which claims exposure to books is directly related to vocabulary development, and extend it to another language (French) and to other literacy subjects (reading fluency and spelling). As part of the study, parents were asked how often they read books to their children each week and how many books they had in their home. The students were then tested on a variety of reading measures in both kindergarten and first grade. The students were tested again in the fourth grade. This time for reading comprehension, fluency, and spelling. Additionally, students were asked how often they read for pleasure. The study determined that parents reading aloud books is directly related to vocabulary and other language skills. Furthermore, exposure to books is indirectly related to comprehension for students in fourth grade. The study also suggested that reading aloud leads to increased vocabulary, which, in turn, predicts better comprehension in older grades. Finally, the study found a relationship between being read aloud to in kindergarten and how much time was spent reading for pleasure in fourth grade. This result indicates that reading aloud influences reading motivation. The time spent reading for pleasure predicted reading comprehension in fourth grade (Sénéchal, 2006). With each of her studies, Sénéchal (2006) explored a little deeper into the academic benefits of reading aloud. Although the idea of increased vocabulary due to reading aloud may seem straightforward, there has been some controversy surrounding it. Scarborough and

Dobrich (1994) questioned the benefit. Their study found the benefits of reading aloud to be quite modest. However, Sénéchal (2006) is not alone in studying the benefits of reading aloud; contemporary researchers have continued to study the effects.

Roberts (2008) found that the vocabulary benefits of reading aloud remain the same whether they are experienced in the native primary language of the child or in the language spoken at school. Roberts examined whether reading storybooks in the child's primary language (Spanish or Hmong) or in English influenced the vocabulary development of the child. It was determined there were no significant effects when the child switched between languages. Children exposed only to English did not gain more vocabulary than those children who were read to in their native language. In fact, some children gained more vocabulary when they were exposed to words in multiple languages.

Barnes and Puccioni (2017) used the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth cohort (ECLS-B) to determine the degree that both quantity and quality of shared book-reading influence reading achievement and math achievement for the more than 14,000 children who were followed from birth to kindergarten. In the third wave of data collection for the ECLS-B, students were given what was referred to as the Two Bags Task. Parent and child were given two bags, one with a children's book and one with Play-doh, cookie cutters, and a rolling pin. They were told to play with the bags for 10 minutes in numerical order. They were videotaped, and their experiences coded using the Reading Aloud Profile-Together (RAPT) coding method. The sample for the study included 800 randomly selected groups of parents and children. The researchers established their own model to analyze the ECLS-B data. Their estimate suggests a 0.10

standard deviation (SD) increase in reading achievement for each additional 20-minute increase of shared book-reading. Students with higher amounts of shared book-reading time had higher scores on reading achievement tests, which included skills such as letter naming, emergent literacy, and phonemic awareness. Similar results were found for math achievement scores but were based on the quality of discussion during shared book-reading (Barnes & Puccioni, 2017).

Price and Kalil (2019) developed a study to find a connection between a mother's time reading to her child and that child's vocabulary development and reading skill development. The study employed the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). The sample for the study was 4,239 children. The Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test were used to measure skills. Analysis was accomplished in three parts. The first analysis was descriptive, addressing birth order and spacing. The second analysis examined academic outcomes and how they relate to birth order and spacing. The final analysis considered the relationship between mother-child reading and the child's academic outcomes. The study provides an understanding of the idea that if parent-child reading is important, then first-born children benefit more from this reading because they will have experienced it longer and the differences will be larger when there are bigger gaps between children. The key finding in the study is that children who are read to daily by their mother perform higher in reading achievement tests. The study found that one extra day of reading 20 minutes in a month resulted in an 8% SD increase in the child's reading score (Price & Kalil, 2019).

Although it can be argued these results are modest, they are consistent across studies that there are academic benefits to reading aloud and the benefits persist over

time. This theme supports this interpretative phenomenological analysis of the read-aloud experience by supporting why reading aloud is important. Academic benefits are one reason that reading aloud can be a means of social change.

Social Benefits of Reading Aloud

Another type of benefit associated with reading aloud is social benefits. Social benefits can include enjoyment of the reading experience, improved self-confidence, and reduced stress. The idea of reducing stress through reading aloud to children was explored by Kumar et al. (2016). They conducted a pilot study exploring how the Reach Out and Read program worked with teenage mothers. The study piloted a reading intervention with adolescent mothers and their children using the Reach Out and Read program and focused on whether the intervention affected maternal depression or maternal reading behavior. The program took place at a clinic for adolescent mothers and their children in Canada, which included mothers aged 12–18 at delivery. Prior to the intervention, the subjects answered a three-question study questionnaire and took the Beck Depression Inventory-Revised (BDI-IA). The questionnaire asked what the child's favorite things were to do, in addition to the parent's favorite things to do with the child, and how frequently they read books together. There were three parts to the intervention. First, a pediatrician, nurse, social worker, or interdisciplinary trainee gave the child a new book. The clinician then provided guidance on shared book-reading and its benefits. Finally, a student librarian came into the room and shared read-aloud techniques and information on programs available through the local public library and gave each child a library card. This process was repeated at three well-child doctor's visits. After the third visit, the questionnaire and the BDI-IA were repeated. Thirty-one mother–child dyads

were recruited for the study, nearly all (30) agreed to participate (96.8%). The 30 dyads were divided into a control group ($n = 15$) and an intervention group ($n = 15$). The results of the study were that the adolescent mothers in the intervention group improved in all measures: they were more likely to share books with their child and more mothers stated reading was their favorite activity to do with their child or was their child's favorite activity. The mothers' depression scores also improved, whereas the control groups' scores worsened. Effect sizes were notable; however, the small sample size means the results are not statistically significant. Furthermore, it is important to note the high percentage of adolescent mothers who wanted to participate in the study (97%) and the large retention rate (93%; Kumar et al., 2016).

Xie et al. (2018) undertook a meta-analysis to determine the social effects of parent-child book-reading interventions. Their meta-analysis consisted of two research questions. First, is children and parents' social functioning affected by reading aloud interventions. Second, are these effects less intense due to sample characteristics, study characteristics, or intervention characteristics. The meta-analysis used PRISMA reporting standard, and calculations were made using the Comprehensive Meta-Analysis software. More than 3,271 records were considered, but many were duplicate studies. After meeting selection criteria, 19 interventions from 18 studies were chosen to comprise the meta-analysis. Sample sizes for these interventions ranged from 19 to 584 people. The psychosocial functioning of parents and children was affected positively in 17 of the 19 studies. For the 19 studies, the weighted mean effect was $d = 0.185$, which is a small effect size for psychosocial functioning; however, the results of the z-tests were $z = 3.355$ and $p = .001$, so the interventions had a small but statistically significant effect on

parents' and children's psychosocial outcomes. In summary, the meta-analysis indicates that parent-child book-reading may impact both parents' and children's psychosocial outcomes for items such as social emotional competence, quality of life, and reading interest. In addition, book reading may affect parent's self-confidence about parenting and attitudes about reading and improve the quality of their relationships. Parent-child book-reading may also reduce stress and depression (Xie et al., 2018).

The social benefits of reading aloud support this study by providing, once again, reasons why reading aloud can be important in both the life of a child and the life of a caregiver. The ability to reduce stress and depression are strong arguments for participating in reading aloud.

Opportunity Gap

Research has demonstrated that the greater the financial resources of the parents, the greater the likelihood children will have higher scores on reading readiness skills when entering kindergarten (Duncan & Murnane, 2014). Reading is Fundamental, a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving reading skills, states that, "47 percent of fourth graders from low-income families read below the basic level" (Reading is Fundamental, 2019, p. 1). These differences in reading achievement tend to become greater over time (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Aikens and Barbarin (2008) studied the relationship between SES and children's reading development. Additionally, they wanted to know how resources and interactions in the community explain socioeconomic differences in reading scores. For example, in their study of 1998-1999 class of 21,260 kindergarten children in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Aikens and Barbarin found that children from higher SES homes began kindergarten with higher reading

scores than their lower-income peers, and those differences increased over time. Simply stated, students from low-economic backgrounds are at a severe disadvantage when compared with their high-income peers.

Today, poverty is more concentrated in specific areas than it has been in the past (Duncan & Murnane, 2014; Neuman & Moland, 2019). This segregation can cause effects for the children living in these areas; often, there are differences in school resources, teachers, and facilities (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Furthermore, areas of poverty generally have less access to public libraries and school libraries (Neuman & Celano, 2001). In their study, Neuman and Celano (2001) argued that reading is a sociocultural act and that children must be provided resources to accomplish it.

Differences in access to these resources affect children's ability to learn. For the study, the researchers considered four neighborhoods in Philadelphia, two low-income and two middle-income. They compared the characteristics of each neighborhood that supported literacy; for example, they surveyed the reading materials available in those cities, examined signs that children could read, searched for public spaces where people might be able to read, checked the books available in childcare centers and school libraries, and reviewed what materials were available in public libraries. The results indicate there were significant differences between the low-income neighborhoods and the middle-income neighborhoods. The middle-income neighborhoods had access to more resources than the low-income neighborhoods (Neuman & Celano, 2001).

In 2010, the Annie E. Casey Foundation sponsored a KIDS COUNT special report called *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters* (Fiester & Smith, 2010). The report discussed how low reading scores particularly impact low-

income children. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2009 reading test revealed that, “83% of children from low-income families and 85% of low-income students who attend high-poverty schools” (Fiester, 2010, p. 7) did not achieve the “proficient” level in fourth grade. The report also found that low-income Black, Hispanic, and Native American students were even less likely to read at the “proficient” level. The report suggests the need in the United States to make significant changes to increase reading proficiency. The report also introduces a readiness gap, suggesting that too many students from low-income households do not have opportunities for the early interaction they need. One interaction often missing is being read aloud to and having access to books in the home. Children with parents who read to them tend to perform better in school, according to the report. Finally, the report recommends more encouragement for parents and families to recognize that their role begins early and that children who are read to early are more likely to succeed in school later on (Fiester, 2010).

The theme of the opportunity gap supports this present study because discovering what type of experiences caregivers who read aloud have might help reveal how to close the opportunity gap. Caregivers might be able to learn from the experiences of those who do read aloud and discover what the experience offers. Thus, they might be more likely to participate in reading aloud themselves.

Parent and Child Views on Reading Aloud

Ledger and Merga (2018), in a mixed-methods study, examined attitudes children have about being read aloud to. The study considered the opinions of 220 children, aged 6–12, in Western Australia. The study reports the findings from the 2016 Western

Australian Study in Reading Aloud (WASRA). Mixed-methods surveys were administered. Older students completed the surveys themselves, whereas younger students completed the survey with help from a researcher. Quantitative data were analyzed using Lictman's data analysis process. Qualitative data were organized into themes from the etic perspective of the researchers. The main findings of the study are that most students, just over three-quarters, enjoyed being read aloud to, whereas 23.8% did not enjoy being read to. Many of the children who liked being read to shared that they appreciated the cognitive benefits, such as being able to understand the words they heard better and having guidance on how to pronounce difficult words. For those who did not like being read aloud to, many stated reasons relating to not being able to concentrate during the read aloud. The majority of students who enjoyed being read aloud to shared that they felt "happy" during the experience and preferred being read "funny" books. Finally, nearly 70% of the students surveyed said they wanted their parents to read to them more at home (Ledger & Merga, 2018).

Students were not the only ones studied; Merga and Ledger (2018) also studied parents' views on reading aloud. The study utilized a mixed-methods methodology, employing multiple research questions regarding the frequency with which parents read aloud to their children, whether they enjoyed the experience, if they read on their own, were they read to as a child and did they enjoy it, what would cause them to stop reading aloud, and what were the barriers to reading aloud. The findings from these questions are reported in the 2016 WASRA. The study was Phase II of the project, wherein data were collected using surveys from 303 parents in Western Australia. The study found that less than half of the students were read to daily (43.1%), but most were read to more than

once a week (89.9%). Furthermore, 96.7% of parents said they enjoyed reading aloud with their children and stated a variety of reasons, including enjoying providing a learning experience for their children, appreciating the enjoyment their child felt, and enjoying the interpersonal connection that came with reading aloud. The main barrier parents reported to reading aloud was a lack of time. The study concludes that, when possible, read-aloud time at home needs to be increased (Merga & Ledger, 2018).

The theme of parent and child attitudes toward reading aloud are significant in this study because the conclusion of these studies by Merga and Ledger is that children want to be read to more and caregivers found that they enjoyed the time they spent reading aloud to their children. These two results suggest that reading aloud is beneficial to both children and caregivers.

The Impact of Books

Dempster et al. (2016) studied the impact reading the *Harry Potter* books has had on students. Their study comprised a small focus group in England that discussed how reading the *Harry Potter* series had affected their own literacy. The study involved two primary schools and two secondary schools in England. The study was divided into two phases. The first phase involved a questionnaire distributed to 621 respondents, from whom 76 were chosen to be part of the focus group, consisting of 42 girls and 34 boys. The students chosen for the focus group had read at least four of the *Harry Potter* books. The focus group questions concerned whether reading the *Harry Potter* books had led to an improvement in reading and reading attitudes. The questions also addressed gender issues in the *Harry Potter* books. The results of the study are that many of the students felt that the *Harry Potter* books had influenced their interest in reading and their reading

development. They researchers also found that these books motivated the students to read longer books because they had realized from reading the *Harry Potter* books that they could tackle longer books successfully.

Relationship Between Prior Research and Present Study

Current research has indicated there are academic benefits to reading aloud (Araújo & Costa, 2015; Barnes & Puccioni, 2017; Price & Kalil, 2019). In addition to the academic benefits, there are social benefits, which include social emotional competence, quality of life, and reading interest (Xie et al., 2018). It is clear that there are substantial reasons for parents to spend time reading aloud to their children. However, Ledger and Merga (2018) found that only 43% of the children they surveyed were read to daily. This present study explores how caregivers interpret the experience of reading aloud, providing insight into how they make sense of the experience. This insight helps the researcher to understand better why these parents choose to read aloud to their children.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

For this interpretative phenomenological study of the experience of reading aloud, it was imperative that a respectful, fair, and trusting rapport be established between the researcher and the caregivers who participate in reading aloud. Furthermore, there is an understanding that all knowledge uncovered is contextual, with the researcher recognizing that multiple viewpoints are possible and respecting those viewpoints. The research required extended interviews with caregivers who read aloud to their children. These factors called for a qualitative approach in answering the research question.

Research Method

An interpretative phenomenological analysis method was chosen by the researcher. This method focused on examining how the participants made sense of their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Reading aloud with a child is a lived experience that varies for each individual. The researcher was interested in discovering what causes a person to read aloud to a child. The factors that inhibit or facilitate a caregiver's desire to read aloud to children were explored. Additionally, the researcher wanted to know what caregivers' perceptions were of the role of read-alouds upon children's literacy development. These questions meant allowing the participants to reflect on their personal experiences, which aligns with the interpretative phenomenological analysis method (Smith et al., 2009). The interview protocol, consisting of the questions used, is in Appendix A. The questions in Appendix A were used as the basis for the interviews (Interview Protocol, 2021; Seidman, 2019). The interviews were semi-structured, so these questions were only a starting point. The interviews were conducted via Zoom and were

video recorded. The interviews lasted approximately 20–40 minutes and were conducted by one researcher.

Population and Recruitment

Participants were recruited through popular blogs that encourage reading aloud with children. The researcher contacted the bloggers who run these sites and asked if they would run a post asking for volunteers for the study. The researcher offered \$25 Amazon gift cards as incentives for participants. A sample size of 20 caregivers of children in kindergarten to second grade who read aloud with those children was recruited. The participants were all aged 18 or older. The researcher purposefully selected this population because of their focus on reading aloud.

The blogger who provided the advertising that brought in the majority of the participants was based in Utah, so many of the participants had ties to Utah: they either lived there or had lived there at one point. All the participants were female and had at least one child in the kindergarten to second-grade range; however, most had other children as well. Nineteen out of the 20 participants were married. Twelve of the 20 participants identified as “stay-at-home-moms.” Several were homeschooling their children or helping them through online schooling. Many of the participants had a background in education. Most participants were from the United States, with several from Canada, and one was living in Zambia, Africa.

Sampling Strategies and Criteria

This study used a purposive snowball approach to recruit participants. The population studied comprised 20 mothers who read aloud to their children from kindergarten to second grade. The reason for this sample size was that part of

interpretative phenomenological analysis suggests that the researcher must have the ability to know in detail what the experience of the participant entails (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). This aspect requires highly detailed interviews; therefore, the number of participants needs to be fairly small, so the researcher can focus on the individuals and their experiences. The sample was also fairly homogenous, as suggested by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014).

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were 20 to 40 minutes in length and all collected digitally. They took place via Zoom and were video recorded with the participants' permission. In addition, the researcher took fieldnotes as the interviews proceeded. All the data were collected by the same individual researcher. To ensure confidentiality, the consent forms were stored in a locked file, as were the interview data. Participant names were replaced with numbers as another means of ensuring confidentiality.

All the participants were female with some link, present or past, to Utah and had at least one child in the kindergarten to second-grade range; however, most had other children as well. Many, but not all, considered themselves stay-at-home moms. Several were homeschooling their children or helping them through online schooling, and many had a background in education. Most participants were from the United States, with several from Canada, and one lived in Zambia, Africa.

Data Coding and Analysis Process

All interviews were transcribed by the company Rev.com. The transcripts were read multiple times by the researcher before coding began to help immerse the researcher

in the data. As the researcher read and reread the transcripts, insights were noted. After a thorough review of the first transcript, themes were assigned. The researcher began with one transcript and fully coded it for themes before moving to the next transcript (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher continued this process with each interview transcript. Next, connections between emerging themes were identified (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The coding was done by hand. Each case was analyzed in depth and examined for the perspectives of each individual subject. All subjects were thoroughly examined before any generalizing was done, as is consistent with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The researcher took fieldnotes during the interviews and kept a reflexive journal. This journal provided the researcher with a place to keep track of personal responses to the interview data as the interviews happened (Saldaña, 2016).

Limitations

This study was qualitative and was not designed to be applied across populations. It provides insight into how some parents find motivation to read aloud to their children regularly. The sample was drawn from caregivers who follow blogs about reading aloud and reading with their children; therefore, the parents may have had more education than average and likely came from higher-income homes, factors that may affect the generalizability of the study. Due to their likelihood of having higher incomes, this population may have had greater access to books than many families. Some families may not have consistent access to literature for read-alouds, which could affect their ability to read aloud to their children. The researcher intended this study to be the beginning of several studies that will consider families of other demographics as well. This

demographic was chosen because they make reading aloud a high priority in their lives and the researcher wanted to understand better the factors that contribute to that decision. In future research, the researcher would like to consider families from other demographics that may not have the same access to books. That this study focused on such a specific demographic must be considered when looking at this in a broader context.

Protection of Human Subjects

Appropriate permission was obtained through the Institutional Review Board. Those being interviewed were made aware that their privacy would be protected. Numbers were used to protect the privacy of those participating in the interviews.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The primary focus of this study was examining caregivers' beliefs regarding the experience of reading aloud to their children. The primary research question was as follows: How do caregivers perceive the at-home read-aloud experience for children in kindergarten through second grade? This phenomenon of reading aloud was explored using the following sub-questions:

- What motivates caregivers to read to their children?
- What are caregivers' perceptions of the role of read-alouds upon children's literacy development?
- What factors inhibit or facilitate caregivers' desire to read aloud to children?
- Do background and culture play into the practice of reading aloud?

All the sub-questions (except for the final one) were addressed by specific interview questions in Appendix A. During the interviews, it seemed inappropriate to ask specific demographic questions, particularly about race. What the researcher focused on instead was asking participants about their home reading culture. Participants described if they were read aloud to as children, who read to them, and what their general feelings were about reading. These questions provided information about their family growing up and the culture they created based on reading. The researcher also asked questions regarding what type of culture and role reading played in their home now. The answer to this question offered a sense of how their reading culture growing up affected their current reading culture.

Participants were recruited from several blogs about reading. One blog advertised the study on their Instagram stories, and in less than 24 hours there were over 160 willing

participants. Due to so much interest in the study, the researcher had to narrow down the participants. Twenty participants were randomly selected by a process of numbering all the participants and using a computer-generated random number selector to determine which participants to interview. Participants were given a \$25 Amazon gift certificate as an incentive for participating in the interviews. The interviews progressed more quickly than anticipated, averaging 25 to 40 minutes in length. The interviews were completed over a 2-week period in April 2021.

Overview of Themes

It was interesting to note the similarities and differences from one interview to the next. Several themes stood out across interviews, including a love of reading, time, connection, supporting individual needs, and impactful books.

Participant Profiles

Interview 1

Participant 1 was a stay-at-home mother of two children: a kindergarten daughter and a 3.5-year-old son getting ready to start preschool. Her husband worked from home, and they lived on a large property with animals in Nebraska. This participant was quick to point out her own struggles with reading as a child. She described herself being in second grade and how she remembered pretending to read. She said, as a child, reading was never something she would describe as fun; however, as she got older, she gradually began to enjoy it. She pointed out that being able to choose her own books to read, rather than being assigned something by a teacher, made a big difference in her enjoyment of reading. She remembered her mother reading to her, but it was not something she did

frequently. She loved the *Berenstain Bear* books as a child and now her daughter loved being read the same books.

Despite her reading struggles as a young child, Participant 1 described loving to read and said, “it’s important for me to make sure that my children don’t struggle” (Interview 1, personal communication, April 13, 2021). She also found she feels comfortable reading aloud to her children and loves to use books as rewards for good behavior. Their set family time for reading was bedtime, but they often picked up books throughout the day to read together. She explained that, “the motivation for me is, I don’t want my kids to be in the place where I was when I was a kid” (Interview 1, personal communication, April 13, 2021).

Participant 1 felt it was important to make reading fun. One role she saw reading aloud playing in her children’s reading development is to help improve comprehension. Lack of time was the main inhibitor for Participant 1 regarding reading aloud, although she did feel that the children’s attitudes and her own attitude affected whether they read aloud. She said it made a big difference whether the book is something she wanted to read. One part of reading aloud she enjoyed most was having deep discussions with her daughter about the books they read.

Participant 1 described enjoying young adult and fantasy books. She preferred books she could connect with emotionally or that transported her to another world. She looked forward to sharing some books that were meaningful to her as a child with her daughter.

When asked about the reasons for reading aloud, this participant shared several: first, she did it because both she and her children enjoyed reading together; second, she

found that reading aloud created a sense of connection; finally, she believed it improved her children's vocabulary. She felt that her own struggles with reading aloud as a child were what led her to begin the practice of reading aloud with her children.

Interview 2

Participant 2 was a mother of five children, ranging in age from 7 to 19. She grew up in Utah but had lived in Springfield, Missouri for the past 15 years. She started reading chapter books aloud to her children when her oldest was about 5 years old.

Although she did not have significant memories of being read to as a child, she did remember one book series, the *Katie John* series by Mary Calhoun, which her mother read aloud to her. She vividly remembered her fifth-grade teacher reading aloud to the class and how much she loved that experience, so much so she attributed her love of reading to those moments. Participant 2 read frequently as a child and continued to love reading as an adult. She shared a wide variety of books she enjoyed as a child and as an adult. Some highlights she remembered from childhood were the *Ramona* series by Beverly Cleary and the *Boxcar Children* series by Gertrude Candler Warner. As an adult, she loved a wide variety of genres, but her favorites were young adult books. A standout book she loved and also loved reading to her children was the *Fablehaven* series by Brandon Mull.

Participant 2 believed that, "everybody could be a reader if they found what type of books were for them" (Interview 2, personal communication, April 13, 2021). A significant portion of her interview concerned her beliefs regarding how important it is to help children enjoy reading. She shared how one of her sons struggled with comprehension and, as a result, decided he hated reading. She stepped back and

encouraged him to read easier books than what were considered his grade level and they worked on comprehension. She also introduced him to graphic novels. Over time, he began to love reading and is now the most avid reader among her children. She felt that reading aloud to her children contributed to their enjoyment of reading in general.

When asked how she managed five children who are all different ages and reading levels, she shared several strategies. Their family set eight in the evening as the time when everyone went to their rooms for bed. The older children did quiet activities in their rooms at that point, whereas the younger ones went to sleep. That way, they all prepared for bed at the same time, and part of their bedtime routine is to read aloud a chapter in their current read-aloud book. She also made sure the younger children had coloring books and crayons to keep their hands busy during read-alouds.

Finding motivation to read was not difficult for Participant 2 because she enjoyed the time together so much. Reading aloud became an integral part of their bedtime routine and the children were usually eager to discover what happened next in whatever book they were reading. One key, she explained, was making sure the books they chose are ones everyone liked and engaged in. The only real inhibitor to reading aloud for their family was if their schedule was interrupted; for example, if they had to be somewhere at night and arrived home too late.

This family had a large home library, including all the books from Participant 2's childhood. They also utilized their library system, which was adequate. They loved audiobooks and frequently used their audible accounts to access audiobooks. One of their favorite family activities involved reading a book and then watching the movie of that book.

For Participant 2, reading aloud was a way to share her love of reading with her children and to encourage time bonding as a family, in addition to developing a love of reading in her children. For her, reading was a way of developing knowledge, and she wanted to encourage that in her children. An interesting side note is that Participant 2's husband did not enjoy reading and did not participate in the read-alouds with the family.

Interview 3

Participant 3 was a stay-at-home mother of two. She had an 8-year-old son and a 5.5-year-old daughter. Her husband had a PhD in Germanic linguistics. Her undergraduate degree was in English, and she had a master's of library science degree.

When asked about her memories of reading as a child, Participant 3 could not remember much. She said her parents told her they read to her, but she did not feel it was a central part of their family culture. She did remember, as a 4-year-old child, memorizing *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. She remembered feeling insecure about her reading abilities as a child. She knew there were different reading groups in school, and she recognized she was not in the top group, more somewhere around the middle. She did not read for fun as a child or teenager. It was not until she was getting ready to enter college that she picked up some books on her own. She felt like she was not well prepared for college because she had avoided reading and decided to read a few pieces of classic literature. She found that she liked reading after all. In college, as an English major, she had to read frequently and developed the habit of reading. She began reading at bedtime and found it was a way to clear her mind. As an adult, Participant 3 described loving reading; however, she struggled to find time and

energy for it as a parent. As a result, she turned to audiobooks and regularly listened to them. She continued to find reading a great way to relax and clear her mind at night.

Participant 3 was comfortable reading aloud and said she enjoyed it. She was also comfortable navigating the local library. Her family's books came almost exclusively from the library. They had moved around frequently and did not like to spend a great deal of money on books.

Participant 3 believed that her family's emphasis on reading aloud led her children to enjoy books and reading. It helped provide them with motivation to want to learn to read themselves. Her children were advanced in school, and she believed that their family culture of reading had helped make school easier. Socially, she stated that reading aloud introduced character lessons that influenced her children.

When describing her family culture of reading, Participant 3 said that they always read together before bed. They often read at other times together, also, but bedtime reading happened routinely. They (her and her husband) read to both children at the same time, taking turns reading. They also frequently enjoyed reading at mealtimes together.

The prime motivator for Participant 3 for reading aloud was that it is an activity she enjoyed. She much preferred reading over playing pretend. She also found that reading aloud could calm her children and that it perpetuated a closeness they all enjoyed. She also enjoyed the opportunities reading aloud provided for having meaningful discussions with her children. Life being busy was the main inhibitor to reading aloud she experienced, although she found that her children becoming distracted by other activities could also inhibit reading time.

In her experience, the moments that had most stood out about reading aloud are the times when the family connected to the book they were reading; for example, they found humor in the same place, and it became a family joke. Participant 3 shared mesmerizing descriptions of time together as a family reading books.

Interview 4

Participant 4 was taking a 1-year leave of absence from her job as a middle-school English teacher to homeschool her 8-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son. They had formed a learning pod with two other families with children the same ages. Participant 4 taught the three second-graders at her house, whereas the preschool children went to another house and were taught by another parent. They lived in Washington, DC.

Participant 4's early memories of reading were mostly negative. She remembered her first-grade teacher making them take turns reading aloud words from pages in a big book. She remembered being terrified she would read her word incorrectly. She continued to be a reluctant reader until third grade, when she discovered series books. She loved *The Baby-Sitters Club* books and several similar series of books about horseback riding. After discovering these books, she quickly began to love reading.

When asked specifically whether her parents read aloud to her, her memories were sparse. She believed they read picture books to her when she was very young, but she did not remember them ever reading aloud chapter books.

Participant 4 described now loving reading but felt she did not have the time to devote to it that she wishes she did. She found, as her daughter grew older and was ready for more advanced books, that she enjoyed their time reading together. She also found some time to listen to audio books. She would like to make more time for reading. One

thing she explained that she loved was reading aloud. She had a theater background and found real enjoyment in reading aloud.

Participant 4 believed that reading aloud to children allows them to “access books that are above the level they can read themselves” (Interview 4, personal communication, April 14, 2021). She also claimed that reading aloud improves vocabulary. She believes there is a power in listening to books. A social benefit to reading aloud, she stated, is that it gives listeners a chance to share the experience of the book with another person, and it allows individuals to discuss what they have heard in the book.

For Participant 4, reading aloud was part of the daily bedtime routine for her children. They also often read at lunchtime or throughout the homeschool day. Several aspects motivated her to read aloud. First, she enjoyed reading aloud. She found it much more enjoyable than activities such as playing Lego. Second, her children enjoyed reading aloud together. Third, she had seen the benefits for her students who loved to read. Finally, she hoped that by reading aloud with them, her children would come to understand that reading was something their family values. The main factor that inhibited the family’s reading aloud was if they were not at home in the evening, which was when they typically read aloud.

Making meaningful connections was something else Participant 4 enjoyed with reading aloud. One experience she enjoyed was reading *Harry Potter* with her daughter. She found it was particularly meaningful to share a book that both she and her husband had enjoyed, with her daughter. They were able to share stories about going to the release parties for different books, and their daughter loved that connection. She also enjoyed reading something with her daughter that caused her to think about something she had not

considered before. For example, they had recently read a book called *George* by Alex Gino, which is about a transgender boy, giving them the opportunity to have meaningful discussions. She wanted to make sure that books provide both windows and mirrors for her children; she wanted them to see themselves reflected in what they read and be introduced to different experiences through books.

Reading aloud had always been part of her family; it was something they had done as part of their bedtime routine from the beginning. One of the main reasons they did it was because Participant 4 believed reading improves communication, and it is part of how we learn. By reading aloud, she felt she could introduce new information to them.

Interview 5

Participant 5 lived near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She had four children, a 13-year-old boy, and three girls, aged 11, 9, and 6. She was an aspiring writer and had been preparing for a writing convention by studying children's books. One of her assignments was reading 100 picture books before the conference this summer, so she was quite familiar with children's literature.

Books were readily available in her home growing up. She described both her parents as "voracious" readers. Her mother read more magazines, whereas her father enjoyed non-fiction. She learned to read before she began formal schooling and has loved reading ever since. She spent large amounts of time at the library as a child. She had minimal memories about being read aloud to by her parents, although she believed they did read to her. Her favorite books mostly came from the fantasy genre, but also some classics. As an adult she continued to love reading and said, "I honestly believe that if somebody tells you they're not a reader, they just haven't found the right book yet"

(Interview 5, personal communication, April 15, 2021). Participant 5 felt comfortable reading aloud and described her home as having books everywhere, including a bookshelf in each child's room. She also liked to give books as gifts. The family had a tradition that each child received a new book every birthday.

Participant 5 believed that reading aloud had impacted her children academically. She explained that her two oldest children had very high Lexile levels, and she attributed some of that to reading aloud. She also had a younger daughter with some special needs regarding her eyesight. She believed reading aloud had the most effect on that particular child because she struggled to see well enough to read. As a result, the parents began reading aloud to her even more than they had to their other children. She believed the reading aloud helped provide her daughter with more motivation to want to read despite it being more difficult for her.

She believed there was also a social impact as a result of reading aloud. Her children were able to "[bond] over a shared love of books" (Interview 5, personal communication, April 15, 2021). She also found that books could be an escape from uncomfortable social situations, which she described as both a positive and negative impact.

For Participant 5's family, reading mostly occurred after dinner or at bedtime. She generally chose books to read aloud that are ones her children would not pick up on their own, but that she would like them to experience. She described her motivation for reading aloud to her children as coming from her own love of reading and her desire to instill a love of reading into her children's lives.

Another benefit Participant 5 found with reading aloud was that it could provide the opportunity to spend meaningful one-on-one time with individual children. She described several experiences with individual children in which they read a book, just her and the child, and how special that time was for both of them.

The main inhibitor of reading time for Participant 5's family was time. They struggled to read together if bedtime was pushed back. She also said that audiobooks inhibited their reading a little, because she knew if her children were listening to an audiobook, they were being read to, so it was less likely for her to take the time to read to them herself.

Participant 5's family enjoyed fantasy books. Some of their favorites included *Harry Potter* and the *Steelheart* series by Brandon Sanderson. When asked about her reasons for reading aloud to her children, Participant 5 was quick to say that reading was important to her, and she loved the shared experience of reading aloud with her children. She also wanted them to experience the books she loved. Finally, she wanted them to love books as much as she does.

Participant 5 had a great love of the fantasy genre. She talked about that love several times in the interview. It was clear she had strong feelings about fantasy books. She even shared a story about a local bookstore she visited and how disappointed she was because, after talking to the bookstore owner, the owner said she was not interested in fantasy and only carried the children's books that were popular.

Interview 6

Participant 6 was a stay-at-home mother of four, a 17-year-old girl and three boys aged 15, 11, and 6. She grew up in Idaho but had lived in Utah for the past 20 years. She

described herself as growing up in a “reading family.” She said her parents both read frequently and she had fond memories of listening to her father read aloud to her mother. Her mother read aloud to her regularly as a child. She was the youngest of eight children and said that reading aloud was her “connection point” with her mother. She vividly remembered sitting on the porch and listening to her mother read to her. She also remembered loving spending time in her school library.

Some books she remembered from childhood included the *Berenstain Bears* by Stan and Jan Berenstain, the *Little House on the Prairie* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, and the *Moffats* by Eleanor Estes. She also remembered liking tragic books about children with cancer when she was in middle school. She explained that they made her feel big emotions and she liked that. Robin McKinley was a favorite author of hers. She also had a strong interest in Native American folklore.

For Participant 6, reading was a wonderful escape and an activity she thoroughly enjoyed. When asked to read aloud, she felt comfortable doing it and had noticed it had several academic effects on her children. First, she introduced her children to more advanced books by reading them aloud. She also found that reading aloud had helped develop a love of reading for her children and improved their reading comprehension skills. Reading aloud had been a way to introduce her children to new genres of books, helping their vocabulary development. Her children had also been impacted socially by reading aloud. She found that when she read aloud to a group of children, such as her children and nieces and nephews, a sense of community was created from sharing the same book. Furthermore, reading aloud relaxed the children and offered them a chance to share book recommendations with one another.

For Participant 6's family, reading generally happened right before bed. Reading time had become an opportunity for the children to have individual time with their mother or father. They generally read in the child's room and often snuggled together. She let the child fidget with a toy or do something if they wanted to while they read.

When asked about motivation for reading aloud to her children, Participant 6 said that she read aloud because she loved it. She loved the connection she felt to her children when they were spending time reading together. She also loved the chance to spend time snuggled up with them and to spend time with one child at a time.

It was important to Participant 6 that her children enjoyed books and reading, and she felt that reading aloud helped encourage an enjoyment of reading. She stated that reading aloud together helped motivate her children to want to learn to read the books they are reading together.

The main factor that inhibited reading for Participant 6 was time. If they were busy and arrived home late at night, it was difficult not to rush the children off to bed before they read. However, this had not been as big an issue during the pandemic since they had been home more.

Participant 6 said her family had great access to books. They had books of their own, grandparents with many books they shared with them, neighbors who shared books with them, and they regularly used the library. She said that she loved finding new books she could buy to add to their personal library in addition to encouraging family members to give books as gifts. Her family also enjoyed using audiobooks, which they generally accessed through the library (Libby), Audible, or Scribd.

Participant 6 described multiple experiences with sharing connections with her children through reading, whether it be emotional connections or through humor, but she greatly appreciated the shared experience. She also enjoyed the deep conversations that reading together has encouraged. In addition, she enjoyed rediscovering great books through reading them aloud, particularly when reading *Harry Potter* to her children.

Participant 6 read aloud to her children to connect with them, something both she and her children enjoyed. She found she would much rather read aloud than do something like play Monopoly with them. She could read aloud without watching the clock or trying to race through it. Reading aloud allowed the family to slow down and connect with one another. She also stated it opened up new ideas and had given them new experiences vicariously.

She felt that her decision to read aloud to her children was directly influenced by her parents; she had great memories of being read aloud to growing up.

Interview 7

Participant 7 lived in Maryland with her husband and identical twin, kindergarten boys. She had a master's degree in art education. She vaguely remembered her father reading her the *Narnia* books by C.S. Lewis, but she did not remember reading aloud being a regular part of their lives. She had a slow start learning to read. She did not feel like she started to read until around second grade, but by fourth grade she had discovered the *Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder and was hooked on reading. Some of the other books she remembered reading as a child were the *Borrowers* books by Mary Norton and *The Baby-Sitters Club* books by Ann M. Martin. She did not have many

books as a child, but she vividly remembered going to her friend's house to read her books because her parents bought her many books.

Participant 7 loved books. She felt comfortable reading aloud unless it was something difficult, such as parts of the Bible. She believed that reading aloud had helped her boys academically by engendering an enjoyment of reading. Although neither boy was yet reading on his own, both enjoyed listening to others read to them. She found they listened to books with more focus as a result of being read aloud to. Socially, she felt reading aloud had a significant impact. One of her children was on the autism spectrum and used books they read aloud together as a type of script for his plays. For example, they read *Curious George Goes to the Beach* by H.A. Rey, then her son incorporated the events of the book into his imaginative play. Then they were able to build on his skills from there. She described this process as being highly effective for him.

Reading aloud had been part of the family's bedtime routine since the boys were babies. They generally read at bedtime. Participant 7 read them three books each night. They gathered on one of the boy's beds. Participant 7 found motivation to read aloud mainly because of the connection she felt while reading with her boys. She appreciated how the practice of reading aloud had built their vocabulary and she wanted to encourage them to like reading. She also found it was a good activity to help her boys calm down from the excitement of the day. She stated that reading aloud was especially meaningful during the COVID-19 pandemic when she was helping them do online schoolwork. She felt reading aloud enabled them to reconnect as a family after a long day of trying to do virtual school. The one thing that inhibited reading for them was being tired. Sometimes, she felt too tired at the end of the day to read to her boys.

When thinking of her children's reading development, Participant 7 felt that reading aloud made reading more meaningful for her boys and helped motivate them to want to learn to read themselves.

Although Participant 7 did not have great access to books as a child, her children had plenty of access. They lived in a county with a strong library system. They regularly visited their library. They had a diverse collection of books of their own and could afford to replace books if they were ruined. They also used audiobooks and e-books. One thing Participant 7 enjoyed was curating their book collection.

Participant 7 read aloud to her children because she felt it was fun and she loved the illustrations. She started to read aloud to them because her pediatrician said it was good for them and was always giving them books. She also found it was easier to read aloud to her children than to play with them.

Interview 8

Participant 8 lived in Zambia, Southern Africa. She had lived there for 13 years. Before moving to Africa, she taught English and reading to junior high students in the United States, where she was from. She was single and had adopted two girls from Zambia. One daughter was 7 years old and the other was 8 years old. She worked at a children's home that resettled orphans with extended families. Her job was in medical advocacy.

Participant 8 remembered always receiving books as gifts as a child, whether it was in her Easter basket or for a birthday. Books were an integral part of her household. She described her dad as "a huge reader" and remembered him regularly taking the family to the library. She remembered some reading aloud, specifically being read *James*

and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl. She did not remember reading aloud happening every night but identified her home as a reading household.

She described reading as her favorite thing to do now. She had already read 52 books this year and it had not even reached the halfway point. She felt comfortable reading aloud and did it regularly with her class when she was teaching. She had an intricate system of reading with her two daughters each night. The process took about an hour and included time reading a Bible story, some poems, several picture books, and part of a chapter book. This routine was very consistent and something they rarely missed. She described part of that reason as being because, where they lived in Africa, you could not go out at night, so reading aloud together was their entertainment. However, the times when they were in the United States, she found that lack of time became an inhibitor to reading aloud.

Participant 8 said it was difficult to quantify the effect she had seen reading aloud make on her daughters academically, but she noticed comprehension benefits and an ability to make better connections with the text. She also believed reading aloud had affected their vocabulary development and helped improve their English skills. Socially, she believed the reading aloud they have done together helped her daughters combat some of the trauma they had experienced. She described, “that reading time is a thing, a marker that I can look at to say how much she’s like grown. Um, and in turn her relationships with her peers are totally different than they were now, than they were earlier” (Interview 8, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

When asked what motivated her to read regularly with her children, Participant 8 cited several reasons. First, she always needed the connection with her girls, which she

found healing. However, she cited her love of reading and her own enjoyment of the process as the most compelling reason to read. She said she did not want to play make-believe with them or go outside and jump on the trampoline, but she loved sitting down and reading a book with them. She also recognized the positive effect reading aloud had on them and hoped it helped compensate for the sub-par education they were receiving.

Access to books had been difficult in Africa. The family had used the U.S. library online and downloaded e-books on their Kindles sometimes. They had access to books through the children's home Participant 8 works for and, while in the United States, she purchased many books at garage sales to take back to Africa.

Participant 8 shared multiple times she felt a connection to her daughters through reading aloud. One experience was while she and her older daughter were reading *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo. The main character in the book has a mother who has left her, which is discussed throughout the book. Participant 8's daughter had a similar experience. Reading the book was the perfect opportunity to initiate some difficult conversations about loss and disappointment. Participant 8 could help her daughter understand that her birth mother was something they could talk about together. Another area of connection had been through reading *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling. Participant 8 loved *Harry Potter*, and after reading it together, her older daughter was obsessed with it, which brought them closer. In addition to the emotional connection, Participant 8 enjoyed the physical connection of reading aloud. She found reading aloud a great time to snuggle and be close to her daughters, which was particularly important for them because they were older when they were adopted, meaning they were never able to

be fed a bottle or rocked by Participant 8. She said she loved the cozy feel of time reading together.

Participant 8 also found it important to read to help the girls see themselves. She worried that when they go back to the United States and all their family is white, it will be difficult for them. Reading aloud enabled her to introduce her daughters to strong characters of color found in books.

Interview 9

Participant 9 recently moved from Colorado to Florida. She was married and had two children, a 6-year-old daughter in kindergarten and a 3-year-old son. She was homeschooling this year. She remembered her mother reading regularly to her as a child. She also had some memories of her father reading to her. She had a collection of *Little Golden Books*, and that is what she remembered reading.

Participant 9 loved reading. She generally read between 50 and 75 books a year in addition to listening to audiobooks. She had been reading to her children since they were infants. She enjoyed reading to children and was comfortable reading aloud, although she remembered hating being called on to read aloud in school.

Although her children were young and just beginning to experience education, she had noticed reading aloud have some impact. She believed it contributed to her children talking early and having large vocabularies. She noticed that reading aloud had helped her daughter be able to sit and listen quietly for larger lengths of time. She also felt it had helped her daughter have higher than average reading comprehensions skills. She had not noticed any specific social impacts.

Participant 9 read with her children off and on throughout the school day. Her husband also participated in reading aloud to the children. Each night, they read a chapter book together cuddled on Participant 9's bed. This bedtime reading was always done by Participant 9.

When asked about motivation, Participant 9 attributed her desire to read to her own love of reading. She also enjoyed the sense of connection reading aloud provided and the opportunity it gave her to spend focused time with her children. The idea of spending time together was appealing. She hoped as her children continued to develop in reading, they would gain a love of it. She wanted books to always be a part of their lives.

Participant 9 bought a lot of books from stores such as Amazon, the Goodwill Bookstore, and Target, but also used the local library. The family lived in a small town, so the library system was smaller and newer books often took some time to become available, but they used their library regularly. They also used audiobooks. The children had a daily "quiet time" when they listened to audiobooks and played quietly in their rooms for an hour.

Participant 9 described reading the first illustrated *Harry Potter* book with her daughter as a special experience for them. Participant 9 loved that her daughter was excited to keep reading the book and the participant had looked forward to sharing it with her daughter. That both mother and daughter enjoyed the book so much brought a shared sense of connection. One of the main reasons Participant 9 read out loud to her children was to create a sense of bonding. Reading aloud was a part of their bedtime routine and had offered a daily chance to read together and talk about the books they shared. It is something that both she and her children, especially her older daughter, enjoyed together.

Participant 9 credited her parents' examples of reading aloud to her as leading her to the practice of reading aloud to her children, in addition to reading about the benefits when she was newly pregnant.

Interview 10

Participant 10 was a stay-at-home mother of four children, aged 1, 3, 6, and 8 years old. Before having children, she was a nanny, a special education assistant, and a first-grade teacher. She also started working on a masters' degree with a dual endorsement in special education and English as a second language but decided not to finish it. Some books she remembered as a child were the *Berenstain Bears* by Stan and Jan Berenstain and *Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish. She did remember her mother reading to her a little bit. She remembered that around first grade "reading just clicked for me, and I fell in love with it" (Interview 10, personal communication, April 19, 2021). Some chapter books she remembered reading were *The Baby-Sitters Club* series by Ann Martin and *The Thoroughbreds* series by Joanna Campbell.

When asked about the effect reading aloud has had on her children academically, Participant 10 said,

I have noticed that they have . . . I haven't spent a ton of time at home, like focusing on learning to read but they have excelled, like, more than I could ever imagine with reading, and I think that ties directly into being read to, starting from the very beginning and doing it often. (Interview 10, personal communication, April 19, 2021)

Socially, she noticed that reading aloud had helped her children with the ability to "play pretend." They often acted out stories read to them. Reading aloud had also provided them with something to discuss with adults.

Participant 10 said that her family read aloud every night before bedtime. They also read at random times during the day. Something they enjoyed was having a “teatime” when they get home from school and reading books then.

The main motivator for reading aloud for Participant 10 was that she loved reading and made sure she picked books she would be interested in. She also loved the process of curating books for her children. The main inhibitor for her for reading aloud was when her youngest child interrupted the reading time.

Participant 10 felt that, regarding her children’s reading development, reading aloud to them helped them become confident readers, which also helped them to become confident in other academic areas.

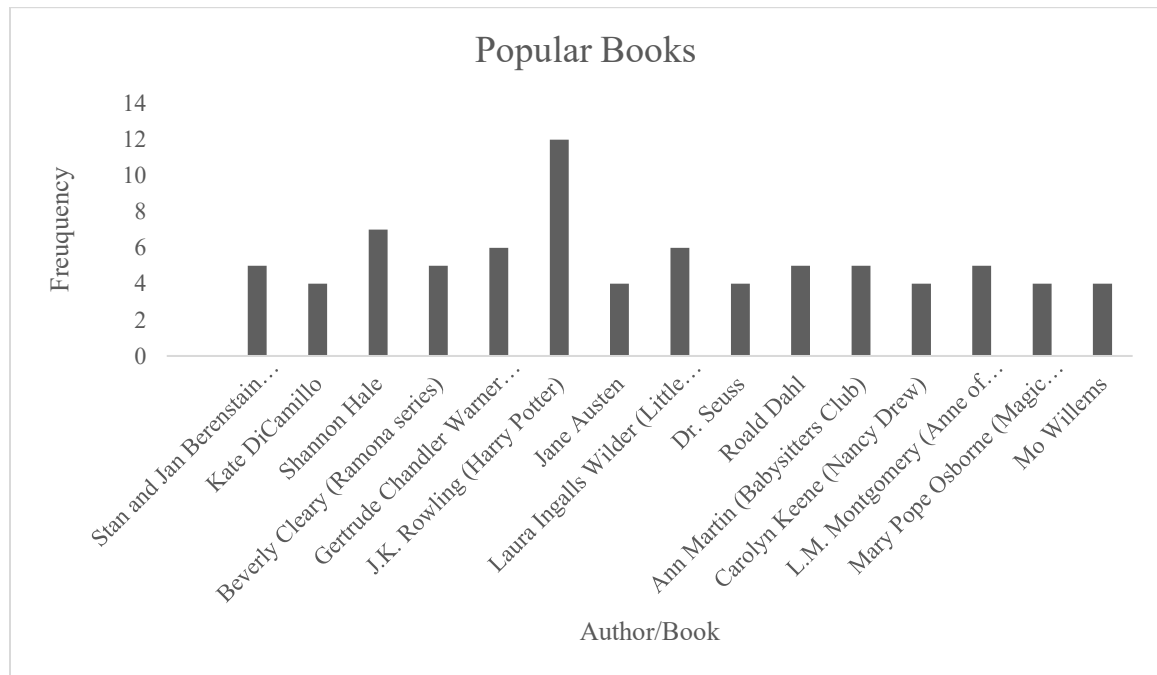
Most of the books Participant 10 read with her children came from the library. They also bought and rented books on their Kindles. Her family loved audiobooks and the children started listening to them as early as 3 years old.

One aspect of reading aloud that Participant 10 most appreciated was the connection to her family. She explained that she loved when they were all laughing at the same spot in a story. She also said that she did not get bored reading to her children, unlike when trying to “play pretend” with them. A book series that brought this connection for the family was the *Little House on the Prairie* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Regarding reading aloud, the reason Participant 10 persisted in doing so was for the family time together and the opportunity to learn. She felt her practice of reading aloud to her children was developed because of her great love of reading as a child and because she loved introducing new books in her classroom when she was teaching.

Figure 1

Frequency of Books Mentioned in at Least Four of the 20 Interviews



Interview 11

Participant 11 was a stay-at-home mother of three daughters, aged 7 months, 3 years, and almost 5 years. She grew up in a military family, so she lived all over, but now lived in Utah. She had strong memories of being read aloud to as a child. She said,

my parents read to us all growing up. My dad used to read *Nancy Drew* and the *Hardy Boys* to us, and we would all pile up on my parent's bed and listen to him reading. He had this awesome deep voice, and I can just, anytime I hear him, I think of those times. (Interview 11, personal communication, April 20, 2021)

She also had fond memories of her mother reading aloud books assigned to her in school, so she could understand them better. Some books she remembered them reading together as a family were *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* and *Harry Potter*.

Participant 11 felt reading aloud was the most important thing you can do with your children. She had a great love of reading. She had participated in book clubs and

was quite comfortable reading aloud and navigating the library. The family lived next door to a library, which she enjoyed a great deal.

When asked what type of academic effect reading aloud has had on her children, Participant 11 said it had helped them to learn more language, specifically increasing their vocabulary. Socially, she felt reading aloud provided an opportunity to expose her children to greater diversity than they might experience in their everyday life. She said her girls spend most of their time at home, but by reading books they are exposed to different situations and perspectives.

Participant 11 explained that she tried to be flexible about when and where they did their reading as a family. Sometimes they read first thing in the morning, other times at bedtime or naptime. They fit in books whenever they could during the day. One behavior she noticed was that her daughters often wanted her to read them a book when they felt upset. They found comfort in reading together.

Participant 11 found motivation to read aloud because it was an activity they all enjoyed greatly. She hoped the role reading aloud played in her daughters' literacy development was instilling within them a sense of joy in reading. She wanted them to have good memories of reading, so that when faced with more difficult reading tasks, they would not be stuck but remember those warm, happy feelings regarding reading.

She sometimes found it difficult to balance the needs of all three of her young children, which could inhibit her ability to read aloud to her children, but she stated that audiobooks were quite helpful in these situations because she can put one on for her older child while she takes care of the younger ones.

One reason she loved to read with her daughters is that “it’s a good bonding opportunity without making messes in the kitchen” (Interview 11, personal communication, April 20, 2021). She also enjoyed the opportunity reading aloud provided to start discussions about what they were reading and to teach lessons in a subtle way. She credited her desire to read with her children to her parents reading aloud to her as a child. She grew up thinking that reading aloud was just part of good parenting.

Interview 12

Participant 12 was married and had lived in Utah her entire life. She had three daughters, aged 5 years old, 4 years old, and 1 year old. She was an avid reader and made reading a part of the family culture. Surprisingly, she had not always loved reading and remembered hating it early on. She had vivid memories of bringing home books in a Ziplock bag to read to her mother and fighting about it and refusing to do it. It was not until she was 10 years old and someone gifted their family with the first few volumes of *Harry Potter* that she began to enjoy reading. Her parents started taking turns reading them aloud to Participant 12 and her younger brothers. She remembered becoming so caught up in the story that she would beg to read ahead. It was then that reading began to be something she enjoyed. Gradually, she found herself wanting to read anything she could. In addition to *Harry Potter*, some authors influential for her were Beverly Cleary, Shannon Hale, and Robin McKinley. Today, she loved reading and prioritized time for reading for herself in addition to the time she spends reading to her children. She felt reading was a way to keep learning.

She noticed several ways that reading aloud had impacted her children academically. She felt it had improved their vocabulary and comprehension and helped

them to express themselves more meaningfully. Additionally, she found that her kindergartener was a highly successful reader, which she attributed, to some degree, to reading aloud.

Participant 12 read to her children multiple times during the day; however, she always read to them before naptime and before bedtime. Additionally, they homeschooled, and reading was a major part of their curriculum.

When asked what motivated her to read regularly to her children, Participant 12 talked about disliking “playing pretend” with her children but really enjoying reading aloud to them. She found that reading aloud was a way to connect with them that she enjoyed. She also said that reading aloud had become part of their routine. She also found it calmed her children, which made it easy to want to do. In the future, she hoped that reading aloud would help her children to develop comprehension skills, listening skills, vocabulary, and an understanding of story structure. She also hoped that reading aloud would continue to help her children express themselves.

The biggest inhibitor to reading aloud for Participant 12 was lack of time. She explained that if their schedule was inconsistent or interrupted, it was more difficult to fit in read-aloud time.

Participant 12 described taking her girls to the library every other week. Their library was not great; they lived in a smaller town with a smaller library. However, they were allowed to go to the library in the next town, which was much better. Participant 12 felt lucky she had the financial means to purchase books she needed or wanted for her family. They also regularly gave books as gifts and encouraged family members to give books as gifts to their children.

Participant 12 read aloud to her children because of the opportunity it provided to connect. She said, “it’s just, um, like a connection time to be able to sit with my kids and like take time out of our day to just sit and read a book” (Interview 12, personal communication, April 20, 2021). She also read aloud for the conversations it stimulated. She believed reading aloud created opportunities for growth. Finally, she wanted to instill a love of reading in her children.

She attributed her desire to incorporate reading aloud to her love of reading. She purposely wanted reading to be part of the family culture. She remembered the effect her parents reading *Harry Potter* had on her as a child and wanted to incorporate the same thing in her own family. She explained,

those were really the only books that I felt like we read aloud as a family, But they’re some of like my favorite memories of, um, just the whole family part of it. My dad was, um, a police officer when I was a kid and so, um, we read when he was around and he wasn’t, you know, like work schedules and stuff was always hard. And so just having those really fond memories of like it being family time and just really fun. Um, and so really wanting to do that with my kids and share like, these were some of my favorite stories and I loved them. (Interview 12, personal communication, April 20, 2021)

Interview 13

Participant 13 was a stay-at-home mother of three boys, aged 7, 4, and 2. She was a former fourth-grade teacher. She lived in Utah. Her memories of reading as a child were fairly negative. She remembered being pulled out into the hallway to read aloud and feeling like she was a very slow reader, which she equated with being a poor reader. However, she later spent the summers reading books and gradually reading more and more. She remembered that her mother read aloud to her, even as late as high school, trying to help get through books she was assigned for school. Some books she remembered were the *Berenstain Bears* by Stan and Jan Berenstain, the *If You Give a*

Mouse a Cookie series by Laura Numeroff, *Nancy Drew* by Carolyn Keene, and *The Baby-Sitters Club* books by Ann M. Martin.

As an adult, Participant 13 liked reading. She felt it was important because it can help you succeed in many other areas in life. She thought she witnessed this in her classroom when she was teaching. She said, “I just feel like reading is kind of a foundational thing of life that if you can read, you then go on” (Interview 13, personal communication, April 20, 2021). Participant 13 mostly currently listened to audiobooks. She was comfortable reading aloud now, despite her feeling of dread as a child.

She believed reading aloud had impacted her children academically in several ways. Her oldest child was quite advanced academically, and she attributed much of this to her habit of reading aloud to him. She noticed also that reading aloud helped her children with vocabulary.

Participant 13 read aloud to her children throughout the day, but most of their reading happened at bedtime or later in the evening. Early on with her children, she expected them to sit still and listen, but as she gained more experience and knowledge, she started letting them fidget or play with something while they read. She explained that they were fairly consistent with reading each night, but the time they spent on it may differ. Some nights it was only a few minutes, whereas others they spent more time. They generally read in the bedroom sitting on the bed or gathered on the couch.

When discussing motivation for reading aloud, Participant 13 said that several things contributed. First, she believed reading was important. She also wanted to model the behavior of reading for her children. Finally, she felt reading was foundational to their education and by reading to them she helped them achieve more. The role she envisioned

reading aloud playing in her children's reading development was one of promoting a love of reading. She wanted reading to be enjoyable for her boys. Lack of time often inhibited their reading aloud, in addition to the varying interests and reading levels of her three boys and her own interest level in the book.

Participant 13 said her family owned many books, but they also used the library regularly. They also used their school library. The library they used had many books but lacked some of the more newly released items. Participant 13 and her husband had differing views on buying books: she wanted to purchase more of their own, whereas he would rather take advantage of the library more.

Participant 13 explained that she read aloud to her children because it provided her with a break, and it allowed her to spend time with her children. She wanted to build reading as a habit for her boys. She also felt it was a way to spend "quality time" with them. Furthermore, she did it because she enjoyed it and because her mother read to her as a child. She wanted her children to enjoy reading also, plus it gave her an opportunity to introduce them to different genres of books.

Participant 13 credited the fact that her mother read to her as leading her to a habit of reading aloud with her children. She remembered the experience of being read aloud to with fondness. She was one of 10 children, and she remembered sitting on her mother's bed and listening to her read aloud to her and her brothers and sisters and it was something she enjoyed.

Interview 14

Participant 14 was married with two daughters, one in kindergarten and one in second grade. Participant 14 and her husband were both from California but had recently

moved to Colorado. She worked in human resources, but when they moved, she decided to become a stay-at-home mother. She was homeschooling both daughters at the time.

One moment she remembered distinctly as a child was riding the bus to downtown San Jose, California with her mother to visit the main branch of the library. She was in kindergarten and remembered checking out the book *Hop on Pop* by Dr. Seuss. As they were riding the bus home, Participant 14 found that suddenly the words made sense and she was able to read the book. It was as if a light bulb had turned on. She remembered little about her parents reading to her. She felt she did not need them to anymore because she could read to herself. She had memories of classic children's books, such as Dr. Seuss, *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Brown, and *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter. As an older child, she loved *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery, *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner, and *Nancy Drew* by Carolyn Keene.

Participant 14 felt more comfortable reading aloud at present than she had early on in parenthood. The family found that reading aloud at bedtime did not work for them and never had. Participant 14 said she was just too tired then. The family did most of their reading aloud first thing in the morning and throughout the school day. She also encouraged her children to listen to audiobooks whenever possible, especially if they had a mundane task to complete.

Regarding the academic impacts of reading aloud, Participant 14 noticed that while her older daughter started reading a little later than other children, once she learned she quickly became an advanced reader. Participant 14 felt this was a direct result of her daughter watching her read and wanting to read herself. She also thought reading aloud builds confidence in reading and had increased her children's listening skills.

For Participant 14, motivation to read aloud came from “making sure it is books that I like” (Interview 14, personal communication, April 20, 2021). She found it is much more difficult to want to read if the books were not something she was interested in. She also shared that it was much more difficult to find motivation to read aloud to her children when she was working full-time. One thing that inhibited reading aloud for Participant 14 was needing space to recharge; sometimes, she just needed a break from her children.

Participant 14 had a large home library, and her family used the public library system regularly, which she described as “fantastic.” They generally took audiobooks from their library through Overdrive. Participant 14 enjoyed the fantasy genre the most because it was a way to escape real life, whereas her daughters leaned more toward the mystery genre.

Participant 14 read aloud to her children because she believed it developed their imagination and creativity. She also felt reading was good for your brain. This idea was what led her to read aloud; she thought it was something she should be doing.

Interview 15

Participant 15 worked as an assistant for a blogger. She had an LPN in nursing and a degree in marketing. She was from Utah but lived in Illinois. She was married with three children, a daughter 8 years old, a son 5 years old, and a daughter 3 years old. Participant 15’s three-year-old daughter was hard of hearing.

She remembered her mother taking their family to the library regularly in the summer when she was not working. She did not have many memories of her parents reading aloud, but she felt sure they did. She did remember that her parents encouraged

reading and there were always books around. She said both her parents and her older sister read aloud to her as a child. She remembered picture books such as the *Napping House* by Audrey Wood and *A Bad Case of Stripes* by David Shannon. As she grew older, her favorites included *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, *The Baby-Sitters Club* by Ann Martin, and *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner. She also read the *American Girl* series books.

When asked about her feelings regarding reading, Participant 15 said,

Oh, I just really love it. I really love reading. I love listening to audio books. And I really, one of my favorite things to do with my kids is to read. I don't, I'm not really, like, an imaginary play type mom. Reading is like my bread and butter, like the thing I really, really enjoy doing with them. (Interview 15, personal communication, April 20, 2021)

Participant 15 felt quite comfortable reading aloud. Currently, her family did most of their reading aloud at bedtime, but that had not always been the case. When her husband was in medical school, she found she was too tired at bedtime to read aloud, so they found times during the day to do it. Flexibility was key. They began their reading time by reading three or four picture books. Then, after the 3-year-old went to bed, Participant 15 and her two older children read aloud a chapter book or listened to an audiobook while they colored.

They utilized a mixture of library books and books they owned. Their local library system was very good. They encouraged books as gifts and looked for books on sale to add to their personal library. They used audiobooks regularly and accessed them through cloudLibrary.

Participant 15 noticed several academic impacts of reading aloud. She believed it had improved her children's vocabulary, increased their ability to sit still, and helped

them develop an enjoyment of stories. Socially, she felt that reading aloud had helped her children build confidence in their reading skills.

Participant 15's main motivation for reading aloud was that she enjoyed it. She said, "I think that makes a huge difference 'cause that would be really hard if you don't like it, 'cause, I mean, I don't like playing Barbies" (Interview 15, personal communication, April 20, 2021). She also read aloud because she felt research said it makes a difference to children. She believed it helps academically, socially, and increases family bonding time. She hoped that reading aloud would help her children develop a love of reading and create a familiarity with reading that would help them be more successful in school. One thing that inhibited reading aloud for her family was the age gap between her children. Often, her 8-year-old was uninterested in some of the simplistic books her 3-year-old wanted to hear. Lack of time or being busy also interrupted their read-aloud time.

One of the main reasons Participant 15 read aloud to her children was because she enjoyed it, but another reason was that it helped her hard-of-hearing daughter with sequencing skills. When asked what led her to the practice of reading aloud, Participant 15 shared that part of it was that it was a free activity she could do with her children while her husband was in medical school. She also said that she always wanted to be the type of mother who read to her children.

Interview 16

Participant 16 had one 7-year-old son. She was a psychologist with a PhD. She lived in Utah. Her memories about reading as a child mostly involved a business her mother had selling books. Due to the business, she and her siblings had access to many

books, and she remembered grabbing stacks of picture books and reading them. She had a few specific memories of being read aloud to and believed her mother must have done some reading aloud to them. Her mother shared her love of books with her children. Some of the favorite books she remembered were written by Don and Audrey Wood. Her main interest was in books about history. As she grew older, she enjoyed books such as the *American Girl* books, *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* by Betty MacDonald, and the *Boxcar Children* books. She also enjoyed books about Native Americans and comic books. She said, “I think, I read hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of books when I was little” (Interview 16, personal communication, April 21, 2021).

Participant 16 had always loved reading but fell away from doing it during graduate school because she was so busy reading for school. Recently, she began reading again and rekindled her love of it. She was very comfortable reading aloud and enjoyed doing it.

When asked about the academic effect reading aloud had on her son, she talked about how it improved his vocabulary and his comprehension. Socially, she found that reading aloud provided her family with the opportunity to create jokes based on the things they had read about. Furthermore, her son talked to other classmates about what he read, and she noticed he learned lessons from the books they read.

Participant 16 read each night at bedtime with her son. They each picked out a book and read both books. They also regularly listened to audiobooks in the car. They rarely missed reading aloud because it was an integral part of their nighttime routine. They had a large personal collection of books but also utilized the library regularly. Their

nearest library had a poor selection, but the neighboring town had a much better-stocked library. They also regularly asked for books as gifts.

Participant 16 was motivated to read aloud because, “it’s so relaxing to me. Like it was a time where we can just sit down or lay down and that is very motivating to me” (Interview 16, personal communication, April 21, 2021). She also loved the connection reading aloud provided with her son and the ability it gave them to talk about the messages in the books. The role she hoped reading played in her son’s reading development was improving his reading skills and developing his confidence in reading. The main inhibitor for reading aloud for their family was when interrupted by other evening activities.

For Participant 16, reading aloud was also a way to connect and interact with her son as she struggled with some major health problems. At one point, she had surgery that limited her ability to move around, so reading together was one thing she could still do with her son that provided them with an opportunity to connect. Relaxing and connecting were central to why Participant 16 read aloud to her son. She also hoped it would help him improve his reading and enjoy reading.

When thinking about what led her to the practice of reading aloud, Participant 16 felt it was that she grew up with such great access to books and that she developed such a love for picture books. She also believed that reading aloud had become such a familiar routine.

Interview 17

Participant 17 was a homeschooling mother of two boys aged 8 years old and 6 years old. She lived in Alberta, Canada and had been homeschooling for 3 years. As a

child, she always enjoyed reading. She was not what she considered a “voracious” reader, but she liked reading. The first book she remembered her mother reading aloud to her was Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House in the Big Woods*. Something that stuck out in her memory was that her mother would create a bookmark for each chapter book they read, with empty lines to write down words they did not know to look up in the dictionary later. As she grew older and was reading on her own, Participant 17’s mother gifted her a new bookmark with each new book. Her father also occasionally read aloud to her. Participant 17 felt that once she was able to read chapter books herself, much of the reading aloud stopped. Some books she remembered were the *Little House on the Prairie* books, books by Bill Peet, *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans, and the *Dear America* series.

Reading became particularly impactful for Participant 17 over the course of two cross-country summer moves. She found that during those lonely summers, reading helped her adjust. She said, “the characters in the book became my buds and it helped ease the transition of moving” (Interview 17, personal communication, April 21, 2021).

Participant 17 felt that reading was important for multiple reasons. She appreciated its entertainment value, but stated it also enlarged understanding, increased empathy, and helped the reader learn new things. She believed reading aloud most strongly impacted her children academically by improving their comprehension skills. She also said that reading aloud helped children see the value in reading. Although she did not see any specific social benefits for her children from reading aloud at the moment, she anticipated it would affect them socially as they grew older and began reading some of the same books as their peers.

Reading aloud happened throughout the day in Participant 17's home. Much of their homeschool curriculum was literature based. In addition to the reading they did for school, they always had a chapter book they read together at bedtime.

Participant 17 described her motivation for reading aloud as coming from a desire to encourage her sons to love reading as much as she did. She also felt confident in her skills regarding reading aloud and thought it was something she was good at. Such feelings of confidence also motivated Participant 17. She hoped that reading aloud played a strong role in her children's literacy development because she planned to read aloud to her children as long as possible. Two main factors inhibited her reading aloud: her energy levels and her sons' attention spans.

Participant 17 regularly utilized the library for both books and audiobooks. She thought that the library was adequately stocked and willing to find books she requested.

When asked why she read aloud to her boys, Participant 17 was quick to cite homeschooling as one reason. She found that reading aloud was an effective way to teach subjects such as history. She also talked about the way reading aloud created connections and bonding. She felt it strengthened their relationship as a family. Participant 17 believed that listening to a podcast about reading aloud is what led her to her practice it regularly with her sons.

Interview 18

Participant 18 was a stay-at-home mother of two boys aged 7 and 3. Her husband worked from home and her older son was doing remote school from home. They lived in Washington state. She had a degree in English. She remembered her mother reading to her as a child and going to the library regularly. She enjoyed reading, but it was not

always easy for her. She was somewhat embarrassed by her perceived reading difficulties; however, despite the difficulties, she continued to enjoy reading. She expressed that she enjoyed reading some books she remembered from childhood with her oldest son. They had been reading some of Beverly Cleary's books at the time of the interview and were enjoying that experience together. Some of the other books she remembered from childhood were the *Berenstain Bears* by Stan and Jan Berenstain, Dr. Seuss books, *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery, and *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan.

Participant 18 felt that reading was important as both an escape and a way to learn. She found that reading aloud had an academic effect on her children. One way it impacted them was in language development. It had also helped her son develop an interest in books and reading and cultivated his listening skills. Socially, she found that reading aloud provided a way to talk about differences and teach about social issues. Participant 18's son had recently lost his grandfather and they were able to work through his feelings about death through reading books. She also regularly used books to teach lessons about concepts such as patience or sharing.

Participant 18 explained that they usually read before bed, although sometimes they read in the mornings. She also used reading aloud to calm her boys throughout the day.

Participant 18 believed her motivation to read aloud came as a result of the bonding time that developed through the process. In addition, she found that reading aloud was something both she and her children enjoyed. She hoped reading aloud would play an ongoing role in her children's literacy development, continuing to increase their

vocabulary and introducing them to a variety of genres of books. Luckily, she found very few things inhibited her read-aloud time with her children; they are quite consistent readers.

Participant 18 read to her children mainly for the opportunity to spend time together and experience something together. She had never read *Harry Potter* and was saving the experience to be one to share with her son. She looked forward to reading the illustrated version together soon. She believed that information from the pediatrician about the benefits of reading were the main influence for her practice of reading aloud.

Interview 19

This interview was a little rushed because Participant 19 was in the car with her two small children. Participant 19 was a stay-at-home mother of four young children, a daughter 8 years old, a 6-year-old son, a 3-year-old, and a 10-month-old. She had attended some college but did not graduate. She remembered learning to read before kindergarten, taught by her mother. She was an only child until the age of 10 and, as a result, spent a great deal of time reading. She remembered loving to read and doing it constantly. She had no strong memories of being read aloud to but was sure that her parents did it. Her favorite picture book was called *Shy Charlene and Sharyl* by C.A. Nobens. She also remembered reading *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little* by E.B. White.

When asked how she felt about reading in general, Participant 19 said she did not read much now but did listen to some audiobooks on Audible. She felt too busy to sit down and read a book herself but prioritized reading aloud to her children because she believed it was important. She thought reading aloud helped her children academically by helping them to understand how books work. She had not noticed any social impacts.

Participant 19 had been reading *Harry Potter* with her 6-year-old son and found the experience highly enjoyable. She loved that he was excited to read together and that they could share a book she loved as a child. Her 8-year-old daughter recently read the same book on her own and had become obsessed with *Harry Potter*. She explained how fun it was to share this love of *Harry Potter* with her children and how positive the reading experience had been.

For Participant 19, motivation to read aloud came from hearing about the important benefits it could offer a child. She loved reading as a child and wanted her children to love it too. She also found that reading aloud was something her children enjoyed. As her children's reading developed, Participant 19 believed that reading aloud would help them build confidence in their own reading. Several things inhibited reading for Participant 19. Having younger children who interrupted reading time often made the process difficult. Furthermore, sometimes, her children would get carried away with playing and she did not want to interrupt them. Finally, she felt that the biggest inhibitor was the lack of a schedule for reading aloud.

Participant 19 used her library regularly and said it was very well stocked with books. She had access to two nearby libraries and regularly checked out as many as 40 books at a time. Her children had not been very interested in audiobooks so far, although she did use them herself regularly.

Participant 19 had several reasons she read aloud to her children. First, she said it was because she loved them and knew that reading aloud made them happy. She also believed it would make her children smarter. Finally, she thought that reading aloud was a way for them to bond as a family and spend time together. She felt that her love of

reading as a child had led her to read aloud to her children, in addition to hearing how good reading aloud was for children.

Interview 20

Participant 20 was married with two daughters, who were 6 years old and 3 years old. She majored in English in college but stayed at home with her girls and was homeschooling them. When asked about memories of reading as a child, she said,

I feel like reading was a part of my family culture while we were growing up. So, I have four older siblings, um, and they all are big readers, and my parents are big readers, so I just feel like it was just the normal thing to just read all the time, so, I read a lot, my mom read to me a lot, um yeah. (Interview 20, personal communication, April 22, 2021)

She also remembered that, when she grew a little older, maybe 10 or 11 years old, her family started all reading aloud books together at night. She remembered a wide variety of books from her childhood, including *Junie B. Jones* by Barbara Park, *Dealing with Dragons* by Patricia Wrede, the *Half Magic* series by Edward Eager, and *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling.

Participant 20 loved to read and felt very comfortable reading aloud. She had seen significant academic impacts from reading aloud to her children, including improved reading comprehension, improved ability to listen, an interest in books, and increased vocabulary. She had noticed no specific social impacts but believed that reading aloud had not hurt her daughters socially.

Participant 20 said the family often started the day with reading aloud and read sporadically throughout the day depending on the day, but they always read before bed. She said the time for reading aloud varied. She generally read to both girls at the same time but tended to focus what they read more on her older daughter's needs and interests since they were more advanced.

Participant 20 was motivated to read aloud by homeschooling but found that the connection reading aloud provided was even more of a catalyst. She said,

I think the biggest thing is it's such a good time of connection for us. Um, and, and bonding and building our relationship because I, if we're reading a book that we both enjoy then it, we're both engaged in it equally, you know? And I think so many things that I do with my kids are not necessarily like that. (Interview 20, personal communication, April 22, 2021).

She then said that reading aloud felt easier than many other parenting tasks because it was so enjoyable for both her and her children.

Regarding her children's reading development, Participant 20 believed that reading aloud would introduce them to more vocabulary and would contribute to her daughters' motivation to want to read. The biggest inhibitor to reading aloud for Participant 20 was time. It was easy to be busy with daily chores and things going on and be distracted from reading aloud.

Participant 20 took books from the library and ordered them from Thriftbooks. She had not tried audiobooks from the library because she had not figured out how to access them.

Participant 20 believed there were two main reasons she read aloud to her children. She liked that it built their relationship, and she enjoyed it and so did her daughters. When asked what led her to a habit of reading aloud, she said,

Well, definitely being read to so much when I was a kid, that would be a big one and just reading aloud as a kid. Um, and I was just always excited to read aloud to my kids um, because I don't know, I knew it was good for them and I wanted to do it. I, it just sounded really fun to read to my kids and it is fun. (Interview 20, personal communication, April 22, 2021)

Common Themes

Although each interview was different, there were several common themes throughout the 20 interviews and several points raised frequently. The themes explored in

these interviews include a love of reading, time, connection, supporting individual needs, and impactful books.

Love of Reading

Nearly all the participants seemed to share one trait in common: a love of reading. Although it makes sense that people are more likely to continue an activity if they enjoy it, it was surprising to discover how strongly the mothers interviewed felt about reading aloud. Thus, the first theme generated is entitled *Love of Reading*. This theme appeared to be central to what motivated the mothers to read aloud regularly with their children. Many stated how important it was for them to develop a similar love of reading in their children. One mother's response to how she felt about reading was,

I love it. I love, I don't have ton of time to do it, like, personally but I absolutely adore, like, researching books for my kids, gathering books from the library for my kids and then spending as much time as I can reading with them. (Interview 10, personal communication, April 19, 2021)

The theme *Love of Reading* was generated mainly from answers to the following interview questions and prompt:

- What are your feelings about reading in general?
- Reading regularly to a child is a time commitment. What motivates you to read regularly with your child?
- Tell me some of the reason's you read aloud to your child.

Studying the answers from these questions, enjoyment of reading came up repeatedly, with the mothers describing the love they had for reading and the motivation it provided for them to keep reading. This idea is illustrated by a quote from one mother about why she reads to her children:

Um, I think one, it's just sharing something I love, that I'm passionate about with them. Two, I feel like it's a great way to spend time together and be together as a family. Um, it's kind of just an event that pulls us together. Um, and I want them to see that reading isn't something that is just a chore, I want them to look at it as something that is fun as well. (Interview 2, personal communication, April 13, 2021)

It is obvious that reading aloud is not a chore for these parents, meaning they are more likely to do it. They also want to share that enjoyment with their children. Many of the mothers cited a desire to help their children learn to love reading as reason for wanting to read aloud to their children. This point suggests that the act of listening to a book being read aloud helps children to have an increased desire to read themselves. Several mothers cited an increased desire to read due to the academic impact of reading aloud. For example, when asked about how reading aloud has impacted her daughters, Participant 20 said of her daughter, "um, and she just has like a big interest in stories" (Interview 20, personal communication, April 22, 2021). Participant 2 concurred with this idea, when she said the academic effect reading had on her five children has helped them all come to enjoy reading (Interview 2, personal communication, April 13, 2021).

Multiple mothers stated an aversion to some other parenting activities, such as "playing pretend," playing Barbies, or playing Lego. However, they found much more enjoyment in reading aloud, making them more likely to do so.

Time

Although a love of reading seemed to produce most of the motivation for parents to read aloud, most parents interviewed also agreed that a perceived lack of time was the biggest inhibitor. For example, one mother said,

the biggest one is time. And a lot of times I feel guilty when, um we've started an, a novel at night and then a week or two go by and we haven't read any chapters. Um, and it is usually because we've pushed bedtime back. I'm tired, the kids are grumpy, I want them to go to bed and be out of my hair, um, and so unfortunately

that's when reading gets cut. (Interview 5, personal communication, April 15, 2021)

The mothers repeatedly cited that having their bedtime routine disrupted by other activities and running out of time to read before bed were the reasons for missing their nightly read-aloud.

The theme of Time was generated from answers to the question:

- What factors inhibit reading aloud for you?

Connection

An additional theme that repeatedly occurred is that reading aloud fostered connection. One mother said, "I feel like it's [reading aloud] a great way to spend time together and be together as a family . . . um, it's kind of just an event that pulls us together" (Interview 2, personal communication, April 13, 2021). Multiple mothers found that reading aloud created a special connection with their children. For many, fostering that connection they felt with their children provided the motivation to keep reading aloud. Participant 12 found this to be the case, stating,

Uh, I wouldn't say I love to play pretend with my kids and reading is something I enjoy doing. And so it's easy for me to be motivated in the sense that like I enjoy doing it and so it's, oh, like when I'm like, "Oh I wanna really connect with my kids." What should we do? I'm like, "Oh, well let's read a book or something". (Interview 12, personal communication, April 20, 2021)

Another mother described this sense of connection in the following way:

It's just every night that I'm like reading aloud to the kids and I have one on each side and they like, you know, just rest their heads on each shoulder . . . and when they're calm and we're just all reading and like entertained by the book that we're reading. It's just a lovely, like all encompassing experience. (Interview 3, personal communication, April 14, 2021)

The theme of *Connection* was generated mainly from answers to the following two interview questions and prompt:

- What are your feelings about reading in general?
- Reading regularly to a child is a time commitment. What motivates you to read regularly with your child?
- Tell me some of the reason's you read aloud to your child.

The above seemed to have the most meaningful impact and generate the most solid information; however, the following prompt also provided some good insight:

- Tell me about an experience you have had reading aloud with your child/children.

One parent shared the following moment of connection with her young daughters:

Um, in the summertime we love to take out our camping chairs, our picnic blanket, and just read forever. My girls will bring out little baskets of books and we'll sit out there and just read through all of them. And I just think that's one of the most tender memories for me. (Interview 11, personal communication, April 20, 2021)

Another mother explained how her daughter regularly wakes up early, knowing her mother spends time doing Bible study in the early mornings. She gets out of bed quietly and asks her mother to read to her. This time has become a special moment of connection for both mother and daughter. Another mother shared a moment she had on a family camping trip with one of her sons. She said they brought along a book they were reading aloud and had some quiet time alone to read aloud together:

So we went, and we sat out in these huge, tall pine trees on the porch of the lodge where the cabins were and it [was] just the sun and sitting in like finishing the book together, outside in the sun, no distractions, no, you know, noise. That- that was awesome. (Interview 6, personal communication, April 15, 2021)

These moments of togetherness seem to provide a sense of motivation for parents to continue the work of reading aloud.

Supporting Individual Needs

Another repeated theme was that of reading aloud supporting the needs of individuals, from helping autistic children communicate more fully to improving sequencing skills of a child with hearing loss, to providing comfort in the face of death, reading aloud seems to meet myriad needs. Mothers throughout the 20 interviews mentioned how reading aloud had helped their children with individual needs.

One mother described reading aloud as helping her son with autism to communicate better:

Because we read aloud to him, he was able to use the books, the, as scripts, and then eventually it evolved into his own form of play. Like so it was *Curious George Goes to the Beach*...and so he would incorporate, like, parts of that into his imaginative play, and then we were able to build on that. (Interview 7, personal communication, April 17, 2021)

Another mother described how reading aloud helped her adopted daughter cope with some of the effects of the trauma she had experienced. She explained that reading aloud “has become a precious time again because she has learned that is like a, a bonding time for us. This is when we are all in bed together. And this is a really important time for us as a family, you know?” (Interview 8, personal communication, April 19, 2021).

Yet another mother described how reading aloud was one thing she could do to connect with her young son while she was struggling with her health. She said,

I have several, um autoimmune diseases and so sometimes that’s my way of being able to do things with him when I can’t move or get up a lot in a day . . . or do as many things. So I’ll just snuggle in bed or do things like that, and he’ll bring a stack of books . . . and I will just read with him ‘cause that’s all I can do. (Interview 16, personal communication, April 21, 2021)

Mothers also shared that reading and reading aloud helped them also. One mother said,

I mean, I can't imagine life without reading. Like it, it's fundamental for me to clear my mind at night before I go to sleep, I have to put somebody else's words in my head, otherwise my mind just keeps circulating. And I can't imagine not reading out loud to my own kids or, or even having these characters and these books, I mean, like lessons that we see reflected in the books that we read, not having those to rely on or refer to. (Interview 3, personal communication, April 14, 2021)

Rather than coming from answers to one specific question, this theme was developed from answers to multiple questions. However, two questions that particularly elicited information for this theme seemed to be the following:

- What sort of effect have you noticed reading aloud has had on your child academically?
- What sort of effect have you noticed reading aloud has had on your child socially?

Impactful Books

It was surprising to see how many of the same books came up repeatedly throughout the interviews. The theme of impactful books was a strong one. *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling was mentioned frequently. Reading *Harry Potter* stood out in the memories of parents in two ways: having it read to them as a child and as a pivotal experience as they read it aloud to their children. Many mothers mentioned how excited they were about sharing this book with their children or how much they had already enjoyed sharing it with their children. The illustrated version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* seems to be of particular value as a shared reading experience.

Another surprise was seeing how many series books were considered impactful by readers. These formulaic stories that some might consider "lesser" literature were cited repeatedly as important books to the interviewees. Books such as the *Boxcar*

Children, The Baby-Sitters Club, Nancy Drew, and even the *Berenstain Bears* were mentioned as favorites and considered memorable.

The theme of impactful books was determined from several interview questions and prompts, including the following:

- What books do you remember?
- Tell me about some of you and your child's favorite books and why they are your favorite.

This question and prompt spurred the participants to share what books made a difference in their lives. It was fascinating to see the overlap of books that were favorites. It is interesting to note that the demographics of the participants were very similar, which could be a strong influence as to why so many similar books were cited as favorites.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Implication of Findings

In this study, the researcher addressed the following research question:

- How do caregivers perceive the at-home read-aloud experience for children in kindergarten through second grade?

This research question was explored through the following sub-questions:

- What motivates caregivers to read to their children?
- What are caregivers' perceptions of the role of read-alouds upon children's literacy development?
- What factors inhibit or facilitate caregivers' desire to read aloud to children?
- Do background and culture play into the practice of reading aloud?

Several themes were addressed in the 20 interviews, including a love of reading, time, connection, supporting individual needs, and impactful books.

Love of Reading

What the Research Says

The theme of *Love of Reading* suggests that how much a parent enjoys reading affects how much a child is read to. The idea that a parent's enjoyment of reading affects a child and the motivation for the parent to read aloud is supported by the literature. Ledger and Merga (2018) suggested that it is much more likely for a parent to prioritize reading aloud if they first enjoy reading themselves. The researchers then discuss that this point is particularly true for children with a mother who enjoys reading. Ledger and Merga (2018) found that 89.7% of the parents surveyed in their study stated that they enjoyed reading themselves. These percentages are similarly reflected in this current

study. Parent's modeling love of reading for their children fits well with Bandura's (2008) observational learning theory, which suggests that children learn through observation. Parents who enjoy reading are more likely to model reading behaviors more frequently, providing children with more opportunities to learn through observing.

Implications

That a parent's love of reading has such a strong effect on their children should be addressed more frequently in education. This research reiterates that point. To make parents read aloud to their children, one way to encourage them is to foster a love of reading in parents. Educators should be encouraging parents to read along with their children. Finding joy in reading is not a subject generally focused on in schools or school communities; the focus is more on aspects such as reading test scores. In reality, according to research, it could be more valuable to spend time teaching families how to find joy in reading in general. If successful, it is likely that parents would increase the time they spend reading with their children. The results of these interviews also suggest how important it is to focus on helping individual students learn to love reading. A child who loves reading is more likely to grow up to love reading, which means they are more likely to read aloud to their own children, providing them with all the benefits of being read aloud to. This study suggests exactly how important it is to spend time helping students develop a love of reading.

Time

What the Research Says

Lack of time was the most frequently stated inhibitor to reading aloud in this study. This was also the case for Ledger and Merga (2018). Time, or the perceived lack

of it, was the biggest barrier to reading aloud. Fortunately, for parents who prioritize time for reading aloud, there are major dividends. Price and Kalil (2019) found that one extra day of a mother reading aloud with her child for just 20 minutes resulted in an increase of that child's reading score by about 8% of a SD. Spending time on reading aloud does make a difference.

Implications

Public service announcements emphasizing the importance of making time each day to read aloud are imperative for reading aloud. Educators and policymakers need to work hard to encourage parents to make time in their schedules for reading aloud. Although most parents seem to find it easiest to read at bedtime, flexibility must be encouraged. For some parents, bedtime does not work for reading aloud, and those parents need to know there is nothing wrong with finding another time. Several parents in this study took advantage of other times of day to read aloud, such as first thing in the morning, mealtimes, or at afternoon naps.

Connection

What the Research Says

The connection that comes when a parent and child spend time reading aloud was the central reason to read aloud for many of the mothers. This finding is unsurprising considering what the research says. Gurdon (2019) found that even the youngest children, specifically newborn babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Georgetown, feel the connection that comes from being read aloud to. In a 2017 study of 20 babies born between 26 and 34 weeks, parents were asked to make recordings of themselves reading aloud to their babies. The recordings were played and the babies observed for their

reaction to the reading. It was quickly determined that the babies loved listening to the voices of their parents. The doctors also observed that while the reading aloud excited the brain, it also calmed the body. The babies were more relaxed for up to an hour after the reading ended.

Gurdon (2019) also posited that reading aloud to a child brings the parent and child together and strengthens their relationship, something that is happening less and less as people become increasingly tied to technology. She discussed how a process happens in the brain called neural coupling, which leads to connection when a person reads aloud to a child. The mothers in this present study had experiences true to the research. They cited repeatedly how much they appreciated the “connection” that developed between themselves and their children as they read aloud to them.

Implications

The feeling of connection that develops between parent and child while reading aloud is something that should be more of a focus for helping provide parents with motivation to read aloud. The mothers in this study were quick to identify that feeling of connection as a great motivator for themselves. Therefore, this topic deserves more research. Parents are expressing fulfillment from this sense of connection, and if researchers can capitalize on this aspect of reading aloud, perhaps more parents can be induced to participate in reading aloud to their children. The idea of increased connection via reading aloud together is particularly important today because children are becoming increasingly reliant on technology, which has less of a sense of connection.

Supporting Individual Needs

What the Research Says

Multiple mothers in this study shared how reading aloud had benefited themselves and their children in emotional ways. For example, one mother felt that the experience of reading aloud had helped her child overcome trauma. Another mother talked about how reading aloud helped her stay connected to her son through her own difficult illness. Another mother shared how reading books together helped her son process the death of a loved one. Research has corroborated the idea that reading aloud together can reduce stress and even combat depression (Kumar et al., 2016; Xie et al., 2018). However, this is an area that could use greater focus. It is evident from the interviews in this study that the mothers involved found comfort in the process of reading aloud with their children and that the children experienced many of the same feelings.

Implications

One area that needs to be considered for further research is how reading aloud together can reduce stress for both parents and children. Evidence from the interviews in this study suggest that reading aloud is an emotionally calming experience. As such, it would help to have studies that could corroborate this idea. One way to do this could be to conduct a survey of a large pool of families who read aloud and ask them specific questions about emotional aspects of reading aloud with their children.

Impactful Books

What the Research Says

One book series with a significant influence on multiple mothers interviewed was the *Harry Potter* series. This series had influenced many of the mothers interviewed

when they were children and had played an important part in the read-aloud experience. Research has implied the accuracy of this idea. According to Dempster et al. (2016), many *Harry Potter* enthusiasts attribute the books as greatly impacting their attitudes about reading and their reading development. It was interesting to note the prevalence of comments from mothers about reading *Harry Potter* themselves and being excited to read it to their children or how meaningful it was to read the books with their children. This finding reflects Dempster et al.'s assertion that *Harry Potter* positively impacted the literacy of many children.

In addition to *Harry Potter*, several other series of books were cited by the interviewees as those remembered from their childhood and that they felt were impactful. These books include *Nancy Drew*, *The Hardy Boys*, and *The Baby-Sitters Club*. These juvenile book series are often considered less quality literature due to the formulaic nature of the story. Some would suggest these books play a less important part in developing literacy; however, this study's interviews imply otherwise. Those interviewed remembered reading these books with fondness and felt they contributed to their love of reading. The literature supports the idea of juvenile book series being impactful for children. MacLeod (1984) discussed why these book series affect readers so strongly. She suggests their predictability is appealing, in addition to the sense of adventure they provide and their happily-ever-after endings. The idea that life will turn out all right in the end draws the reader in and makes them want to continue reading.

Implications

The books that were impactful to those interviewed have implications regarding what books educators and policymakers should select when providing families with free

or low-cost books. Perhaps educators should not focus as much on finding the best literature, but instead search for books that will be enjoyed. This study suggests that if a book were to be donated to a family, the one that might have the highest impact is the illustrated version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. In the 20 interviews in this study, this book was by far the most cited as a favorite and impacting the enjoyment of reading.

Often, entities looking to donate books to families search for the perfect example of literature, one that will be the most educational. However, those books are not the ones the interviewees shared as being memorable or impactful in this study. This study has revealed the idea that finding pleasure in reading is the best motivator for parents reading aloud to their children; thus, the books educators choose to encourage them to read should be the books they enjoy. Far more focus should be placed on enjoying the reading experience.

Final Implications

The results of this study suggest that far more importance should be placed on helping children and their parents enjoy the reading process. It is evident from these interviews that the greatest determining factor for a parent to read aloud to a child was having a parent who enjoyed reading themselves. Developing interest in reading is often considered superfluous and may be overlooked. However, this study suggests that not only does a love of reading help a child academically, it also continues to help the next generation of students, because parents who enjoy reading are parents who read aloud to their own children. This study recommends more research into how to increase

enjoyment in reading. Although reading achievement is important, this study suggests it may be less important than cultivating a love of reading in a child.

APPENDIX A
Interview Protocol

Name:

Date:

My name is Heidi Grimshaw. I am a PhD student in Literacy at St. John's University.

The goal of this project is to understand more about the experience of reading aloud with children in grades kindergarten through second. The interview will take between 60 and 90 minutes to complete. It will be recorded. Prior to this interview, you were given a consent form to sign. I want to confirm that you give permission for this interview to be recorded. As an incentive to complete the interview a \$25 Amazon gift card will be emailed to you following the interview. What email address would you like that to be sent to? Do you have any questions before we start?

Let's get started.

-
1. First of all, can we begin with you telling me a little about yourself and your family?
 2. What memories do have about reading as a child? Did someone read to you?
 3. What books do you remember?
 4. What are your feelings about reading in general?
 5. How comfortable are you reading aloud?

6. What sort of impact have you noticed reading aloud have on your child academically? Socially?
7. Tell me about reading with your child.
8. Reading regularly to child is a time commitment. What motivates you to read regularly with your child?
9. What role do you see reading aloud playing in your child's reading or literacy development?
10. What factors inhibit reading aloud for you?
11. Where do you get the books you read with your child?
12. Tell me about an experience you have had reading aloud with your child.
13. Tell me about some of you and your child's favorite books and why they are your favorite.
14. Tell me some of the reason's you read aloud to your child.
15. What do you feel like led you to the practice of reading aloud to your child?

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the read aloud experience with children ages kindergarten through second grade. This study will be conducted by Heidi Grimshaw, Department of Education, St. John's University, as part of her doctoral dissertation work. Her faculty sponsor is Dr. Sampson, Department of Education.

If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to do the following: Take part in an interview to help the researcher understand more about the experience of reading aloud with a kindergarten to second grade child. Your interview answers to the interview questions will be recorded by video through Zoom. Participation in this interview will involve a minimum of sixty minutes of your time to complete. Upon completion of the interview a \$25 Amazon gift card will be emailed to you at the email address specified.

Federal regulations require that all subjects be informed of the availability of medical treatment or financial compensation in the event of physical injury resulting from participation in research. St. John's cannot provide either medical treatment or financial compensation for any physical injury resulting from your participation in this research project. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to the principal investigator or , alternatively, the Human Subjects Review Board (718-990-1440).

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the experience of the read aloud with children ages kindergarten through second grade more fully.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by removing your name and any identifiers will be replaced with a number. Consent forms will be stored in a separate location from the interview documentation and will be stored in a locked file. Your responses will be kept confidential with the following exception: the researcher is required by law to report to the appropriate authorities, suspicion of harm to yourself, to children, or to others. Your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher. Additionally, your responses will be transcribed (likely by a third party transcription service) and may be appended to the researcher's dissertation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. For interviews, you have the right to skip or not answer and questions you prefer not to answer.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact Heidi Grimshaw, heidi.grimshaw18@stjohns.edu, or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Sampson, sampsonm@stjohns.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

You have received a copy of this consent document to keep.

Agreement to Participate

Yes I agree to participate in the study described above

Subject's Signature

Date

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