

KEY INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND BEHAVIORS TO SUPPORT STUDENT
MOTIVATION AND LEARNING IN THE HIGH SCHOOL STAAR ENGLISH
REMEDIAL CLASSROOM

A Record of Study

by

CASSANDRA RIOS BAILEY

Submitted to the Graduate and Professional School of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Chair of Committee,
Co-Chair of Committee,
Committee Members,
Head of Department,

Sharon Matthews
Radhika Viruru
Monica Vasquez Neshyba
Fuhui Tong
Claire Katz

December 2022

Major Subject: Curriculum & Instruction

Copyright 2022 Cassandra Rios Bailey

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that support student motivation and learning in a high school STAAR English remedial program. Research was conducted within one summer school semester during 10-days of instruction and focused on high school students who *Did Not Meet Grade Level* through the STAAR End-of-Course English exam. This study utilized a qualitative methods approach. Teacher interviews, student surveys, and classroom observations were used to gather insight of how motivation was defined, characterized, supported, and not supported in the high school STAAR English remedial class. Data collection focused on identifying instructional strategies and behaviors used in the learning process to support student motivation. Data was analyzed after summer school concluded. Analysis of the data from the study showed that the teacher, as *someone*, and the classroom climate, as *something that*, played a key role to support students' motivation. Specific behaviors regarding the teachers' attitude, instruction, and classroom management were noted by students as *something that* supports motivation and learning, all which establish the classroom climate that a teacher creates. Ultimately, teachers implemented instructional strategies and behaviors that supported student learning and also created a classroom environment that developed student self-efficacy and motivation.

DEDICATION

This record of study is dedicated to my Mom and Dad.

I have not enough words to express my love and gratitude for you both. Thank you for being my rock and always being there to support me throughout all these years. As your little girl, “mi reina”, and your little dancer, I continue to look up into those stands to see your smiles and tears of happiness, to hear your applause and cheer, and to feel your love and prayers. Thank you for always standing at my side, believing in me, pushing me to be better, and inspiring me to continue moving forward through any obstacle and towards my dreams. You are the epitome of humility and strength. You taught me that there is no rush in life and that setbacks are comebacks. You kept going when times were against you and kept pushing through to show us the way. You are my beacon of strength, hope, and love, which guided me to achieve all that I have and all the more that is to come. Thank you both for teaching me patience, compassion, resiliency, and true leadership. This one’s for You!

Welcome to Aggieland!

I love you both, Always and Forever!

Con Amor Siempre.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One too many people deserve an abundant Thank You for supporting me in the start and through this journey I never imagined possible. First and foremost, Dr. Maria de Lourdes Vilorio. You were the answer to my whispered prayer. Thank you for your words that changed my entire world and for the courage to take the first step. Dr. Miguel Guajardo, Mr. Alberto Ibarra, and Gerardo Soto. Thank you for being incredible mentors to me as a novice teacher and supporting me in taking my first step.

To every single one of my friends, colleagues, and fellow administrators. Thank you for being my cheerleader along the way and always rekindling my spirit with, “You got this, Cass!” To Cohort VIII. I will forever hold a special place in my heart for our group. To Brandon, Durell, Criselda, and Joann. Thank you for your readiness and encouragement at all hours of the day.

A huge shoutout to every single one of my students for teaching me the importance of patience and the value of learning. This journey started because of you. Meza, for checking in and cheering me on since your 8th grade year, Dr. Miss Rios Bailey Did It! An abundance of thanks to all participants in my study for your time and welcoming me into your classroom. Thank you for sharing your unique experiences, perspectives, and approaches with me.

To Dr. Matthews and Dr. Viruru, thank you both for your continued patience, guidance, and support throughout these years. Mil Gracias for never giving up on me and challenging me beyond my own personal limits and expectations.

A Mi Familia: the Rios, Solis, and Baileys. Thank you for instilling the power of knowledge and the value of education in us. Family means the absolute world to me, and I thank each of you for always rooting me on. Your love, prayers, and support kept me going. I am looking forward to making up for lost time and creating many more memories with everyone.

To all my guardian angels, thank you for being at my side and listening to my prayers.

This one is for my fur babies: Pinkie Lynn, Scruffles, Shiloh, and Rizzo – more doggie walks are on the way! Thank you for being my pillow, my cuddles, and my reminder to get up and breathe. Shiloh and Rizzo, thank you for always laying at my side and waiting for me with snores and smiles. Those late-night worknights were always worth it as they were always filled with my favorite puppy-kisses and those little “Proud of you, Mom” moments.

My Lolo! I love you so much! I am so grateful and blessed to have you as my big brother. You have cheered me on, made me laugh, knocked sense into me, and protected me all along the way. With all of my heart, thank you for always being at my side, pushing me to be brave and take the next step. In whatever it is, it is always something that makes me a better person. I love you, Lolo! Dr. Dave, what can I say. You and me have had an incredible bond since childhood. Those days playing school in the garage really taught us well. From one Doctor to another, Cheers! Manny, my wingman, I cannot thank you enough for always being here for me. To my Aggie Cousins: I put a RING on it! Howdy! Gig ‘em! Whoop!

Ryan. I am here! You met me when I started this program, married me in the midst of this program, and now get to enjoy married life with me beyond this program. It was a long and winding road, but you believed in me and held my hand day in, day out. You continue to be a pillar of strength, hope, and love for me. Our crazy, beautiful journey continues, and I am looking forward to the hundreds of adventures that await. #BecomingBaileys

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

I DID IT! –CRB

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Contributors

This record of study was supervised by Committee Chair, Dr. Sharon Matthews, and Committee Co-Chair, Dr. Radhika Viruru, from Texas A&M University's Department of Teaching, Learning & Culture. Committee members included Dr. Monica Vasquez Neshyba, from the Department of Teaching, Learning & Culture, and Dr. Fuhui Tong, from the Department of Educational Psychology. All work completed for this record of study was completed independently by the student.

Funding Sources

No funding sources were used for this record of study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER I LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTION.....	1
The Context	1
National Context	2
Situational Context.....	6
The Problem	8
Relevant History of the Problem.....	9
Significance of the Problem.....	11
Research Questions	12
Personal Context	13
Researcher’s Roles and Personal Histories.....	13
Journey to the Problem	14
Significant Stakeholders.....	21
Important Terms.....	22
Closing Thoughts on Chapter 1	24
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP	26
Introduction	26
Relevant Historical Background.....	26
Alignment with Action Research Traditions.....	28
Theoretical or Conceptual Framework.....	29
Self-Efficacy Theory	30
Most Significant Research and Practice Studies.....	31
School Culture and Belonging	31
Classroom Climate, Quality Teacher-Student Relationships, and Student Engagement	33

Instructional Strategies to Support High School Student Motivation.....	35
Explicit Instruction	35
Think-Aloud Instruction	36
Differentiated Instruction.....	37
Cooperative Learning	38
Social-Emotional Learning	39
Closing Thoughts on Chapter 2	40
 CHAPTER III SOLUTION AND METHOD.....	 42
Proposed Solution	42
Outline of Proposed Solution	43
Justification of the Proposed Solution.....	44
Study Context and Participants.....	45
Proposed Research Paradigm	46
Justification of the Use of Instruments in Context.....	47
Data Analysis Strategy	48
Timeline.....	49
Reliability and Validity	51
Closing Thoughts on Chapter 3	52
 CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	 53
Introducing the Analysis	53
Understanding Motivation	56
Identifying Strategies and Behaviors that Support Motivation.....	58
Teachers Describe Ways to Support Student Motivation and Learning	60
Classroom Observations	60
Presentation of Data	63
Results of Research.....	63
Research Question #1	63
Research Question #2	68
Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #1	68
Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #2	72
Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #3	75
Teachers' Approach to Students	76
Teachers' Approach to Learning.....	78
Teachers' Approach to the Classroom.....	81
Research Question #3	84
Supporting Student Motivation through Praise	84
Supporting Student Motivation through Rewards	87
Supporting Student Motivation through Online Learning Games.....	90
Interaction Between Research and Context	92
How the Context Impacted the Results.....	92
How the Research Impacted the Context	95
Summary of Chapter 4.....	97

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION	99
Summary of Findings from Chapter 4	99
Discussion of Results Related to the Literature.....	99
Creating a Positive Classroom Climate	100
Instructional Strategies for STAAR English Courses	101
Discussion of Personal Lessons Learned	102
Implications for Practice	104
Connections to the Context.....	104
Connections to the Field of Study	105
Lessons Learned.....	107
Recommendations.....	109
Closing Thoughts.....	112
REFERENCES.....	114
APPENDIX A.....	127
APPENDIX B.....	128
APPENDIX C.....	129
APPENDIX D.....	130
APPENDIX E.....	131
APPENDIX F.....	132
APPENDIX G.....	134
APPENDIX H.....	135
APPENDIX I.....	136

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Number of schools in Border City school districts	6
2	Student population and demographics amongst Border City school districts	7
3	Proposed timeline of the researcher’s plan of action	50
4	Background experience and current teaching role of STAAR English teacher participants.....	54
5	Data sources and questions used to define motivation and characteristics of motivated students.....	57
6	Data sources and questions used to identify strategies and behaviors that support student motivation.....	59
7	Students’ definition of motivation	64
8	Characteristics and behaviors of motivated students as illustrated by students and teachers	66
9	Teacher participants’ experiences and description of student motivation in their high school STAAR English remedial class.....	67
10	Modeled instruction used by STAAR English teachers	69
11	Examples of questions teachers asked during instruction	75
12	Comments from teachers that do not support motivation and learning	77
13	Students identify distractions that do not support motivation in the classroom	82
14	New question types in the redesign of the STAAR exam	96
15	Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge	108

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1	STAAR Reading Strategies map (front page)	16
2	STAAR Reading Strategies map (back page).....	17
3	Color-coding methods used during DOL activities	70
4	Example of student work completed independently in class shows the use of test-taking strategies the teacher modeled.....	80
5	Example of student work showing his understanding of a compound sentence while also sharing a real-world experience from summer school	83
6	Motivational quotes students say to themselves	85

CHAPTER I

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTION

The Context

Since the implementation of standardized testing in the mid-19th century, school leaders and educators across the nation have explored innovative means to improve teaching, increase learning, and raise academic achievement in order to meet rising accountability measures in education. By the 20th century, the emphasis to meet state and federal accountability measures in education through the use of high-stakes testing not only impacted curriculum and instruction but also sparked a rift between students and their motivation to learn. According to a report from Amrein and Berliner (2003), students became less motivated to learn as a result of the pressures and consequences that came with high-stakes tests. In a more recent report, Nichols and Brewington (2020) suggested that, “tests and testing have undermined [student] motivation, interest, and enjoyment in learning” (p. 6), drawing attention to a problem that has persisted over time.

High-stakes tests are tests whose scores are used to make immediate and important decisions in education that directly impact teachers and students (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015) including, “placing students in academic tracks, retaining students in grade, or deciding high school graduation eligibility” (Moses & Nanna, 2007, p. 56). Currently, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) serves as a gatekeeper for students to progress through school and meet high school graduation requirements. Beginning at the 3rd grade, students in Texas are required to take the annual STAAR and demonstrate proficiency and growth in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students who receive a STAAR performance label of *Approaches Grade Level*, *Meets Grade Level*, or *Masters Grade Level*, as

specified by the State Board of Education, are eligible to proceed to subsequent grade levels whereas students who receive a STAAR performance label of *Did Not Meet Grade Level* are enrolled in STAAR remedial courses and provided additional tutoring and support (Texas Education Agency, 2021). Öqvuis & Malmström (2018), however, found that, “educational motivation declines after [students] transition to secondary education” (p. 155), affecting student learning and performance in the high school classroom.

Motivation influences student engagement, goals, and behaviors, all of which are essential to the learning process, educational outcomes, and academic achievement (Nayir, 2017; Öqvist & Malmström, 2018). As students move from one grade level to the next, motivation levels will vary between individuals as they are faced with challenges that can affect their level of motivation, such as creating positive relationships or meeting the demands of “cognitive, social, and academic tasks” (Koca, 2016, p. 12). Accordingly, teachers should first identify student motivation levels and then use motivational strategies and behaviors to support active, authentic engagement in the learning process (Nayir, 2017). When students are engaged in the learning process, certain emotional, behavioral, and cognitive behaviors are present that highlight a commitment to learning, support successful learning, and increase academic success (Nayir, 2017). Without engagement and motivation, high-quality curriculum and instruction will not support student success (Yilmaz, Sahin, & Turgut, 2017), and students will struggle to achieve academic success.

National Context

The 20th century brought great change to the American society and its schools. The use of standardized intelligence tests expanded into public schools and became a common practice in education to assess and categorize students at the elementary, junior high, and high school grade

levels (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015; Vinovskis, 2019). Furthermore, the population in America increased as a result of immigration, and the number of disadvantaged students, which included foreign language students and students living in poverty, impacted public schools (Vinovskis, 2019). Numerous disadvantaged students were inadequately prepared both academically and intellectually (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015; United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Vinovskis, 2019). Growing concerns with the quality of education in America prompted state and federal policymakers to provide public schools and disadvantaged students with more support, including, “additional federal school funding, more regulations, development of new tests, and increased research support” (Vinovskis, 2019, p. 28).

In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson signed the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which declared a national goal to provide educational opportunities of quality and equality to all children (Brenchley, 2015). ESEA provided additional funds and resources to school districts and disadvantaged students, including low-income and special education populations. Believing it would, “lever out poverty for children and families across the country” (Bishop & Jackson, 2015, p. 2), a deep dive into the education system shortly after indicated otherwise.

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* scrutinized the national education system for failing to prepare students with the necessary skills to succeed in college as well as the workforce. As countries around the world advanced with innovative developments, American students sat in classrooms and failed to acquire essential higher-order intellectual skills, including literacy, to develop the individual powers of mind and spirit to manage their lives and progress with an advancing society (United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The National

Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) believed that America lacked a rigorous curriculum, expectations for high student achievement, efficient use of time, and effective teachers in comparison to other nations, and findings called for attention to the way educational processes were organized in regards to content (basic purpose), expectations (high expectations), time and teaching (disciplined efforts). Nonetheless, ESEA had established a vision to promote quality and equity in public schools across the nation, and as a growing and competitive country, America was compelled to not trail behind in education.

Standards in education continued to increase amidst rising accountability measures, and the need to improve the quality of education steered the conversation between state and federal policymakers. In 1994, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was signed into law and focused on, “standards, assessments, [financial] flexibility, and accountability” (p. 10) to bring systemic reform to education in America (Superfine, 2005). By creating and aligning, “better curricula and instructional practices, standards, assessments, and opportunities for students to learn” (p. 16), *Goals 2000* anticipated to improve the quality and equity of education (Superfine, 2005). Many states, nonetheless, failed to comply or participate in *Goals 2000*, and by 1999, *Goals 2000* was dismissed by Congress and replaced with a new policy (Superfine, 2005).

In 2001, the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) required schools across the nation to, “demonstrate that all students, as well as various subgroups of students, [were] meeting adequate yearly progress [AYP]” (Von der Embse & Witmer, 2014, p. 132) through the use of high-stakes testing. An emphasis to increase students’ academic achievement took precedence in the classroom to meet AYP policies and transformed both teachers’ and students’ everyday experiences. As a result, NCLB policies narrowed the school curriculum and transformed classroom teaching and learning, gradually decreasing student motivation to learn new

knowledge and skills (Adler-Greene, 2019; Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Munter & Haines, 2019; Nichols & Brewington, 2020; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014).

The reauthorization of ESEA and NCLB continued to focus on improving the quality and equality of schools through the use of annual assessments. In December 2015, the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) was signed by President Barack Obama and is the nation's existing law in education committed to protecting and providing a fair and equitable, high-quality education for all students. With a, "clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., "A New Education Law", para. 4), ESSA utilized action and accountability to influence positive change, promote learning, and measure students' progress towards high academic standards. ESSA (2015) further encouraged the use of programs and, "strategies to enhance children's motivation to read and write and children's engagement in self-directed learning" (p. 136). Nevertheless, policies that stemmed from NCLB and ESSA continued to prompt school leaders and teachers to place an emphasis on high-stakes testing and develop innovative plans to meet state and federal policies in education.

The use of high-stakes testing and accountability measures in education were intended to, "motivate the unmotivated to learn" (p. 32) and improve the quality of education in America; on the contrary, students actually became less intrinsically motivated to learn (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Nichols & Brewington, 2020). The pressure and preparations of high-stakes testing hindered students from opportunities to become self-directed learners, create personal learning experiences, and engage in critical thinking by focusing on repetitive and routine practices to raise scores (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014). As a result, student motivation in the classroom declined over the years and impacted student learning and academic achievement.

Situational Context

Border City (pseudonym) is home to two school districts. Premier ISD (pseudonym) was established in 1882 and extends across the southern and central regions of the city. As Border City developed outward, Premier ISD became centralized and landlocked. Power ISD (pseudonym) was established in 1961 and took over newly developed areas of the city, building schools in areas that neighbor Premier ISD schools. As seen in Table 1, Power ISD expanded and became a local powerhouse, increasing its number of schools as it grew in population. Premier ISD, on the other hand, stood at a standstill and worked through setbacks of old Border City and poverty-driven communities.

Table 1
Number of schools in Border City school districts as of 2022.

School Type	Premier Independent School District	Power Independent School District
Elementary Schools	20	30
6 th grade Campus	0	1
Middle Schools	4	12
9 th grade Campus	0	4
High Schools	3	4
Early College Campus	1	0
Other: <i>non-traditional, discipline alternative</i>	2	1
Total Number of Schools:	30	52

The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) is an annual report from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that collects a wide range of information for each school and district in Texas, including student performance for various assessments and programs, all of which are disaggregated by student groups (Texas Education Agency, n. d., para. 1). As seen in Table 2, Premier ISD and Power ISD vary significantly in both student population and demographics. Power ISD nearly doubles the total student population of Premier ISD. While numbers in population vary significantly for various student groups, the EL student population between both

school districts is closely comparable. It is a sub-group that has increased over time in both school districts as Border City continues to grow in population and size. Additionally, both school districts host a large population of students from low-income families, including those from the colonias. Colonias are, “located within 150 miles of the Texas-Mexico border that [have] a majority population composed of individuals and families of low and very low income” (Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, n.d., para. 3). Students from the colonias are generally identified as Economically Disadvantaged and At-Risk of failing academically considering their socio-economic and living conditions.

Table 2

Student population and demographics amongst Border City school districts.

2019-20 Texas Academic Performance Report	Premier Independent School District	%	Power Independent School District	%
Total Students	23,665		42,923	
Economically Disadvantaged	22,827	96.5%	32,148	74.9%
English Learners (EL)	12,465	52.7%	14,216	33.1%
At-Risk	15,998	67.6%	22,684	52.8%
Title I	23,665	100%	42,433	98.9%

The large number of low-income students in both school districts has classified Premier ISD and Power ISD under Title I eligibility (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Title I, created under ESEA of the *Improving America’s School Act* and amended under ESSA, provides additional financial support to schools with, “high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, para. 1). Accordingly, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers continuously address curriculum and instruction in ways to increase student learning, improve teaching, and raise academic achievement as standards in education continue to increase.

In 2018, TEA introduced a new state accountability system in Texas in which a letter grade would be used to determine a district's and school's overall performance in three domains: (1) Student Achievement and graduation rates, (2) School Progress and academic growth, and (3) Closing the Gaps, which evaluates the academic performance of fourteen student groups (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Since the outset of Texas' new state accountability system, Premier ISD has received a B rating whereas Power ISD has received an A rating, continually meeting TEA's performance target year after year. Granted that Premier ISD and Power ISD are two very distinct school districts, one critical factor is common based on teachers' experiences: student motivation has decreased in the high school classroom and impacted teaching and learning.

The Problem

To ensure students are receiving an equitable, high-quality education and meeting state accountability measures, school leaders and teachers have narrowed today's curriculum (Nichols & Brewington, 2020; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014) and now, "teach to the test" (Koca, 2016), focusing instruction on test-taking skills and strategies while also using various forms of testing and data to create action plans to improve testing outcomes (Koca, 2016; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014). Using testing data to categorize and determine academic placement (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015; Vinovskis, 2019), students who received a STAAR performance label of *Did Not Meet Grade Level* are generally enrolled in a STAAR remedial course and encouraged to attend after-school tutorials to receive supplementary instruction and support specific to the STAAR test. Teachers of STAAR remedial courses re-teach concepts with a new or different approach, concentrating on test-taking skills and strategies in order to improve student performance. In many cases, teachers follow a curriculum that solely focuses on STAAR reading passages and test questions, which gives students the opportunity to

become familiar with the appearance of the test. Subsequently, school leaders, teachers, and students have become situated in a culture of high-stakes testing that the *No Child Left Behind Act* created and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* maintained.

Relevant History of the Problem

In the mid-1800s, policies in education were created to improve the quality of schools and raise academic achievement in order to keep up with an advancing and competitive society against other nations around the world. Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, implemented standardized testing in 1845 to measure learning and achievement and to, “ensure that educational access and student learning were equitable across school contexts” (Shelton & Brooks, 2019, p. 2). By 1867, the Department of Education was established, “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). However, the Soviet Union’s launch of *Sputnik* in 1957 changed the course to not only improve education in America, but to establish policies that would increase, strengthen, and advance education in competition with other countries.

In 1958, the *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) provided federal funds to schools, “to promote innovation in education” (Superfine, 2005, p. 14) for, “science, mathematics, and foreign language instruction” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). ESEA was established in 1965 and provided federal funding support towards disadvantaged students. In 1983, however, *A Nation at Risk* reported staggering numbers and statistics that indicated, “the American education system was inherently flawed” (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015, p. 44). Policies in education continued to be addressed, “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017). Thus, the use of high-stakes testing skyrocketed and was continuously amended to be, “more efficient, manageable, standardized, easily administered, objective, reliable, comparable, and inexpensive” (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015, p. 45).

Beginning with reading and mathematics as the foundation to determine an individual’s competency to progress through school, reading was recognized by researchers as a, “highly complex process” (p. 41), which made it difficult to identify and agree upon which aspects of reading to assess, as well as create a test that most suitably assessed and measured reading (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). Initially, standardized reading tests were subjective and shifted from reading aloud to silent reading and oral responses to written responses. These tedious, time-consuming testing practices, as well as questions over the “reliability of teachers’ grading practices” (p. 40), called for more efficient, objective results (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). Standardized tests shifted to multiple choice responses that were graded by hand up until 1931, after the Markograph, an electronic test scoring machine, was developed (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015).

Standardized testing is nothing new. The concept of uniform testing to recognize an individual’s level of cultural, intellectual, public, and social competency is believed to have stemmed from China as early as 2200 B.C. (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). Standardized testing in the U.S. began in the mid-1800s, but high-stakes testing and the use of numbers and data to classify and arrange students in schools, according to their level of knowledge and skills, started in the early 1900s (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). High-stakes testing has endured through years of change, and through change, three themes held true to the fundamental purpose of testing: (1) objectively assess an individual’s progress in learning through school, (2) provide efficient time and opportunity to competently complete and measure an individual’s knowledge

and skills, and (3) hold students and schools accountable for academic achievement and success (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). Today, policymakers in education continue to amend standardized reading tests in order to effectively and efficiently assess and measure students' fluency, comprehension, knowledge, and skills. As state academic standards continue to increase in Texas schools, teachers are prompted to teach to the test, focusing on repetitive and routine practices to raise scores, meet state and federal standards in education, and avoid consequences that come with *failing* or *low-performing* labels (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015; Munter & Haines, 2019; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014).

Significance of the Problem

Standards in education have increased over time to ensure student learning is progressing with an advancing society. Accordingly, high-stakes tests continue to assess student learning and measure student performance, and the use of scores to determine immediate and important decisions in education have impacted teachers and students directly (Huddleston & Rockwell, 2015). The pressures to meet state academic standards and the consequences that follow for not meeting state academic standards have driven teachers to teach to the test and focus on students whose test scores are just below passing standards as a means to raise test scores and improve academic achievement (Munter & Haines, 2019). As a result for many students, motivation has declined and impacted classroom instruction and learning, and the consequences for test scores labeled as *failing* or *low-performing* have impacted annual, end-of-year evaluations, overall school performance ratings, and federal funding (Munter & Haines, 2019).

Motivation is a critical component for education, learning, and performance (Yilmaz, Sahin, & Turgut, 2017), yet student motivation continues to decline in classrooms across the nation. Nonetheless, teachers strive to increase academic achievement, prepare students for

higher education, and encourage a desire to learn more (Pless & Katznelson, 2019). School leaders and teachers continue to explore ways to increase learning, support student motivation, and prepare students with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in college and the workforce. In order to continue providing quality and equitable educational opportunities for all students, school leaders and teachers need to find ways to support motivation as a primary approach to improve student learning and academic achievement. I embarked on a study to identify how ELAR (English, Language Arts, and Reading) teachers support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom in an effort to address this problem and spark meaningful conversations and action between school leaders and teachers.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that supported student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. Teacher interviews, student survey responses, and classroom observations were used to explore how motivation was defined, recognize characteristics of motivated and unmotivated students, and identify instructional strategies and behaviors that high school STAAR English teachers implemented in the classroom to support student motivation and learning. I sought to answer the following three essential research questions:

- (1) How do teachers and students define motivation? What do teachers and students identify as characteristics of motivated students?
- (2) What strategies do high school teachers implement to support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom? What behaviors do teachers and students identify that increase student motivation?
- (3) How do teachers describe ways to support student motivation to improve learning?

Personal Context

Researcher's Roles and Personal Histories

In 2008, I graduated from a university in Texas with a Bachelor's degree in Dance and a Minor in Communication Studies. During my final semester in college, I attended my university's teacher job fair, scheduled an interview at a major city in Texas, and was unexpectedly offered a high school teaching position on-the-spot. I completed five years as a dance team director and speech communications teacher before deciding to return to my hometown of Border City to be closer to family and continue my career in education. I challenged the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) exam for ELAR, a content area that I enjoyed most during my middle and high school days, and successfully *Passed*. I submitted my application to both school districts in Border City and was offered an 8th grade ELAR teaching position, where STAAR is used to assess students and hold schools accountable for meeting state academic standards, at unknowingly, one of the three lowest performing schools in the city. Yellow Middle School (pseudonym), located in Premier ISD in south Border City, had just been recognized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as an improvement required campus for failing to meet the state's academic standards, which also made front page news in our local newspaper. With limited knowledge of the ELAR curriculum and STAAR, I walked into the classroom ready to meet the challenges that would come my way.

During my four years working for Premier ISD, I decided to go back to college and complete my graduate degree. In December 2017, I graduated from my hometown's university with a Master degree in Educational Administration. During my hooding and commencement ceremonies, I was filled much pride and happiness because I was a certified administrator, and I had been accepted into Texas A&M Online EdD in Curriculum & Instruction program. I was

ready and excited for the journey ahead of me because I knew it was going to be filled with so many new learning experiences and opportunities to support others in education.

Journey to the Problem

Border City is located in the southern region of Texas overlooking the Rio Grande. A neighbor to Mexico, Border City is a blend of two cultures, embracing Mexican-American histories and traditions. Accordingly, two languages can be observed and listened to around the city, and for many people in Border City, Spanish is the primary way to communicate. During my first-year teaching in the ELAR classroom, I faced the daily challenges of working with a majority of English Learners (EL) to (1) develop knowledge and skills in reading and writing, (2) measure at or exceed grade-level curricular and STAAR performance standards, and (3) increase motivation to learn new knowledge and skills.

Within a few months into the school year, I realized that several of my students' families were natives of, lived in, and/or worked in Mexico. Aspiring to provide for their families, some of my students attended school in the U.S. to earn a high-quality education, living with friends or family members other than their own mother and father. I further realized that several of my students' parents were unable to fully or effectively support their child's education. During teacher-parent conferences, I learned that some parents did not have a high school diploma and/or worked multiple low-income jobs to provide for their household. The distance created between families and lack of support or guidance affected student learning and motivation in the classroom. The instruction I was providing was not enough to support my students' learning or motivational needs. I faced these realities my first-year teaching in Border City, so finding ways to increase student learning and motivation became a challenge I continuously strive to overcome. Thus, my resilience for research springs.

As I previously shared, I am not a reading major nor specialist. This is important to highlight because when I first started teaching ELAR, I had no knowledge of how to provide instruction in Reading nor how to support struggling readers. I do not like to fail, however, and I did not want to fail my students. During my first semester in the ELAR classroom, I realized that a majority of my students were EL and At-Risk students, and with no easy-to-read handbook, every moment in the classroom was a trial-and-error learning experience to grow. I spent countless hours reaching out to mentors (including my *Mom*, a former elementary school teacher of 33-years who specialized in Reading), researching the internet, implementing new methods of instruction, and creating new resources to help my students improve reading and writing skills.

In my second year at Yellow Middle School, I created a *STAAR Reading Strategies Map*, a one-page, front/back graphic organizer that included 10 steps for students to practice while working through STAAR reading passages and questions (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). This resource was created as a tool for my EL students who had been struggling with reading comprehension and test-taking skills throughout the semester. The purpose for creating and implementing the *STAAR Reading Strategies Map* was to support my students step-by-step through the reading process, build comprehension, and develop effective thinking skills. When I first implemented the *STAAR Reading Strategies Map* in my classes, I modeled each step along with my students. As the semester continued, my students eventually worked through each step and completed each strategy along with their cooperative learning group. This resource was recognized by school leaders, and it became our school's reading initiative that school year. Slowly but surely, me and my students were making progress in the Reading classroom and showing an increase in scores. My students were not necessarily meeting passing standards on the state assessment, but they were showing academic growth in reading.


Figure 1

STAAR Reading Strategies map (front page). A graphic organizer created by Cassandra Rios Bailey that included 10 steps for students to practice while working through STAAR reading passages and test questions.

STAAR READING STRATEGIES

1 Getting Started!

Take a quick, visual snapshot of what you are about to read.
Skim through the passage and identify Text Features:




- 1) Title (Heading) & Author
- 2) Sub-Titles (Sub-Headings)
- 3) Side-Bars (Illustrations, Captions, Diagrams)
- 4) Bullet Lists or Numbered Lists
- 5) Vocabulary - **bold**, *italic*, underline words



2 Ask Yourself:

WHAT GENRE OF LITERATURE AM I ABOUT TO READ?
HOW DO I KNOW?


<i>Fictional Narrative (myth)</i>	<i>Non-Fictional Narrative (memoir)</i>
<i>Persuasive</i>	<i>Informational</i>
<i>Procedural (how to)</i>	<i>Expository (explain)</i>
<i>Drama (play)</i>	<i>Speech</i>
<i>Poetry</i>	



Would you watch a movie without seeing its trailer beforehand or hearing anything about it?
*Probably Not! So then, why should we read without knowing what we are going to read about?
Let's get our questions to act as a "teaser" of what we are about to read and why we need to read!
They will help create images in our mind that will begin to connect like a puzzle as we are reading.*




3 Work Backwards!

 The passage you are about to read may seem lengthy and tedious, but our goal is to answer as many questions correctly so we can achieve a successful score.
Preview selection questions first to set a purpose for reading.


Read the question → Breakdown the question → Highlight Key Words
Who? What? Where (line or paragraph)? Selection vocabulary? Literary elements? STAAR terms?
As you are reading, key words you identified will click* in your brain; make a side note to find your answer quicker.


We will now move along and in to Read, Respond, & Justify Strategies.


As in Math, you have to show your work to illustrate and prove how you reached your answer;
in Reading we are going to show and explain how we reached our conclusion.





3 Reading RULES!

 **Read** a CHUNK at a time. (*Paragraph by Paragraph; Piece by Piece; Section by Section*). Break apart and analyze each CHUNK so you don't overload or overwhelm your brain with so much information.

 **Underline** [CIRCLE/HIGHLIGHT/ANNOTATE] important words only: names, places, numbers (*dates, time, percent, money*) and visual cues: •bullet points, "quotes", (parenthesis), graphs, illustrations, etc.

 **Look-Up** unknown or unfamiliar words (words you *do not know* or *think you may know*) using context clues (around), a Dictionary to define a word and a Thesaurus to replace a word with a synonym.

 **Express in Five** words or less to describe the main idea of the paragraph. *What would I title this paragraph?* Identify the Topic Sentence and pull out the strongest word(s) that describe the BIG picture.

 **Summarize** everything you just comprehended and analyzed. Synthesize and connect central ideas and important information. *What did I just read? What is the whole passage about? Describe the story in one BIG PICTURE.*

BME Strategy = BEGINNING + MIDDLE + END = SUMMARY
SWBSTF Strategy = SOMEBODY WANTED BUT SO THEN FINALLY
PLOT Diagram= RISING ACTION, CONFLICT, CLIMAX, FALLING ACTION, RESOLUTION

Created by Cassandra Rios


Figure 2

STAAR Reading Strategies map (back page). A graphic organizer created by Cassandra Rios Bailey that included 10 steps for students to practice while working through STAAR reading passages and test questions.


STAAR READING STRATEGIES

Note Taking Strategies

- 1) DO NOT GET HIGHLIGHTER HAPPY! Draw attention to important words only.
- 2) AVOID MORE SENTENCE READING! Jot Down Key Points and Words of the Paragraph.
- 3) Make Personal, Text-to-Text Connections. Paraphrase information into your own words.
- 4) Ask yourself: Which one of the five textual structures was used to organize the information?
Cause/Effect, Chronological Order (Timeline), Sequence (Step by Step), Compare/Contrast, Problem/Solution, Outline
- 5) Draw a visual, thinking map, create a graphic organizer, or organize the information using an outline.
[anchor chart, bubble map, circle map, fishbone, sequencing map, story map, T-chart, timeline, TOPCATT, tree map, Venn diagram]



4 Solve the Mystery!



- 1) Work with the **SIMPLE** Questions first... because your mind is running with fresh information and details; and you don't want to waste your testing time limit focused on challenging questions.

If you read the question and answer choices, and are able to answer at first read, then it is considered **EASY**. Try to answer the question before looking at the answers to see if your response is provided as an answer choice.
- 2) ...Then Work with **TOUGH** Questions
If you read the question and answer choices, and cannot answer at first read, then skip the question and come back to it later.


Process of Elimination

Review all four answer choices before eliminating any wrong answers. If two answer choices sound correct, use textual evidence to support the best answer.
CLUE: Look closely at every single word (*noun, verb/action word*) within the answer choice.

✗ ✗ ✔ ✗
(a) (b) (c) (d)


Justify Your Answer

Support your answer choice using textual evidence. Read the sentence(s) before, within, and after. Note it in the space provided.




Why is your answer choice, the best answer choice? Where in the passage is your answer strongly supported?

JUSTIFICATION CODES


• Maybe, Possibly, Sounds Correct, True		¶ Paragraph Number
WI-Wrong Information (<i>false, incorrect, not true, opposite</i>)		BME-Beginning Middle End (<i>summary</i>)
NM-Never Mentioned (<i>no evidence, proof, support</i>)		MI-Missing Information
NQV-Nada Que Ver (<i>nothing to do with the text</i>)		TMI-Too Much Information

5 Double Check Your Work

Review the question with the answer choice you selected – *Is there a valid connection?*
Use your “Justify Your Answer” Note – *Does my justification support my response?*
Be confident with your answer choices and make sure all questions are complete and answered.




6 Bubble In

<table style="border: none;"><tr><td style="padding: 0 5px;">a</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">b</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">c</td><td style="padding: 0 5px;">d</td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table> 	a	b	c	d	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<p>Transfer your responses to your answer document at the closing of each completed reading selection, to keep the scantron clean, <i>in case you have to change any of your answers</i>. Do not play HIDE and SEEK with PATTERNS or SHAPES! HIDE: you second guess yourself and force yourself to break a pattern and change your answer. SEEK: you purposefully look to make a particular shape or create a code. Check that your answer document is complete and all questions are bubbled in darkly and neatly.</p>
a	b	c	d																		
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																		
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																		
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																		
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>																		

TEST COMPLETED!

You have now finished your test! Raise your hand to hand in your test documents.
Read a book or put your head down. Be respectful of others and make sure not to communicate with anyone until everybody has finished testing. **BEST OF LUCK!**



Created by Cassandra Rios

After two years, I transferred to Yellow Middle School's feeder school, which was also a low-performing campus. I continued recognizing my students' learning abilities, attending curriculum and instruction trainings, and creating supplementary resources to support diverse learner needs. Much of what I was creating for my students was recognized by school leaders and introduced to ELAR teachers at my campus for consideration in the classroom. I, however, was not getting the same results. My test scores were neither increasing nor decreasing, so I continued to revise my resources for my students. In 2018, I accepted the ELAR Master Teacher position for English II and worked alongside my colleagues to create lessons and activities that would hopefully help our students meet state academic standards. That school year, TEA data showed a remarkable increase in test scores for our content area. We had increased by 8% compared to the prior year and were the only school in our district to demonstrate such growth. There was much to celebrate, but after four years teaching for Premier ISD, it was time for a change, which brings me to the present.

Nearly 20 years after my high school graduation, I was thrilled to return to my old stomping grounds and to an environment I was once familiar with. Gold High School (pseudonym) is a top-performing high school located in Power ISD in north Border City and recognized as a campus that excels in numerous academic and extracurricular areas. I was hired as an ELAR teacher and sponsor of a nationally ranked cheer program. Unfortunately, my experiences during the first semester were not what I expected. I was in a period of too much transition and change, and I could not get a firm grasp on this new world. Nevertheless, it was a wake-up call for me as a teacher and doctoral student. From one district in the south to another district in the north, my students were not very different from each other. Socio-economically and academically, there were contrasts, but one factor bridged the students together from one end

of Border City to another: motivation was low in my high school STAAR English remedial classroom.

The motivation for high school students to walk into the STAAR English remedial classroom ready to learn new knowledge, practice new skills, create new experiences, and prepare for the STAAR exam were low. I had a tough time motivating many of my students no matter what strategies or resources I implemented to supplement instruction. My apprehensions increased day-by-day because I knew this group of students were in my class for the entire school year, and I did not want to fail as a new teacher to Gold High School. Through research towards my ROS on student motivation, I learned about the significance of establishing a positive classroom environment and building effective teacher-student relationships. These were two instructional approaches I had never intentionally focused on as I planned and prepared my daily lessons. By the middle of the semester, I took a different approach with my students in a way that I hoped would support their motivational needs. I became more mindful of how I communicated with my students in order to build relationships based not only on academic support, but social and emotional support as well. I noticed a change in my classroom as many of my students appeared more communicative with me and more motivated to learn and perform well on various assignments and assessments. The school year, however, was cut short, and I was unable to determine whether or not my students' learning was impacted.

In March 2020, COVID-19 rapidly spread around the globe, and the traditional classroom suddenly transformed, impacting the final months of the school year. Protective action plans were implemented worldwide to stop the spread of COVID-19, some of which included facial coverings, social distancing guidelines, and stay home policies. School closures extended week after week to keep people safe as COVID-19 numbers continued to rapidly increase. By mid-

April, Governor Greg Abbott closed all schools in Texas for the remainder of the school year. Alternatively, technology provided a way to complete the academic school year as remote online classrooms became the central hub to continue instruction and learning from home throughout the pandemic. Teachers and students shifted from the traditional, in-person classroom and prepared for virtual schooling. Teachers planned for innovative ways to teach, engage, and motivate students online, using various online educational platforms and approaches to support student learning, but faced numerous obstacles in the final weeks of the semester. The lack of resources, including access to a reliable computer and Wi-Fi, forced teachers and students to finish the semester to the best of their ability.

Remote online classrooms continued the following academic school year. Every student in the district was provided with a personal Chromebook and the district improved internet Wi-fi services. Nevertheless, teachers noticed major declines in student motivation and performance. Students were not logging in to class, completing assignments, or staying awake during remote instruction. Chromebooks were being used for entertainment purposes instead of educational purposes, so students were not paying attention or participating in discussions. Students at the elementary and secondary grade levels sat in front of their computer for hours, virtually attending school to receive instruction and complete coursework with limited to no social interaction with their peers.

In August 2021, school leaders prepared to re-open schools and return for in-person instruction. Teachers and students returned to the classroom with much concern of catching and/or spreading COVID-19 even though protective action plans were enforced by the district. Schools continued to enforce facial coverings and social distancing guidelines, as well as the use of desk shields at every desk. As teachers and students returned to the classroom, different

instructional approaches were implemented by teachers to engage students in learning. Some teachers continued the use of online educational platforms while other teachers returned to traditional instruction. Within the first few weeks of the school year, teachers noted an increase in student absences and behavior problems, in addition to greater declines in student motivation and performance, which made student engagement, learning, and instruction in the high school classroom a recurrent difficulty for teachers to address.

The experiences I have shared have led me to new insight, conversations, action, and literature to understand how motivation impacts student learning and academic achievement. Throughout my research, I hope to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that support student motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. It is a journey that continues today that I anticipate to highlight throughout my ROS.

Significant Stakeholders

The most significant stakeholders to the research are the high school ELAR teachers who have shared their experiences, participated in observations, and provided feedback throughout the research process. High school ELAR teachers informed the research by reflecting on specific strategies and behaviors that were implemented in the STAAR English remedial classroom to support student motivation and learning. By identifying characteristics of motivated and unmotivated students, high school ELAR teachers provided insight for others to recognize in a way where student motivation and learning will continue to be supported as a means to improve learning and academic outcomes.

Other stakeholders include school administrators and district leaders for Curriculum and Instruction, Professional and Staff Development, and Secondary Education. Since the knowledge and expertise of district leaders are used to prepare and support school leaders and teachers, the

insight provided will be valuable to address motivational strategies within curriculum and instruction for the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. Accordingly, district leaders, school leaders, and teachers will have opportunities to discuss and collaborate with one another to incorporate effective motivational strategies into the district's Scope & Sequence. High school teachers around the district will have a better understanding of how to support student motivation in the classroom and be better prepared to implement strategies and behaviors that improve motivation and learning.

The ultimate stakeholders of this research are students enrolled in high school STAAR English remedial courses. The pressures and consequences that come with high stakes testing, along with a pandemic that swept through the nation, have impacted student motivation and learning more now than ever. The “cognitive, social, and academic” (Koca, 2016, p. 12) challenges that high school students face need to be supported within the school setting to ensure successful learning takes place. By providing teachers with effective instructional strategies and behaviors to support student motivation, teachers can improve motivation and learning for high school students, transform everyday classroom experiences, and increase academic achievement.

Important Terms

Self-efficacy— “In an academic context, self-efficacy is a self-regulatory mechanism that has a major impact on the pupils’ academic behavior, as it determines [an individual’s] perception of his or her own ability to learn and carry out a given task, a key variable for the student’s ability to adapt to future situations” (Supervía & Robres, 2021, p.2).

Student motivation— “viewed as ‘goals, energy, drive and direction and having a reason to do what they do and do it to the best of their abilities” (Spielhofer, Walker, Gagg, Schagen, & O’Donnell, 2007, p. 13; as cited in Flitcroft & Woods, 2018, p. 113).

Extrinsic motivation— “behavior is governed by gaining external rewards, praise, and acceptance from others and by avoiding loss or punitive consequences” (Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, & Farley-Ripple, 2017, p. 10). According to Koca (2016), “a student who is extrinsically motivated commits to a task in order to receive a reward from a source external to him or herself such as from the teacher” (p. 5).

Intrinsic motivation— “describes individuals’ desire to engage in activities simply for the sake of the engagement because they find the activities interesting and enjoyable” (Fan & Williams, 2018, p. 2). According to Koca (2016), “a student who is intrinsically motivated commits him or herself to a task for its own sake, that is, for the enjoyment of it, the learning it allows, and for a feeling of accomplishment” (p. 5).

School belonging— “school-based relationships and experiences, student-teacher relationships, and students’ general feelings about school as a whole” (Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodrick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018, p. 2).

School culture— “generally referring to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions” (Melesse & Molla, 2018, p. 191). According to Melesse and Molla (2018), school culture includes the shared vision, mission, and values that hold the school together.

Classroom climate— “the social, the emotional, and the physical aspect of the classroom. The classroom climate influences student growth and behavior. A positive classroom climate feels safe, respectful, welcoming and supportive of student learning. For a good classroom climate, it is also important to promote positive relationships” (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016, p. 166). “Classroom climate centers on the interactions between teachers and students, showing the importance of teacher language and interactions with students in the class” (Flitcroft & Woods, 2018, p. 114).

Instructional strategies— “methods used by a teacher, methods involved in the student learning process and conferring specific learning goals” (Celik & Bay, 2021, p. 441).

Instructional behaviors— “teachers' (and students') role in the learning process that involves the degree to which teachers display instructional clarity to achieve the learning goal, manage classrooms effectively to minimize disruptions and misbehaviors and maximize students' opportunity to learn, and distribute control over students' learning activities” (Maulana, Opendakker, & Bosker, 2016, p. 148).

Student engagement— “a process that facilitates learning and increases academic success” (Nayir, 2017, p. 60). According to Nayir (2017), a student who is actively engaged: (1) dedicates and focuses on assignments and subjects; (2) performs with enthusiasm and care during the learning process; (3) continues to study even when faced with challenges, and (4) attributes personal value and meaning to assignments and learning.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter 1

The implementation of standardized, high-stakes testing has changed the way teachers approach curriculum and instruction, narrowed the curriculum, and impacted student motivation. The pressures to meet state and federal accountability measures in education decreased student motivation, when initially, high-stakes tests were aimed to motivate the unmotivated and improve the quality of education (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Nichols & Brewington, 2020). Currently, the STAAR exam is used to assess student proficiency in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies. By the time many students get to high school, motivation has declined and affected their learning and performance in the high school classroom.

To improve student learning and academic achievement in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom, teachers need to have the knowledge and resources to support

motivation and learning. Effective strategies need to be addressed in the curriculum and implemented during instruction to support student motivation and learning. Identifying instructional strategies and behaviors that support student motivation and learning can be a challenge for teachers to recognize; therefore, professional development, conversations, classroom observations, and mentoring opportunities to support student motivation in the high school classroom need to occur so that effective action plans, instructional strategies, and behaviors can be developed and implemented in the classroom.

In this study, I explored strategies and behaviors ELAR teachers implemented to support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. After gathering feedback and experiences from high school ELAR teachers and students, I used qualitative data to identify characteristics of motivated and unmotivated students, as well as strategies and behaviors that supported and did not support student motivation and learning. In Chapter 2, I will introduce the significance of student motivation in education and factors that impact student learning and academic achievement. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the proposed solution and methods. In Chapter 4, I will examine the analysis and results. In Chapter 5, I will share conclusions to the research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction

Motivation influences, “what, when, and how we learn” (Vedder-Weiss and Fortus, 2013, p. 952), essentially impacting the learning process, academic achievement, and educational outcomes (Nayir, 2017; Öqvist & Malmström, 2018). Motivation in the high school classroom has declined, decreased students’ desire to learn, and impacted academic achievement through the years of high-stakes testing (Adler-Greene, 2019; Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Munter & Haines, 2019; Nichols & Brewington, 2020; Öqvist & Malmström, 2018; Watson, Johanson, Loder, & Dankiw, 2014). In this chapter, I reviewed the prior literature to discuss the impact rising accountability measures and high-stakes testing have had on decreasing motivation for high school students in the STAAR English remedial classroom. I defined student motivation and described two types of motivation that drive learning. I will then provide an overview of factors and instructional strategies for high school teachers to consider in the classroom to support student motivation and learning.

Relevant Historical Background

Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, students across the nation have been exposed to a groundbreaking number of high-stakes testing (Nichols & Berliner, 2008) that include ELAR, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies. According to Cavendish, Marquez, Roberts, Suarez, and Lima (2017), “testing accountability systems, developed under [NCLB], were based on assumptions that high-stakes assessments modeled on state [academic] standards would lead to improved academic performance and increased graduation rates” (p. 1). By raising state academic standards measured through quantifiable measures of progress, policymakers

believed that education would improve and schools would be motivated to continue improving (Koca, 2016). The demands of high-stakes testing, however, “actually decrease[d] student motivation” (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Nichols & Brewington, 2020) and led students into an era of, “learning through standards and accountability” (Sloane & Kelly, 2003), a policy that continues to this day to promote “educational excellence and equity” in our schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2019) as various district and state assessments appear more commonly throughout the curriculum.

As early as 1st grade, teachers begin to prepare students to meet state academic standards for high-stakes testing. Formative classroom assessments and district checkpoints, such as Curriculum Based Assessments (CBAs) and Benchmarks, are used by teachers and school leaders to assess student learning, gather data, plan curriculum and instruction, and prepare students for the annual end-of-year STAAR exam, which begins in 3rd grade. Students that receive a STAAR performance label of *Approaches*, *Meets*, or *Masters* are eligible to proceed to subsequent grade levels, whereas students who receive a STAAR performance label of *Did Not Meet Grade Level* are enrolled in STAAR remedial courses (Texas Education Agency, 2021) and provided additional instruction and support to improve scores and learner outcomes. For a number of high school students enrolled in the STAAR English remedial course, students have struggled with the higher-level reading comprehension skills required in the ELAR content area and continue to fail the STAAR English exam year after year, ultimately creating high school classrooms filled with students losing motivation to learn.

The ELAR content area serves as a core subject in education that students begin taking at the elementary grade level in order to develop their language skills as they progress through school. Language teaching for ELAR, “occurs through two basic comprehension-based skills

which are listening and reading and two production-based skills which are speaking and writing” (Süğümlü, Mutlu, & Çinpola, 2019, p. 487). The practice and development of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills throughout school is essential for students to function effectively in other areas of school and life. Defined by Varuzza, Sinatra, Eschenauer, and Blake (2014), reading motivation is, “an individual student’s excitement, enjoyment, and desire to read as well as the ability to remain on task when assigned specific readings” (p. 109), but as students move up in grade level, positive attitudes and motivation towards reading gradually decrease and diminish, affecting one’s choice, “to read or not to read” (p. 109). Additionally, as the grade level increases, “writing motivation scores decrease” (Süğümlü, Mutlu, & Çinpolat, 2019, p. 490) even though writing skills, “support students in [explaining and] expanding their thoughts, regulating their knowledge, using the language, enriching their intelligence and improving their mental lexicon by being in touch with mental processes” (p. 487). By the time students have transitioned into high school, a time when identities are developed and cognitive responses to education are shaped, the motivation to learn has declined (Öqvist and Malmström, 2018) and affected teaching and learning experiences, as well as academic outcomes.

Alignment with Action Research Traditions

Action research is a, “form of practitioner research into a practice problem” that involves the participant in the simultaneous process of, “taking action with the intention of improving a situation” (Godfrey 2020, p. 375). According to Herr and Anderson (2015), the “research participants themselves either are in control of the research or are participants in the design and methodology of the research” (p. 1), and use a narrative style to, “reflect on the research process as well as the findings” (p. 2). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described action research participants as facilitating change by experimenting with a problem, “while documenting what happens when

trying a new strategy or intervention” over time (p. 4). With motivation as a problem in the high school STAAR English remedial course, the ELAR teacher for this study will identify characteristics of motivated and unmotivated students in their classroom and then describe ways they support student motivation and learning. The ELAR teacher will identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that were implemented in their classroom that supported student motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial course.

Motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom is low. For many students enrolled in a high school STAAR English remedial course, individuals have struggled over time to master higher-level reading comprehension skills that include compare and contrast, evaluate and analyze, judge and interpret, making inferences, and using text evident to support their thinking (Ness, 2018). As a result, students continue to fail the STAAR English exam year-after-year and are enrolled in remedial courses to improve academic outcomes; nonetheless, the motivation to learn declines. An action research and case study research approach were used in this record of study to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that support student motivation and learning, as well as facilitate change for students in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom as ELAR teachers collaborate and address a problem (Herr & Anderson, 2015), experiment and document, “what happens when trying a new strategy or intervention” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 4).

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

Motivation is viewed as the goals, energy, inner drive, direction, and persistence that give individuals a reason to successfully achieve a goal or complete a task to the best of their abilities (Flitcroft & Woods, 2018; Nagler, 2016). In education, heightened levels of motivation, “play a very important role in helping students become involved in academic activities” (p. 112),

influencing the choices, effort, and energy to pursue an academic goal or task (Yilmaz, Sahin, & Turgut, 2017) with “hope and resilience” (Vosoogh, Tavakolizadeh, & Pakdaman, 2021, p. 225) through the learning process to achieve academic success.

Two distinct types of motivation inform one’s attitude and behavior towards any given subject: *extrinsic motivation* and *intrinsic motivation*. When students are extrinsically motivated, behaviors are driven, “by gaining external rewards, praise, and acceptance from others and by avoiding loss or punitive consequences” (Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, Farley-Ripple, 2017, p. 10). Individuals who are extrinsically motivated do not have a, “direct interest in what is taught” (Moldovan, 2014, p. 204) but are simply driven by the reward at hand for positive learning outcomes or achievements. On the other hand, students who are intrinsically motivated engage in behaviors driven by a direct interest and desire to learn, acquire knowledge, and know much more (Moldovan, 2014) or simply because, “they find the activities interesting and enjoyable” (Fan & Williams, 2018, p. 2). For these key differences in motivation, teachers should identify how motivation will be supported in the classroom; therefore, the following factors should be considered to support student motivation and learning.

Self-Efficacy Theory

This study uses Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory as the theoretical framework to understand the concept of student motivation. Self-efficacy impacts students’ motivation and academic behavior as it, “determines the students’ perception of his or her own ability to learn and carry out a given task” (Supervía & Robres, 2021, p.2). When a student, “believe[s] in their abilities and capabilities, they have a double motivation to continue and accomplish their tasks and goals” (Vosoogh, Tavakilizadeh, and Pakdaman, 2021, p. 227). Supervía and Robres (2021) noted that academic self-efficacy can predict a student’s interest for learning, engagement,

commitment, perseverance, motivation, academic satisfaction, and wellbeing, further stating that, “Students with high levels of self-efficacy perceive school tasks as a challenge that they face confidently, armed with their knowledge and skills, resulting in a more responsible and efficient attitude towards school tasks,” (p.2). According to Ortlieb and Schatz (2020), as students develop their level of self-efficacy, “a diverse array of literacy skills also improve” (p. 736) including reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, fluency development, and writing achievement.

To support student self-efficacy in the classroom, McCabe (2006) indicated that the learner needs to be aware of their learning progress and provided with teacher feedback that convinces students of their capability to learn and perform well. The use of specific, appropriate, and credible clues, cues, hints, reminders, or praise should “draw attention to evidence of success” (McCabe, 2006, p. 254). Nevertheless, Ortlieb and Schatz (2020) argued that teachers cannot only *tell* students they can achieve but must design and, “craft environments where success is both attainable and sought after” (p. 737). These classroom environments should include vicarious experiences (*teacher and peer modeling*), performance accomplishments (*student mastery experiences*), verbal persuasion (*attribution, calibrated feedback*), and physiological and affective states (*feeling, student agency*), all of which, when effectively applied in the classroom, establish ongoing support that helps develop student self-efficacy (McCabe, 2006; Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020) and student motivation.

Most Significant Research and Practice Studies

School Culture and Belonging

As previously discussed, Ortlieb and Schatz (2020) argued that environments where success is pursued and desired must be created for student motivation and learning to exist.

Therefore, the culture of a school plays an important factor to support student motivation as it will lay the groundwork for how students perceive learning and success. School culture is understood as the, “vision, mission, and values” (Melesse & Molla, 2018, p. 191) of a school that have been created, shared, learned, and transferred (Özgenel, 2020) as a means to “shape and influence” (Melesse & Molla, 2018, p. 191) a group or organization, in this case, the school. In general, a school’s culture refers to the traditions, routines, and practices within the organization that are based on the shared beliefs, goals, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school will function (Melesse & Molla, 2018; Vedder-Weiss & Fortus, 2013). The culture of a school can influence particular knowledge, skills, and behaviors, build student character (Ahmad, Chew, Zulnaldi, Sobri, & Alfitri, 2019), and influence levels of motivation.

In order for student motivation to be supported, students will, “need to feel they have the ability to do good work,” (para. 5) but also feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in the school, classroom, and from a peer (Walker, 2012). School belonging includes, “school-based relationships and experiences, student-teacher relationships, and students’ general feelings about school as a whole” (Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodrick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018, p. 2). Shindler, Jones, Williams, Taylor, and Cardenas (2016) found that, “building a sense of [school and] classroom belonging and the sense of self and peer-acceptance” (p. 12) promoted higher academic achievement because students’ mental health was supported along with the ability to trust and take risks. When students feel, “accepted, respected, included, and supported” (Allen, Kern, Vella-Brodrick, Hattie, & Waters, 2018, p. 2) by the school and their peers, motivation increases. The perception and sense of belonging a student has to the school and classroom will ultimately impact their motivation, engagement, and learning.

Classroom Climate, Quality Teacher-Student Relationships, and Student Engagement

The classroom is a place where open communication, social, emotional, and academic support exists between teacher and student, “characterized by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation” (Yunus, Osman, and Ishak, 2011, p. 2637). Nonetheless, establishing a positive classroom climate can support student self-efficacy and motivation and learning. Climate refers to the general environment as well as the teaching and learning experiences created between teachers and students in the classroom (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014). A positive classroom climate was described as feeling safe, respectful, welcoming, promoting positive relationships, and supportive of student learning (Nagler, 2016). Higher levels of intrinsic motivation were reported from students who perceived a positive classroom climate as being positive, caring, supportive, and warm, and whose teachers demonstrated care, support, warmth, and a belief in their students’ abilities (Fan & Williams, 2018).

Teachers play a vital role in shaping the classroom climate as well as influencing student’s educational motivation by how they, “interact with students, the strategies they use to address low motivation, their use of classroom assessments, and the strength and type of relationships they foster with students” (Usher, 2012, p.5). Therefore, quality teacher-student relationships can help develop students’ goals, beliefs, competencies, social, emotional, and academic skills (Koca, 2016; Öqvist and Malmström, 2016). According to Louis, Murphy, and Smylie (2016), “the strength and meaningfulness of teacher-student relationships mediate student academic performance and create contexts that support learning” (p. 316). An effective teacher was characterized as respectful, a team player, creative, fair, available, patient for their students, passionate and enthusiastic about teaching, making learning fun in ways that rekindle student

excitement and motivation to develop new knowledge and skills (Nagashibaevna, 2019). Yunus, Osman, and Ishak (2011) found that both a positive classroom atmosphere along with a teacher's level of support and involvement, increased student engagement and motivation to learn, further noting that students, "tend to work harder in the classroom, persevere, accept direction and criticism, cope better with stress and pay attention more to the teachers" (p. 2638). Creating a positive classroom climate where effective attitudes, behaviors, and leadership are implemented to create healthy teacher-student relationships can further support student motivation and improve classroom teaching and learning experiences.

Student engagement is, "a process that facilitates learning and increases academic success" (p. 60), characterized by students who are highly motivated, dedicated to the subject, actively engaged, and show interest in class (Nayir, 2017). Educators can increase student engagement, motivation, and learning in the classroom by implementing effective instructional strategies and motivational activities that increase student autonomy, competence, relatedness, and relevance (Carrabba & Farmer, 2018). Students should be given multiple opportunities, "to experience autonomy [in order] to enhance intrinsic motivation to engage in learning activities" (Evans & Boucher, 2015, p. 88). Students should play an active role in their learning and the learning process (Serin, 2018), "set their own goals, choose their own learning strategies, monitor their own progress" (Oluwatayo, Aderonmu, Aduwo, & Peter, 2016, p. 203), take ownership and be effective instruments in their own learning, so long as teachers are clear on the learning goals and keep students well-informed on their performance (Sloane & Kelly, 2003). Subsequently, instructional strategies that support student motivation and increase student engagement need to be, "a vital part of [a teachers'] teaching strategy" (Anwer, 2019, p. 158) in order for effective learning to take place.

Instructional Strategies to Support High School Student Motivation

Up to now, I have discussed factors within the school that support student motivation, which have focused on school belonging and culture, classroom climate, effective teacher-student relationships, and student engagement. Nevertheless, for high school students enrolled in a STAAR English remedial course, I continue to notice low motivation in the classroom for the following reasons: (1) students have failed the STAAR English exam time-after-time, (2) students have taken one or more English remedial courses every given semester alongside a regular English course, and (3) students are aware of the low-performing grouping of students enrolled in the course, and for some, this diminishes their self-esteem and motivation. In the following paragraphs, I will focus attention on key instructional strategies, or the methods used in the student learning process (Celik & Bay, 2021), that I have observed teachers implementing in their classroom to support motivation and learning for students enrolled in a high school STAAR English remedial course.

Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction is described as a clearly stated and detailed form of instruction about, “*how a concept should be done*” (p. 140), not leaving any knowledge and skills for chance or assumption, confusion or doubt (Deagon, 2021; Reutzler, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014). During explicit instruction, the teacher applies the following strategies to monitor and support student learning: (a) direct explanation, (b) modeling, (c) guided practice, (d) independent practice, (e) feedback, (f) discussion, and (g) monitoring (Reutzler, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014, p. 409). Essentially, teachers follow Pearson and Gallagher’s (1983) Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model, or an “I Do – We Do – You Do” structure (Clark, 2014; Deagon, 2021). Fisher and Frey (2013), however, split up the “You Do” component to include *You do it together*, which

involves collaborative learning with peers, and *You Do it alone*, which focuses on independent learning. Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) Gradual Release of Responsibility model reflects Vygotsky's view that meaningful learning takes place over time and deeper levels of mastery are achieved with abundant guidance, practice, and the mentorship of others (Clark, 2014).

The teacher begins explicit instruction by verbally guiding or modeling students through a text while the student watches, then provides guided instruction by modeling specific reading strategies step-by-step along with the student, and gradually releases the student towards independent thinking and application after observing successful practice of the skills (Fisher & Frey, 2013; Saccomano, 2014). According to Clark (2014), this gradual release of responsibility gives teachers time to observe and assess students' understanding of a lesson, helps teachers and students recognize that learning is taking place, and deepens a teacher's connection to students, increasing the efficacy of one's teaching. Once students demonstrate successful thinking, practice, and application of a skill, the teacher resumes explicit instruction with feedback, "to correct mistakes or affirm correct application of skills, strategies, processes, or concepts" (p. 410), discussion that provides students with opportunities to assess their knowledge or elaborate a response, and the monitoring of student progress and performance (Reutzel, Child, Jones, & Clark, 2014). As a result, student metacognition, "the knowledge of and monitoring of one's thinking and learning processes" (p. 110), is supported and improving reading comprehension, reading proficiency, reading strategy use, vocabulary, and academic achievement (Iwai, 2016).

Think-Aloud Instruction

In correlation to explicit instruction, the think-aloud is an instructional strategy in which the teacher, as a proficient reader, periodically stops within a text to verbally illustrate their thinking and reading strategies, scaffolding, modeling, and supporting students to build new

knowledge and language as well as engage, process, and understand a text in similar cognitive processes to the teacher (Ness & Kenny, 2016). At the same time, students are practicing the use of specific reading strategies as the teacher, monitoring their own thinking processes (Jackson, 2016) and becoming, “more aware of how to use [these] modeled strategies so as to eventually develop efficiency and automation in the use of reading strategies” (Wang, 2016, p. 1807).

According to Ness (2018), the following five think-aloud strategies are essential to meeting today’s demands of close reading and high-rigor expectations: (1) asking questions, (2) making inferences or predicting, (3) synthesizing or summarizing, (4) understanding the author’s purpose or evaluating, and (5) monitoring and clarifying. When think-aloud instructional strategies are practiced in the classroom over a consistent and extended period of time, teachers are guiding and leading students to become engaged, proficient, and independent comprehenders (Jackson, 2016; Ness & Kenny, 2016; Wang, 2016).

Differentiated Instruction

In order for students to make progress in their learning, teachers need to first recognize the, “classroom as a collection of learners” (p. 137) with different learning strengths, needs, preferences, backgrounds, interests, abilities, disabilities, gender, educational experiences, learning styles, skill levels, and readiness in order to provide instruction and learning opportunities that are specific to meet individual learner needs and motivation (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). According to Haymon and Wilson (2020), differentiated instructional practices supports, “student engagement in classroom instruction, improved participation in lesson activities, and increased learning of skills and concepts” (p. 75). Differentiated instruction was described by Onyishi and Sefotho (2020) as:

- matching students' approaches to learning with the most appropriate pedagogy, curriculum goals, and opportunities for displaying knowledge gained,
 - modifying and adapting instruction, materials, content, students' project, product and assessment to meet the learning needs of individual students, and
 - employing multiple teaching approaches in the same classroom to accommodate the variety of aptitudes, needs, personalities, and experiences of individual students
- (p. 137).

While students in the same classroom are based on age group or grade level, students are not necessarily at the same level of learning, so a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective to support learning (Magableh & Abdullah, 2021; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development defines differentiated instruction that, "shifts students from their level, or from what they can do today without support to what they can do with assistance, then to what they can accomplish independently which before they could do only with help and support" (p. 258) because students are working within their comfort zone and gradually being challenged with continuous teacher guidance before mastery and independence (Magableh & Abdullah, 2021).

Cooperative Learning

Teachers implement cooperative learning strategies to motivate students to learn with, by, and for each other (Fernandez-Rio, Sanz, Fernandez-Cando, & Santos, 2017; Alcala, Garijo, Perez-Pueyo, Fernandez-Rio, 2019). When cooperative learning strategies are effectively practiced in the classroom, the following elements are taking place between students within a small group to support learning:

- (a) positive interdependence: students succeed in a task only if the other group mates succeed too,
- (b) promotive face-to-face interaction: students work in direct contact to

each other during the task, (c) individual accountability: students must contribute to the group's goal, (d) group processing: students reflect and discuss during and after each task and (e) interpersonal and small-group skills: students learn to listen to each other, to share ideas, to give and receive feedback, to take turns, to encourage others (Fernandez-Rio, Sanz, Fernandez-Cando, & Santos, 2017, p.90).

Cooperative learning strategies have been shown to improve the classroom atmosphere and increase student motivation when effectively implemented over a period of time. Functioning as a facilitator, the teacher supports and leads students to work interdependently within a small, heterogeneous group, which is based on ability and achievement level, to provide peer-to-peer support and develop an understanding of the content, all while engaging in the learning process and working towards a common goal or outcome (Wyman & Watson, 2019). Shana, Lahiani, and Mahmoud (2020) found that students, “preferred to work in groups to complete their tasks” (p. 989), adding that students were not only more engaged and motivated to master learning content, but also made more positive connections that impacted students' attitudes about the classroom. Cooperative learning strategies that have been commonly used in the classroom as a form of peer-to-peer instruction, which will be the focus of this study, include Think-Pair-Share, Round Robin, and Expert Groups.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a process used to practice and develop, “knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Barnes, 2019, p. 600) that addresses the “psychological, emotional, social, and mental” (Reppy & Larwin, 2020, p. 49) needs of children. According to Ross and Tolan (2018), SEL focuses on the changes and outcomes of specific skills and behaviors in a structured setting, such as in the classroom, “through teaching and practicing” (p. 1173), wherein these

values, behaviors, and skills become routine and internalized (Strahan & Poteat, 2020). When SEL needs are met in the classroom, intrinsic motivation increases (Reppy & Larwin, 2020), and students' competency, engagement, and achievement levels are higher (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012), making learning and academic success more likely to occur (Koca, 2016). Strahan and Poteat (2020) suggested that when social-emotional learning needs go unaddressed, the chances of increasing academic achievement are "almost impossible" (p. 2). The focus into both academic and non-academic skills, including SEL needs, is fundamental to support student learning and motivation, and thus, need to be developed and included within the academic curriculum (Humphries, Williams, & May, 2018).

Closing Thoughts on Chapter 2

Through this literature review, I defined self-efficacy and motivation in order to determine how extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be supported in the school and classroom for learning to occur. Motivational factors focused on school culture and belonging, as well as classroom climate, quality teacher-student relationships, and student engagement in the learning process. Research revealed, however, that students must be highly motivated and actively engaged (Nayir, 2017); therefore, I provided a few instruction strategies that teachers used in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. I discussed how explicit instruction, think-aloud instruction, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and social-emotional learning strategies support student motivation and learning. In a culture of high-stakes testing, where motivation continues to decrease as a result of the emphasis and pressures to meet state academic standards, teachers should identify characteristics of motivated and unmotivated students and then implement instructional strategies and behaviors that will support motivation in order to improve learning and academic outcomes.

During my internship, I conducted daily classroom observations in three high school STAAR English remedial classrooms to observe and note instructional strategies and behaviors from teachers that supported motivation and engaged students in learning. These observations lasted a short period of time because COVID-19 rapidly spread around the globe, impacted the final months of the school year, and transformed the traditional classroom. As a result, it was still unclear to me on what or how to recognize effective instructional practices and behaviors that supported motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. Through my ROS, I examined instructional strategies and behaviors that high school ELAR teachers implemented to support student motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. I discuss this process in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

SOLUTION AND METHOD

Proposed Solution

The purpose of this record of study was to identify key instructional strategies used in high school STAAR English remedial classrooms that support student motivation and learning. Instructional strategies are defined as the, “methods used by a teacher, methods involved in the student learning process and conferring specific learning goals” (Celik & Bay, 2021, p. 441). Five instructional strategies were used to guide classroom observations, based on feedback from teacher interviews: *Explicit Instruction*, *Think-Aloud Instruction*, *Differentiated Instruction*, *Cooperative Learning*, *Social Emotional Learning*. Instructional behaviors focused on the, “teachers' (and students') role in the learning process that involves the degree to which teachers display instructional clarity to achieve the learning goal, manage classrooms effectively to minimize disruptions and misbehaviors and maximize students' opportunity to learn, and distribute control over students' learning activities” (Maulana, Opdenakker, & Bosker, 2016, p. 148). Actions and words from the teacher and student were analyzed to identify how motivation is supported and not supported in the high school STAAR English remedial class.

This record of study utilized qualitative methods to gather the experiences and perspectives of high school teachers who taught a STAAR English remedial course, as well as students enrolled in a STAAR English remedial course. This study took place within one summer school semester, which specifically targeted students who were labeled as *Did Not Meet Grade Level* through the STAAR End-of-Course English exam. Teachers had the opportunity to use their knowledge and experiences with motivation to point out common characteristics they have recognized amongst motivated students and then highlight instructional strategies and

behaviors that have supported student motivation and learning in their classroom. Students reflected on their teacher's behaviors and instructional strategies that supported their motivation and learning and use the practice of writing and imagery to express their motivational experiences in the classroom. The researcher identified common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies that were expressed by both teachers and students, and observed which ones had the most impact on motivation and learning. This ROS will ultimately propose key instructional strategies that teachers and students identified to support motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom.

Outline of the Proposed Solution

To document participants' experiences and perspectives, I collected qualitative data during 10 days of summer school instruction that included one-on-one interviews with four teacher participants, online surveys completed by 36 students for the pre-survey and 34 students for the post-survey, classroom observations from seven teachers, and instructional resources used in STAAR English remedial courses completed by both teachers and students during the summer school semester. Data collection for this study was determined as non-human subjects research on February 18, 2020 (See Appendix A), therefore IRB protections were not used.

Summer school took place Monday through Thursday, and students were provided with 10-days of instruction to prepare for the STAAR exam. Students were scheduled to attend a 3-hour morning or afternoon session that focused on the STAAR English exam. I proposed to interview high school STAAR English teachers individually prior to the start of summer school and at the closing of the semester. This gave teachers an opportunity to reflect on instructional strategies and resources that supported student motivation and learning and/or adjust as necessary. Furthermore, I proposed for students enrolled in a summer school STAAR English

remedial course to complete an online survey at the beginning and at the end of the summer school semester to reflect on their teacher's instructional strategies that supported their individual motivation and learning. Once data had been collected, I identified common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies that had been expressed by both teachers and students. This data was used to support classroom observations using my ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet (See Appendix D) and focused on specific strategies, lessons, and behaviors that supported motivation and learning. Daily observations were conducted for 10-days to document specific instructional strategies, lessons, and behaviors, as well as classroom resources and student work that best supported motivation and learning in regards to teacher-student relationships, explicit instruction, think-aloud instruction, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning strategies, and social-emotional learning.

Justification of the Proposed Solution

Research maintains that student motivation levels influence learning and academic outcomes. Additionally, factors around the school and in the classroom can support student motivation and learning. After working as an ELAR teacher with students at the lowest performing school to the top performing school for the past 9 years, I have noticed a significant decline in student motivation in the high school ELAR classroom, which has affected teaching, learning, and academic outcomes. This research provided insight from high school ELAR teachers and students on key instructional strategies and behaviors that supported motivation and learning for students enrolled in a high school STAAR English remedial course. I considered each individual participant's knowledge and understanding, perspectives and experiences, and personal connections they made in regards to student motivation. I proposed specific instructional strategies and behaviors that supported motivation and improved learning for

students enrolled in a high school STAAR English remedial course. As a result, teachers can begin to consider and implement instructional strategies and behaviors that will support motivation and learning.

Study Context and Participants

School leadership plays a key role in promoting student motivation and improving academic outcomes, as well as supporting teachers and classrooms. Gold High School is considered the top performing high school in Border City amongst six other traditional high schools. Through my personal experiences and informal conversations with colleagues, high school ELAR teachers have shared similar experiences and struggles in the STAAR English remedial classroom as declines in student motivation continue to impact teaching, learning, and academic outcomes. Therefore, to explore instructional strategies and behaviors that supported student motivation, I focused on high school STAAR English remedial course teachers and students who attended summer school for additional support to meet STAAR proficiency standards. The number of student participants in the research focused on those who failed the STAAR English exam in the prior Spring semester but were very close to passing, also known as “bubble kids” (Bae, 2018; Booher-Jennings, 2005; Dee & Jacob, 2011; Munter & Haines, 2019). According to Springer (2008), “bubble kids” are likely to pass the STAAR exam with increased attention a little extra help, thus benefiting most from 10-days of instruction. Teacher interviews, student surveys, and classroom observations took place on campus during the regular summer school instructional day for both morning and afternoon sessions.

During summer school, teachers provided small group instruction that focused on test-taking skills and practices within a shorter time frame, taking on a structure used by STAAR Academies. In this case, teachers were provided with a Scope & Sequence that specifically

targeted the STAAR English exam, which included lessons for Revising, Editing, Reading and Writing. The SIRIUS Zingers book is a resource for students to practice and prepare for the STAAR exam, “by focusing on how to **read**, **analyze**, and **answer** STAAR test questions” (Sirius Education Solutions, 2020, p. iv). The SIRIUS Zingers book includes STAAR formatted passages and questions for Revising, Editing, and Reading, all of which serve as a preview of what students can expect on the STAAR exam. The SIRIUS Zingers workbook is broken up into 19 lessons that focus on a specific and commonly tested TEKS. Each lesson includes three scaffolded practices (A, B, and C) that, “increase in complexity by modifying the number of answer choices,” (Sirius Education Solutions, 2020, p. iv). Two mixed practices follow after every two lessons, which also increases in the number of questions and answer choices.

As students work through SIRIUS Zingers, each lesson focuses on a commonly tested skill using STAAR Language – *academic vocabulary and key words* – for students to review and understand prior to working through the questions. In addition, there are test-taking tips and strategies that guide, “**all** students to **think** in ways that help them answer STAAR test questions,” (Sirius Education Solutions, 2020, p. ii). STAAR Think and Reflect questions appear throughout each lesson to assess student knowledge and thinking, asking questions for students to *explain why* an answer is correct or incorrect.

Proposed Research Paradigm

Case study research is defined as, “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores [an issue within] a bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Creswell, n.d., p. 73). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the unit of analysis in a case study focuses on understanding, “one particular program or

one particular classroom of learners” (p. 39) within its “real-life context” (p. 37). In this study, the researcher explored and identified key instructional strategies that supported student motivation and learning in a STAAR English remedial classroom. A journal was kept by the researcher to record thoughts, negotiations, interpretations, hunches, and more (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Justification of Use of Instruments in Context

The researcher conducted daily, unannounced classroom observations for 10-days of instruction with each participating ELAR teacher. During classroom observations, I documented strategies that supported student motivation using my ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet, which can be found in Appendix B. Selected dimensions that relate to the study were used to create my ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet and to support data from teacher interviews and student responses. Teacher participants participated in two one-on-one, semistructured interviews prior to the start of summer school and at the end of the 4-week summer school semester. Questions were prepared in advance and served as a guide for the interview, “with possible probes identified” (p. 127) during the interview to gain a deeper understanding if necessary and relevant to the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). Probe questions and responses were recorded and analyzed by the researcher. Interview questions can be found in Appendix C. Interviews were recorded with a recording device and used for transcribing purposes only. Research questions were presented individually, giving the interviewee ample time to respond. The researcher jotted down notes during and specific to the interview: *time stamps, key words, connections to the literature, etc.* Data collection provided insight and personal experiences from high school STAAR English remedial teachers on instructional strategies that supported student motivation. Teacher participant names will be protected and

remain confidential throughout the research.

Student participants completed an online survey through Google Forms. The survey consisted of open-ended responses, short answer questions, and fill-in-the-blank responses. Student participants had the opportunity to share their perspectives, experiences, and progress at the beginning and at the end of the summer school semester through writing and imagery. The online survey can be found in Appendix F. Student participants had the opportunity to complete the online survey during one class session. Data collection provided insight and personal experiences from high school students enrolled in a summer school STAAR English remedial course. Student participants reflected on behaviors and strategies that their teacher implemented to support motivation and learning. Student responses were not be analyzed until summer school had concluded for the semester. Furthermore, student participant names will remain protected and confidential throughout the research.

Instructional resources were gathered during observations based upon teacher interviews and student responses. The researcher collected lessons, activities, reading passages, guided and independent assignments, and any other form of learning support (note-taking handouts, graphic organizers, online platforms, etc.) that increased student motivation. These resources were gathered according to how the researcher, teacher, and student perceived the lesson's instruction in supporting motivation and learning, in which the ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet was used as a guide to collect the appropriate resources.

Data Analysis Strategy

The researcher applied an inductive analysis to the research, in which the researcher, “look[ed] at all the raw data, chunk[ed] them into small analytical units of meaning for further analysis, cluster[ed] similar analytical units and label them as categories, and identif[ied] salient

patterns after looking within and across categories” (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 150). Data from interviews and surveys were systematically transcribed, coded, sorted, categorized, and analyzed to identify common themes—instructional strategies and behaviors STAAR English remedial course teachers implemented in the classroom to support student motivation and learning. Themes from the qualitative study about key instructional strategies explain how teachers support student motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. Data analysis results were organized by major topics, qualitative categories, and exemplar participant quotes to provide insight into behaviors and instructional strategies that high school ELAR teachers implemented to motivate students to learn. I anticipated to identify specific strategies and factors that foster and increase student motivation.

Timeline

This record of study took place over one summer school semester. The STAAR exam is scheduled during the closing week of summer school; therefore, research will be conducted for 10-days of instruction from Monday through Thursday. Table 3 illustrates a proposed timeline of the researcher’s plan of action to conduct, analyze, and complete research. Data from teachers and students was collected prior to the start of summer school and at the closing of the semester. Data from classroom observations was gathered daily from each morning and afternoon session. Teacher participant responses were used to identify common characteristics, behaviors, and strategies to use as a guide/checklist during observations. Student responses were note analyzed until summer school had concluded for the semester.

Table 3

Proposed timeline of the researcher’s plan of action at Gold High School, according to Power ISD’s Summer School calendar.

Time Frame	Research Activity
Week before Summer School Begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create “Motivation” Google Classroom • Approve “Motivation and Learning” Google Form (online survey) by ROS Chairs and School Principal and upload to Google Classroom • Teacher participants will review and sign “Teacher Consent to Participate in Research Study” • Conduct pre-interview with teacher participants • Highlight common characteristics, behaviors, and strategies shared by teachers to use as a guide/checklist during observations
First days of Summer School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will receive a “Parent/Student Consent to Participate in Research Study”, review the purpose of participation in the study, description of study, and accept or deny participation in the study. • Students will join my “Motivation” Google Classroom and complete the online pre-survey at the start of class (before instruction) or at the end of class (after instruction).
Day 1-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct classroom observations for morning and afternoon classes • Collect instructional resources: lessons, activities, reading passages, guided and independent assignments, and any other form of learning support (note-taking handouts, graphic organizers, online platforms, etc.) that support student motivation
Day 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student participants will complete online post-survey at the start of class (before instruction) or at the end of class (after instruction).
Closing week of Summer School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct post-interview with teacher participants • Review data of students labeled as <i>Did Not Meet Grade Level</i> and identify bubble students through the STAAR End-of-Course English exam (students who failed the STAAR by 1-10 points)
July-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common characteristics, strategies, and behaviors shared by both teachers and students • Analysis and writing of data and findings • Provide report to teacher participants and offer a follow-up interview in-person or virtual for teacher participants to comment on the accuracy and findings for the research

Reliability and Validity Concerns or Equivalents

Producing reliable and valid research results in an ethical manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) is important to this study as I prepared to conduct, collect, and analyze data from observations, interviews, surveys, and instructional resources. Therefore, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and trustworthiness are addressed for all participants and instruments being used in my ROS. Students at Gold High School accessed their online survey through their district Chromebook and used their district ID information to login. Student participants were added to My Google Classroom in order to gain access to the survey. Only students with a district Chromebook and district login information were able to access the survey. As the survey was created, the researcher selected the following options for students to complete the survey: Collect email addresses, Restrict to users in Power Independent School District and its trusted organization, and Limit to 1 response.

To add validity to the study, triangulation of data was used. Method triangulation, which “involves the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon” (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014, p. 545), was used between interviews, surveys, and field notes. Creswell (2014) defined triangulation as:

[using] different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes. If themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to validity of the study (p. 201).

A journal was kept by the researcher throughout the research process to record thoughts, negotiations, interpretations, hunches, and more (Bhattacharya, 2017). The researcher’s journal was used to identify and clarify any bias and/or create an open, honest narrative about how any,

“interpretation of the findings is shaped by [the researcher’s] background” (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). Member checking was utilized for teacher interviews to determine the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data. The researcher returned the final report or, “parts of the polished or semi-polished product” (p. 202) and provided a follow-up interview in-person or virtual for teacher participants to comment on the accuracy and findings of the research (Creswell, 2014).

Closing Thoughts on Chapter 3

When students are motivated to learn, student performance in various areas can improve. Accordingly, it is essential for educators to continuously address motivation and explore new means to support student motivation and learning. As the researcher, high school STAAR English remedial course teachers and students were provided a time and space to reflect on and recognize instructional strategies in the classroom that support motivation. My ultimate goal through research is that we will be more mindful of the instructional approaches we take to support student motivation. Teachers play a key role in supporting student motivation, and as leaders of change in the classroom, we can transform our classroom and instruction to increase student motivation and improve learner outcomes.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introducing the Analysis

This research focused on students who were labeled as *Did Not Meet Grade Level* through the STAAR End-of-Course English exam and are attending summer school to receive additional support and instruction to meet STAAR proficiency standards. Summer school English teachers followed the district's Scope & Sequence: a day-by-day overview of skills and lessons to cover, including DOL (Daily Oral Language) activities, Revising, Editing, Writing, Reading, and weekly Checkpoints. The Scope & Sequence also included resources and links to online learning platforms, as well as tasks for teachers to complete with students, such as essay conferencing, discussion of Checkpoint data, and tailored instruction opportunities. Teachers provided small group instruction that targeted the STAAR English exam, using the SIRIUS Zingers workbook along with annotation methods to model test-taking skills and strategies. Students followed along and copied their teachers' notes in their workbooks. This gave students a daily practice to build their knowledge and skills to better prepare for the STAAR exam.

The data for this study was comprised of pre-interviews and post-interviews from four STAAR English teachers (See Table 4) and classroom observations from seven STAAR English teachers (four English 1 & three English 2 teachers). Due to low student attendance during summer school, three teacher participants paired up with one other teacher to co-teach for the summer school semester. The three additional teachers agreed to participate and allowed me to observe their instruction. A total of four classrooms (two English 1 & two English 2 classrooms) were observed within a 10-day instructional period, unannounced and at random times during both morning and afternoon sessions for an unspecified amount of time.

Table 4

Background experience and current teaching role of STAAR English teacher participants who took part in the pre-interview, classroom observations, and post-interview.

STAAR English Teacher Participant	Experience as English teacher
Teacher A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed 6th year teaching high school English 1, English 2, English 2 Pre-AP, English 3, and STAAR English • taught STAAR English 2 this summer • class consisted of incoming Juniors • co-teacher present
Teacher B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed 5th year teaching upper level high school English • taught STAAR English 2 this summer • class consisted of incoming Juniors • no co-teacher present
Teacher C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed 5th year teaching ESL Reading and STAAR English • taught STAAR English 1 this summer • class consisted of incoming Sophomores and Juniors • co-teacher present
Teacher D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed 5th year teaching beginner English Language Learners, as well as English 1 and STAAR English • taught STAAR English 1 this summer • class consisted of incoming Sophomores and Juniors • co-teacher present
Teacher E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • veteran ELA teacher who taught STAAR English 2 this summer • co-teacher with Teacher A • participated in observations only

One-on-one interviews between the researcher and the teacher participant took place on campus in a classroom setting after summer school hours. Each teacher participant was given a Teacher Consent to Participate in Research Study (see APPENDIX B) to read and sign before interviews were conducted. I provided additional background and answered questions teacher participants expressed regarding the research. Teachers were not given the questions beforehand but were encouraged to remain calm and be genuine with their responses. Three of the four teachers felt nervous before interviews out of fear of judgement and that their answers would not meet my needs for research. They were each assured that their words and experiences would be valuable and that no judgments were going to take place. Additionally, I reassured that their

names would be protected and confidential. Interviews were recorded on my laptop, using the Voice Memos+ recording program. During each interview, I took handwritten notes that included time stamps, key words or phrases to refer back to during data analysis. Pre- and Post-teacher audio-recorded interviews were transcribed using the NVivo Transcription online service.

Daily classroom observations ranged from a minimum of 30 minutes to 1-hour, but on two days within the first week of summer school, I observed each teacher once for the entire 3-hours of class. This allowed me to become familiar with the teacher, students, and overall classroom environment before I continued with observations. Every day before the start of class, I met with each teacher to discuss the agenda for the day, which helped me vary the order of observations so that I would prevent seeing the same teacher or classroom at the same time. After observations, I would debrief with each teacher to clarify questions or discuss any matters that came to mind. Upon the teacher's request, I would share my written observations with them.

An online pre-survey and post-survey was completed by students within the first week and on the last day of summer school. Since summer school attendance varied each day, teachers handed out the Parent/Student Consent to Participate in Research Study (see APPENDIX C) to students over 3-days. I was present in the classroom to review the form and answer any questions or concerns students had about the research. The Motivation Google Classroom class code was shared for students to join and complete the survey. Thirty-six students completed the pre-survey and 34 students completed the post-survey. 26 students completed both pre- and post- survey. Student participants consisted of incoming Sophomores and Juniors who have not passed one or both of the STAAR English exams.

Data analysis began after summer school ended. Teacher interviews were audio-recorded on my laptop using the Voice Memos+ recording program and transcribed using the NVivo Transcription online service. Student survey responses were completed online through Google Forms and converted into a Google Sheets grid format. Before any coding processes began, I became acquainted with the data. I spent a week reading and reviewing through teacher interview transcripts, student survey responses, and classroom observations. Analytic memos, or *notes to self*, were kept in my researcher's journal, "a place to *dump your brain* about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation" (Saldana, 2021, p. 58).

After a couple of days, I started first cycle coding. Words and phrases from both teacher interviews and student surveys were used to inductively create codes, categories, and themes. In Vivo Coding was the initial "go-to method" (p. 138) to ensure the actual words of participants were captured (Saldana, 2021). After first cycle coding of reading through teacher interviews and student survey responses, codes initially identified were then categorized, recategorized, and then synthesized into more general themes. "Rather than using a short code or category label, a theme expands on the major ideas through the use of an extended phrase or sentence," (Saldana, 2021, p. 259-260). Themeing the Data: Categorically was used to elaborate on the strategies and behaviors that high school teachers implement to support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom.

Understanding Motivation

In order to understand how motivation was defined and characterized by both teachers and students, In Vivo coding was used. Table 5 shows the questions that were asked to define and describe motivation. I individually reviewed each student response and teacher interview and highlighted key words and phrases that described or characterized a motivated student (See

Table 5). The “terms used by [participants] themselves” (Saldana, 2021, p. 137) were typed into an Excel document. Student codes were typed into Column A, Teacher Pre-Interview codes were typed into Column B, and Teacher Post-Interview codes were typed into Column C. Codes were sorted alphabetically to detect and group together similar clusters. This data was printed out to facilitate categorizing codes using a color-coding process. Color-coding was a preferred approach as various colors were used for, “*at a glance* reference and visual classification” (Saldana, 2021, p. 49). First, all codes were eyeballed or analytically browsed, “to inventory the contents and to discern any particular patterns” (Saldana, 2021, p. 140).

Table 5

Data sources and questions used to define motivation and characteristics of motivated students

Student Pre-Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define motivation. What does motivation mean to you? • When you are motivated and ready to learn, 3 behaviors your teacher will notice are...
Teacher Pre-Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What behaviors and characteristics do you recognize when a student is motivated to learn in your classroom?
Teacher Post-Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What behaviors and characteristics did you recognize when a student was motivated to learn in your classroom?

Data analysis revealed four categories: (1) someone, (2) something that, (3) feeling, and (4) personality trait. As I reviewed each student’s response, I noticed a pattern of sentences beginning with, *someone* or *something that*, whereas other sentences included a particular emotion or attribute. These four categories made-up two general themes – *external* and *internal* motivation – which were then placed under their appropriate theme.

Additionally, characteristics and behaviors of motivated students repeated throughout student survey responses and teacher interviews, suggesting four possible categories: *participate*, *focused*, *no distractions*, and *excited*. Each category was assigned a color (*focused* and *no distractions* were linked together), and focusing on one code at a time, every code was grouped and color-coded according to its corresponding category because they, “share[d] something in common” (Saldana, 2021, p. 10). Not every code fit into one of the aforementioned categories – *do what’s asked*, *do work*, *take a lot of notes*, amongst others – but they did, “share some characteristic” (Saldana, 2021, p. 13), so a new category emerged: *on-task/class behaviors*. Once all codes from students and teachers had been categorized, categories were refined as follows: (1) participation, (2) focused/no distractions, (3) excited, and (4) on-task. After first cycle coding of reading through student survey responses and teacher interviews, codes that were initially identified and categorized were then synthesized into more general themes.

Identifying Strategies and Behaviors that Support Motivation

In order to identify what motivates and does not motivate students, In Vivo Coding and Descriptive Coding were used to capture the actual words of participants, by using a short phrase or word in the form of a noun (Saldana, 2021). I started with the following student pre-survey questions, “*What are some things that motivate you in the classroom?*” and “*What are some things that do NOT motivate you in the classroom?*”. These two questions were used as a starting point before I continued to identify specific strategies and behaviors that support motivation. Students used general terms and phrases such as *motivate*, *helpful*, *good mood of classroom*, and *fun activities*, so these terms and phrases would help me identify specific strategies and behaviors, which I will discuss in the following paragraph. The terms used by student participants were individually written on a single notecard and laid out on the floor. A total of 76

words or phrases were identified regarding motivation. Codes were “eyeballed” (p. 140) to identify particular patterns and grouped together as a possible category. Seven categories were identified: *teacher*, *climate*, *activities*, *grades*, *friends*, *family*, and *other*. The same process was repeated to identify what does not motivate students. Three categories were identified: *teacher*, *climate*, and *other*. All codes were typed into an Excel document and arranged by category from greatest to least. This data was titled “Motivate Coding List” and printed out to be used in the following steps.

Table 6 shows the following questions that were used to identify specific strategies and behaviors that support student motivation. All codes were typed into an Excel document and reorganized in order to detect similar clusters (Saldana, 2021).

Table 6

Data sources and questions used to identify specific strategies and behaviors that support student motivation.

Student Pre-Survey	Student Post-Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 things your teacher does in the classroom to support your motivation and learning... • 3 things your teacher does in the classroom that do NOT support your motivation and learning... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were some things that your teacher did this summer to support your motivation and learning?” • What were some things that your teacher did this summer that did NOT support your motivation and learning?”

This data was printed out and placed side-by-side with the “Motivation Coding List”. All codes were examined to identify patterns and possible categories. I recognized that students identified specific behaviors that focused on the *teacher’s attitude* and *instruction*. After first cycle coding, the initial categories were then synthesized into a general theme. I reflected closely on these categories and behaviors, and the general theme of “classroom climate” developed.

Teachers Describe Ways to Support Student Motivation and Learning

The following research question was used to guide the teacher interview coding process, “*How do teachers describe ways to support student motivation to improve learning?*”. In Vivo Coding was used to identify how teachers described ways to support student motivation to improve learning. I reviewed each teacher interview and highlighted keywords and phrases that expressed a specific instructional strategy or behavior identified by teachers to support student motivation. Participant’s words were typed into an Excel document and sorted alphabetically for each teacher. This data was printed out so that I could categorize codes using a color-coding process. First, all codes were reviewed and analytically browsed at carefully. I recognized similar patterns between codes, so I began inductive coding. Focusing on one code at a time, each individual code was either labeled as a category or grouped into an existing and corresponding category. Each category was assigned a color. All codes were categorized until all codes had been labeled. Fifteen categories emerged, which were then used to identify a shared approach between all four teacher participants of strategies and behaviors that support student motivation. Three general themes were labeled: (1) supporting student motivation through praise, (2) supporting student motivation through rewards, and (3) supporting student motivation through online learning games.

Classroom Observations

During classroom observations, descriptive accounts from the classroom and participants were noted, “factually and objectively as much as possible” (Saldana, 2021, p. 135). A combination of Process Coding and Descriptive Coding were used to analyze data from classroom observations. Process Coding was used to identify, “simple observable activity” (Saldana, 2021, p. 143) and actions that used gerunds, or *-ing* words, such as *modeling, following*

along, and *asking*. Through Process Coding, I illustrated the process of a We Do – Explicit Instruction model that teachers implemented daily with their students and that students identified to support their motivation and learning needs (See Table 8). Descriptive Coding, “summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldana, 2021, p. 134). Through Descriptive Coding, I captured accounts, characteristics, and quotes of motivated and unmotivated students, as well as behaviors and quotes that supported and did not support student motivation. This would help me illustrate what motivation looks like and sounds like in the high school STAAR English classroom from both teachers and students.

Codes were typed into an Excel document. Process Coding words were typed into Column A and Descriptive Coding words and phrases were typed into Column C. Classroom observations had been kept organized by date and time and labeled sequentially, so the number assigned to each observation was typed into Column B and Column D as reference to the teacher and date of observation. Codes were sorted alphabetically to detect any repetition and assigned to its corresponding code. A preliminary and provisional, “start list of codes prior to field work” (p. 40) were used to deductively code classroom observations (Saldana, 2021). Six instructional strategies (or codes) were initially noted in the ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet in checklist format, including a “Other” option (See Appendix D). This allowed identification and check-off of a specific strategy a teacher enacted at the moment of instruction. Strategies were selected and based on common instructional approaches that I observed teachers, including myself, using in their classroom during my internship. As observations continued, I split-up Explicit Instruction into four components and noted three “Other” instructional strategies that teachers were implementing in the class that had not yet been indicated. This helped distinguish between each instructional strategy and recognize how often each instructional strategy was

implemented. By the end of observations, 12 instructional strategies were specified: (1) Teacher-Student Relationship, (2) Explicit Instruction–I Do, (3) Explicit Instruction–We Do, (4) Explicit Instruction–You Do, (5) Feedback & Discussion, (6) Think-Aloud Instruction, (7) Differentiated Instruction, (8) Hands-on Activities, (9) Technology, (10) Cooperative Learning, (11) Social Emotional Learning, and (12) Teacher Centered Instruction.

Each of the 12 instructional strategies were assigned a color. Focusing on one instructional strategy, I reviewed each classroom observation individually and highlighted specific actions, keywords, and quotes that exemplified its coordinating “Instructional Strategy”. After I reviewed and color-coded all classroom observations, I used a tally system to record the instructional strategies that repeated throughout my observations between teachers and classes on my “Overview of Data” chart, a basic chart I created and used as a rough draft to write out my initial observations and notes. A tally system was used to see which instructional approach and behavior teachers were using most and less of in the classroom.

Presentation of Data

The purpose of this study was to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that support student motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom. Data from teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student surveys were collected during summer school to answer three essential research questions:

- (1) How do teachers and students define motivation? What do teachers and students identify as characteristics of motivated students?
- (2) What strategies do high school teachers implement to support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom? What behaviors do teachers and students identify that increase student motivation?
- (3) How do teachers describe ways to support student motivation to improve learning?

The way that students initially defined motivation – *someone, something that, feeling, and personality trait* – was used to identify particular external and internal motivating factors that supported high school students in a STAAR English class during summer school. The research focused on identifying specific instructional strategies, lessons, and behaviors that teachers implemented to develop student self-efficacy, support motivation, and improve learning.

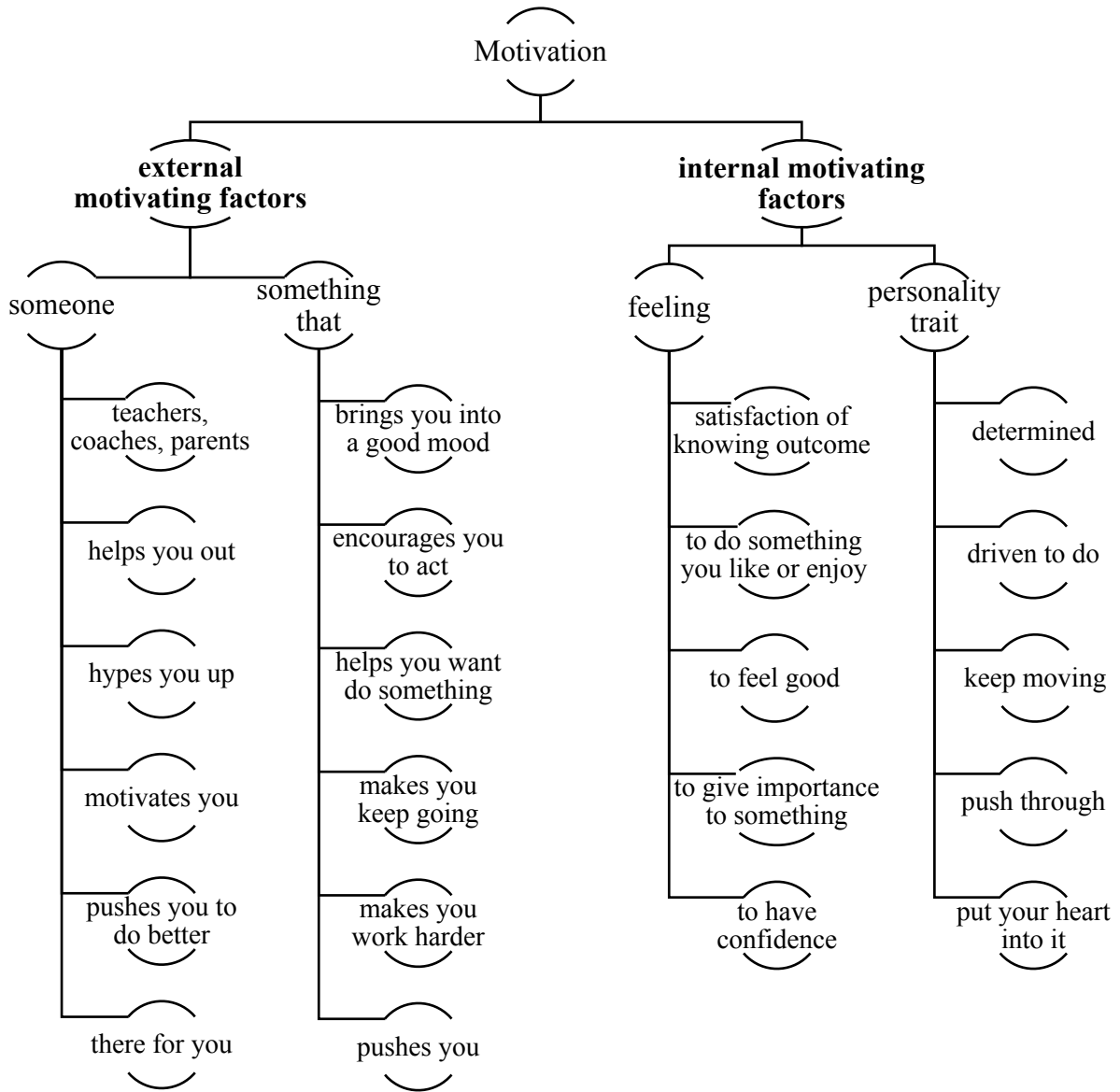
Results of Research

Research Question #1: How do teachers and students define motivation? What do teachers and students identify as characteristics of motivated students?

When students were asked to define motivation, a majority of sentences began with or included, *someone* or *something that*. For instance, one student noted, “to me motivation means that *something* or *someone* to push a person to do better,” while another student noted, “*something that* encourages a person to act or do something.” These sentences led me to acknowledge that many students rely on *someone* and/or *something* to support their motivation

and learning (See Table 7). A small number of responses attributed the feeling of *confidence* or *drive* to motivation.

Table 7
Student's definition of motivation.



To further explore *who* this someone or *what* this something could be, I reviewed the students' Pre-Survey responses for, "*What are some things that motivate you in the classroom?*" and noticed that the teacher played a major role in supporting motivation. Through In Vivo coding, four categories emerged about the teacher: *attitude*, *helpful*, *motivating*, and *rewarding*. While

the teacher's attitude can actually encompass the other three categories, attitude focused on the personality of the teacher and the nature of the teacher's approach to students. These strategies and behaviors of teachers will be discussed in Research Question #2.

After motivation was defined, I wanted to know how motivated students were described by both teachers and the students themselves. If teachers know what to look for in a motivated student, teachers should be able to provide effective and increasing support in the classroom. Through In Vivo coding, four words were common and repeated throughout student survey responses and teacher interviews, suggesting a possible category: *participate, focused, no distractions, and excited*. Each category was assigned a color (*focused* and *no distractions* were grouped together), and focusing on one code at a time, every code was grouped and color-coded according to its corresponding category since they, "share[d] something in common" (Saldana, 2021, p. 10). Not every code fit into one of the aforementioned categories – *do what's asked, do work, take a lot of notes*, amongst others – but they did, "share some characteristic" (Saldana, 2021, p. 13) so a new category emerged: *on-task/class behaviors*. Once all codes from students and teachers had been categorized, categories were refined as follows: (1) participation, (2) focused, (3) excited, and (4) on-task. After first cycle coding of reading through student survey responses and teacher interviews, codes that were initially identified and categorized were then synthesized into a general theme. I reflected closely on these four categories and behaviors, and the general theme "Classroom Engagement" developed (See Table 8).

Table 8

Characteristics and behaviors of motivated students as illustrated by students and teachers.

Classroom Engagement			
participate	focused	excited	on-task
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•active•answer questions•ask questions•participate/ volunteer <p><i>"respond to teacher" -Student</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•alert•awake/ not sleeping/ head up•have my attention/ eyes on board or teacher•no distractions/ not on my phone/ not talking to my friends•paying attention•sit there and learn/ sit in their desk/ sitting up straight <p><i>"shush my friends" -Student</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•arrive to class on time/ get to class early•good mood/ happy•look forward to class•ready to go•speak a lot <p><i>"not feeling like they dread going to class" -Teacher B</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•doing work/ what is asked•good grades•study•take a lot of notes•trying/ work hard <p><i>"use skills & strategies [teacher] taught" -Teacher A</i></p>

On the other hand, several students defined motivation more internally, using words that described a *feeling* or an *attribute* of an individual. One student noted, “motivation to me is to do something you enjoy and just feel so good to do it”, and another student noted, “it means you’re driven to do something you put your heart into it whatever it is.” These two perspectives led me to one other student’s definition of motivation, “it means actually giving importance to something”, in which the individual’s intrinsic motivation or mindset has initially given value and purpose to an action or object. In this case, the action would likely be *passing* and the object would be the *STAAR exam*.

When all four STAAR English teachers were asked to describe motivation in their high school STAAR English classroom, each teacher participant expressed that motivation was low (See Table 9). Students had shared that motivation meant that you are, “driven”, “confident” or

have a “feel good” attitude to do something, but teachers shared that many students lacked any drive or positive attitude to pass the STAAR exam after one or several unsuccessful attempts. These perspectives were related to Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory, in which motivation and academic behavior are determined by the students’ perception or beliefs of their own ability to successfully apply knowledge and skills to academic tasks (Louick, Leider, Daley, Proctor, & Gardner, 2016; Supervía & Robres, 2021). So, when a teacher supports a student in developing their self-efficacy, they have “double motivation” (Vosoogh, Tavakilzadeh, & Pakdaman, 2021, p. 227), thus, more likely to work hard, persist longer in the face of difficulty, improve various literacy skills, and achieve academically (Louick, Leider, Daley, Proctor, & Gardner, 2016; Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020).

Table 9

Teacher participants’ experiences and description of student motivation in their high school STAAR English remedial class.

Participant	Description of Motivation
Teacher A	“Motivation in today’s classroom is incredibly low. The students have a lot of apathy in the classroom. They struggle to stay on task. A lot of the work that I give them, it seems to be too much even though the work that I give them is less work than I gave prior to, maybe pre-COVID; so, it’s very low motivation, and even though we have the help of technology, it hinders more than it helps.”
Teacher B	“Motivation in today’s classroom is just...it’s kind of hard to pull motivation from the summer school. They don’t want to be here.”
Teacher C	“This last semester, I had a class. They were very unmotivated. It was my STAAR class. I tried everything under the sun I could think of: I played games with them. I did group projects. I did fun projects. I did painting. I got some participation, but not as much as I had hoped so.”
Teacher D	“It’s a very difficult time for kids. I know we talk a lot about motivation and engagement, but I feel like a lot of kids are desensitized from everything because they’re always on their phones. They see a lot of things all the time. They see the news. It’s just all of this information overload. So sometimes we try and get them interested in something, and they’re not so interested because there’s just so much other things going on in their lives, in the news, and this and that. Sometimes you feel like they don’t care enough or they don’t realize the impact of the things you’re trying to teach them until they’re older. As is always the story.”

Teacher A recognized that STAAR English classes spend most of the class time teaching to the test in order to make sure students either pass or show growth in the STAAR exam. For some students as re-testers, this is their 1st reattempt whereas others have taken it as many as six or more times. Identifying specific and effective *some things* is important for teachers (as the key *someone* who motivates students) if motivation is going to be supported in the STAAR remedial class. In the following research question, I will discuss specific instructional strategies and behaviors that I observed within 10-days of summer school instruction when students were most motivated and engaged in the STAAR English classroom.

Research Question #2: What strategies do high school teachers implement to support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom? What behaviors do teachers and students identify that increase student motivation?

To identify strategies and behaviors that support student motivation in the high school STAAR English remedial classroom, I used student survey responses as the starting point before gathering evidence from classroom observations and teacher interviews. According to the Motivation Pre- and Post- surveys, 25 of the 36 (pre-survey) and 28 of the 34 (post-survey) students selected that they learn best when they work “following along with my teacher”. The following are specific strategies teachers carried out in the STAAR English classroom.

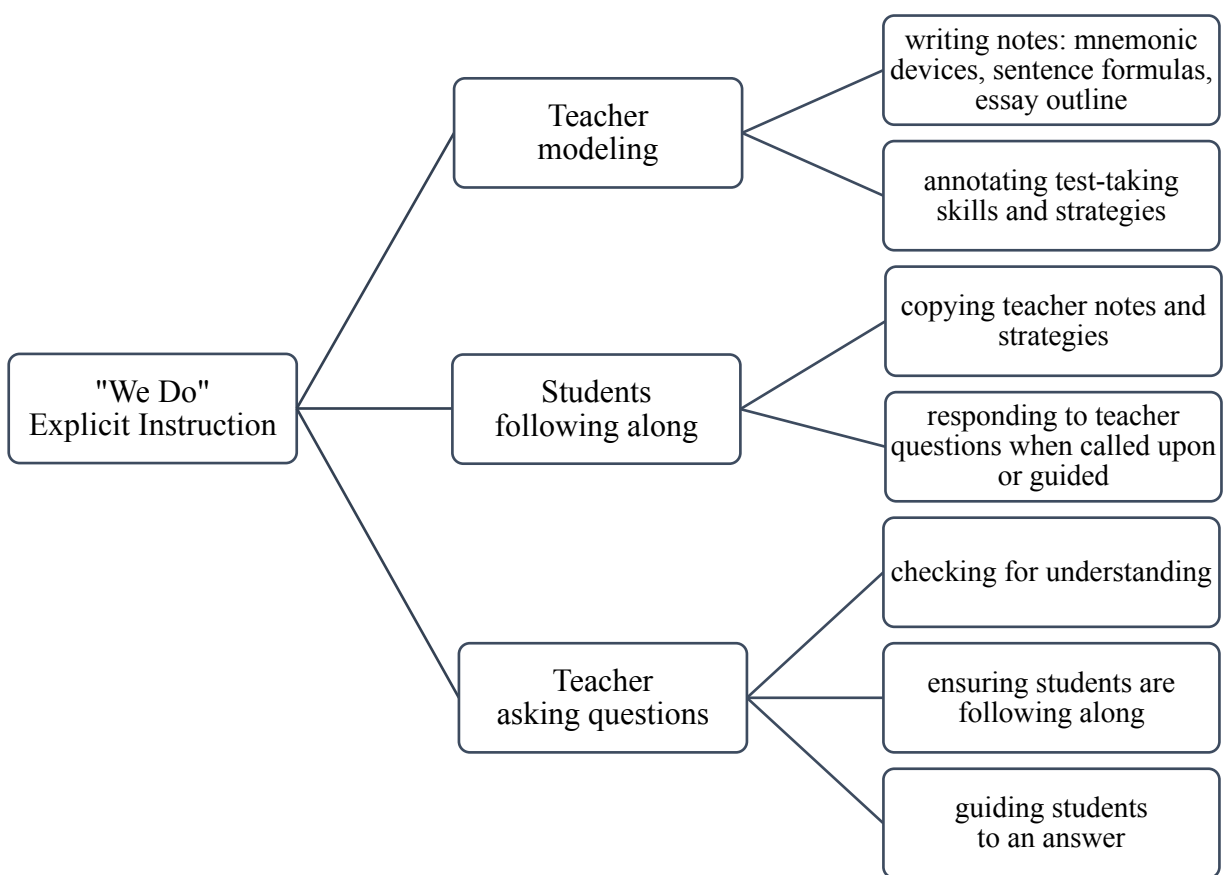
Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #1: Following along with the teacher & “doing strategies with the class”

When students were asked how their teacher supported their motivation and learning, the word *explain* appeared several times as follows:

- explains thoroughly
- explains very well
- take time to explain when we don’t understand
- was going slow and explaining

Student survey responses were reviewed to identify and clarify what students meant by *explain*, and one student was able to note that the teacher was “detailed with explanations”, and another student noted, “teaches us step-by-step in a problem and shows us how to get the answer”. I observed this step-by-step process of modeled instruction in the classroom that STAAR English teachers used to support student learning (See Table 10).

Table 10
Modeled instruction used by STAAR English teachers.

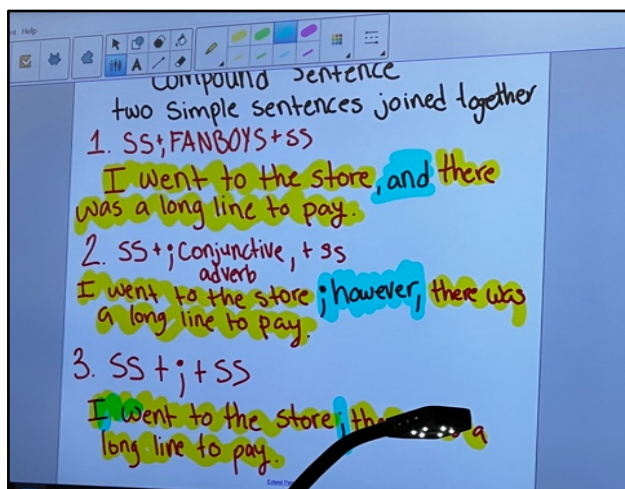


Students noted that “following along with my teacher” was the best support for motivation and learning because ultimately, “I have other questions to ask” or “I can be corrected then and there so I can fix it faster.” One student described their reason for being in a STAAR class, “Well bad, because I have tried many times to pass it and I have not been able to.” Nevertheless, students enrolled in a STAAR class, “have another opportunity to pass [the]

English STAAR”, as one student revealed, but need more help and more importantly, more support. “It messed up my mentality and lowers my confidence of passing the STAAR and I feel dumb”, expressed one student. This is the reality for many of our high school students enrolled in a STAAR English class and as a motivating factor, the teacher can support student’s motivation throughout instruction by explicitly modeling aloud specific strategies that students will need to practice and prepare for the STAAR exam. Throughout summer school instruction, I frequently observed teachers modeling aloud and “doing strategies with the class” as one student noted (See Figure 3), to help develop students’ knowledge and skills.

Figure 3

Color-coding methods used during DOL activities to illustrate and differentiate between different components for a variety of sentence structures.



Teacher E’s use of WRAP was a reading strategy practiced in both English 2 classrooms to answer STAAR test questions. WRAP stood for: **W**ork through the questions first, **R**ead the story, **A**nswer the questions, **P**rove your answer. With WRAP, students read the questions prior to reading the selection to identify what questions were asking, ultimately serving as a preview of the text. According to Teacher E, “WRAP gives students a purpose for reading and an idea of what to look for as they read through a passage.” Teacher E used WRAP in her English 2 classes

as the preferred reading strategy for STAAR reading passages, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions. When STAAR English 2 teachers started a new reading passage, students were able to recall aloud the WRAP reading strategy for the teacher and classmates to follow in a step-by-step process. Both English 1 classes followed a similar approach, but they did not have a mnemonic device; nevertheless, students in the English 1 classes were able to call out test-taking strategies in the order they were instructed to practice.

Teachers worked through the SIRIUS Zingers workbook using WRAP along with Close Reading strategies that focused on coding the text and chunking the text. Coding the text, which used color-coding methods and annotations such as underlining, circling, highlighting, x-out incorrect words specific to the test's questions, was modeled aloud by the teacher to help students visualize and differentiate between different components and literary elements. Coding the text is one test-taking strategy that directs students to, "look for concrete ideas with which they can identify" (Saccomano, 2014, p. 144). Additionally, chunking the text was modeled by teachers to comprehend and summarize paragraphs in a text. As the summer school semester continued, teachers began to call on students individually to practice synthesizing information by providing their own summary or main idea of a paragraph and letting the teacher know what to write. According to Saccomano (2014), "Students can only process so much new information at one time" (p. 143) so breaking down a reading passage and focusing on the purpose or main idea, paragraph-by-paragraph, actually becomes more manageable and easier to process.

While teachers modeled how to work through the questions and read through a passage, students followed along and copied the teacher's notes in their workbooks. This gave students a daily practice to build their own knowledge and skills to better prepare for the STAAR exam. As students were following along with their teacher, student self-efficacy was developing because of

their, “capability to successfully apply knowledge and skills to academic tasks” (Louick, Leider, Daley, Proctor, & Gardner, 2016, p. 1).

Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #2: “We do a lot of work together”

Our school district’s high school ELA Instructional Coordinators created and provided teachers with a Scope & Sequence: a day-by-day lesson plan for teachers to follow that included an overview of skills and exercises to cover in Revising, Editing, and Reading, with specific materials and links to online learning platforms. The Scope & Sequence also included specific tasks for teachers that include weekly checkpoints, essay conferencing, discussion of data, and teacher tailored instruction. Realistically, there was a lot of information to review with students and unfortunately, not enough time.

Students were asked in the pre-survey, “When you are motivated, you are ready to learn, engage in activities, and complete tasks for which one of the following reasons”, and 24 of the 36 responses selected “a feeling of accomplishment”, to leave class at the end of the day knowing that they completed any task on the agenda. So when a student mentioned “we do a lot of work together”, it was understandable to know that the workload during summer was in fact “a lot”, as several students noted, but with only 10-days of instruction to prepare for the STAAR exam, teachers wanted to make sure that students were getting enough practice, preparation, and support by means of guided and independent work. Teacher C shared the following:

“I think what kind of un-inspires them, especially dealing with the [EL] kids...[reading] is obviously not their strong suit, so they feel unsuccessful, and they feel overwhelmed when they see a huge text and they just like, already have this defeated, *I don't want to read all that*. So, I like to break it up and I like to read together. That's best for me when we all read to share together. And then we discuss it, try to connect it to everyday lives

and themselves. I feel like they don't feel like they're good at this subject and because they feel like they've already failed the test once that it's not very encouraging.”

Since students enrolled in summer school did not demonstrate the skills necessary to pass the STAAR exam, teachers provided more modeled instruction and less independent practice to support learning and growth. Teachers explicitly modeled aloud test-taking skills and strategies while students followed along, but most importantly, teachers made sure to practice and review every lesson and assessment with the students. Like one student noted, “we do a lot of work together so that everyone understands.” This was one approach that teachers implemented in the STAAR English classroom to support student motivation and learning. When students were not understanding a particular skill or concept, teachers would revisit the Scope & Sequence or conduct one-to-one conferencing with the students to identify areas in need of improvement. As I reviewed student responses, I noticed a pattern of strategies and behaviors that teachers consistently did during summer school, which were noted by students in the post-survey as *something* that their teacher does in the classroom to support their motivation and learning:

- go over passages
- read with us
- rereads anything
- gave us examples so we can understand better
- gave us practice tests
- reviewing

During observations, teachers followed Pearson and Gallagher’s (1983) Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model, or the “I Do – We Do – You Do it Together – You Do it Alone” structure (Clark, 2014; Deagon, 2021; Fisher & Frey, 2013). Whether the lesson was in revising,

editing, reading, or writing, teachers consistently modeled specific test-taking skills and strategies, verbally and explicitly (I Do). The SIRIUS Zingers workbook supported an Explicit Instruction model in which the teacher first provided guided instruction by following along with the accompanied test-taking tips and strategies. Through guided instruction (We Do), teachers modeled test-taking skills and strategies step-by-step for each lesson while asking questions to assess student knowledge and learning (See Table 11). Students generally responded correctly, but when students were unable to respond, teachers used guiding questions to lead students to the correct answer. If students responded incorrectly, teachers would provide further support and supplementary instruction, using guiding questions to an answer and modeling through a question more slowly to ensure students were grasping the material. Once students demonstrated understanding, teachers would gradually release students towards independent thinking and application of the skills (Saccomano, 2014) by providing independent practice (You Do) while continuing to provide one-on-one support as they walked around and checked on students' work and progress.

Table 11

Examples of questions teachers asked during instruction.

Checking for understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Can you prove to me why this is the correct answer?"• "Why is this an incomplete sentence?"• "What corrections do I need to make?"• "What is wrong with this sentence?"• "What do we have to do next?"• "Why is the word ___ positive or negative?"• "Do we know what to do if..."<ul style="list-style-type: none">"What do I do if...""What is it called when...""What else do I have to do..."
Ensuring students are following along	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fill in the Blank<ul style="list-style-type: none">"If it's not a ___ then its a ___"• Multiple Choice<ul style="list-style-type: none">"What did you all put for number ___? A, B, C, or D?"• Open Ended<ul style="list-style-type: none">"Can you all give me an example of ___?"• Yes/No<ul style="list-style-type: none">"Do I have a ___, yes or no"
Guiding students to an answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funnel<ul style="list-style-type: none">(T) "What is a ___"(S) reads PPT(T) "So, what is a ___"(S) shares their definition

Instructional Strategy and Behaviors #3: Teacher’s approach to students, learning, and the classroom

It is beneficial to know what does *not* motivate students in the classroom to recognize behaviors that may be a cause for a decrease in motivation. Pre-survey and post-survey responses were reviewed to see what students had to say about motivating and non-motivating, “things their teacher does to support their motivation and learning”. Three themes emerged within each

question: the teacher's approach to students, learning, and the classroom.

Teacher's approach to students

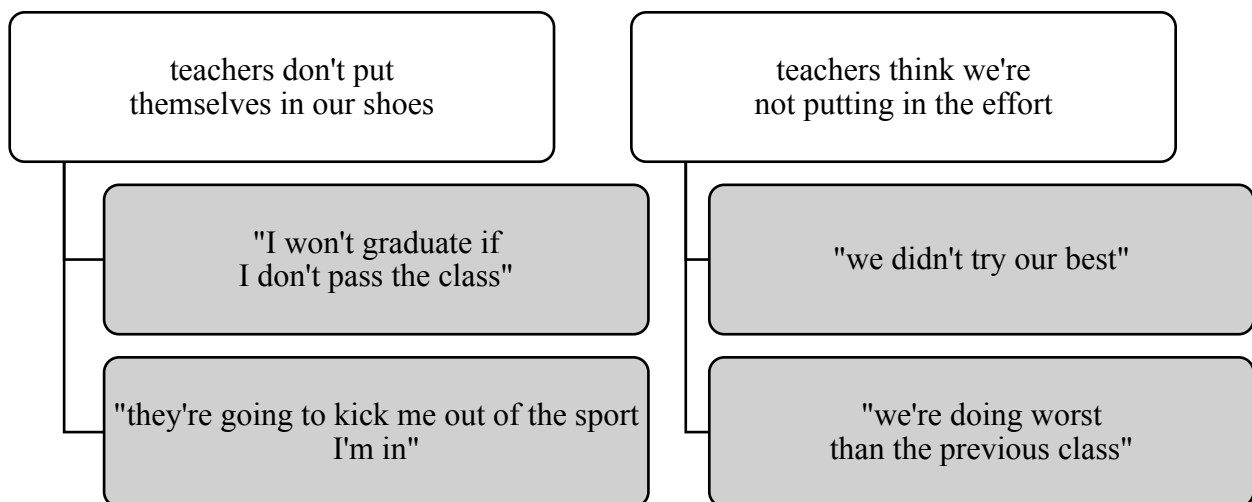
The teacher played a major role in motivating students across survey responses. Students were specific to describe behaviors of a teacher who was *motivating*, *helpful*, and having an *attitude* that resonated positively with students. Students illustrated a teacher's "good attitude" and "good energy" with words like *kind*, *patient*, *cool*, *funny*, *respectful*, and *understanding*. Several students were more specific to note that the teacher, "hypes us up", "interacts with us", and even "wants to know about us". Teacher A shared the following:

"I definitely think another way to motivate students is by making connections with them and building relationships. The only problem with that is, you know, it's a STAAR class, so it's very, *teach to the test*, and it's kind of like you either spend time making connections and building relationships with them or you spend time teaching. It's very hard to do both. So I would love to grow in that area and make time to build connections with those students because that's another way you can motivate them: by getting them to trust you, building that trusting relationship, and it's hard because, like I said, in the STAAR class, your main focus or your goal is to make sure those kids either pass the STAAR test or they show some sort of growth."

On the contrary, students noted behaviors that do *not* support their motivation and learning. I hope that as we hear what students described as not motivating (although it may be uncomfortable for some readers) that we as teachers will become more reflective and mindful of our approaches towards students and more supported by our school leaders. As I read through each students' response, I saw myself as a teacher in several of their descriptions. I discuss this reflection further in Chapter 5.

The pressures and consequences that come with high-stakes testing can easily transfer onto the teacher, and like Teacher A said, “the kids feel your energy.” *Something* a teacher does that a student found as non-motivating was that the, “teacher is always stressing”, which can lead teachers to be upset or demanding, and at times not engaging with the students, as several students noted. As a teacher, I have been down this road before with the numerous pressures of accountability, so to know that when students are *not* motivated to learn because, as they noted, of a “long day” or a “bad day” (along with the fact that some students have a lowered confidence and “feel dumb”), students do not want their teachers to give up on them. In one observation, a teacher was completing a DOL activity with students and asked, “What corrections does this sentence need?” Students did not respond, and the teacher lost her patience and commented, “Hello? Are you all awake? Did you all hear me? I feel like I’m talking to myself.” This negative approach likely shut-down students from responding any further and did nothing to support student motivation. As challenging as it can be sometimes, our words and behaviors do impact the motivation and learning of our students. Students shared examples of words that teachers have expressed in the classroom that do NOT support motivation and learning (Table 12).

Table 12
Comments from teachers that do NOT support motivation and learning.



The teacher as motivating and helpful goes hand-in-hand with increasing motivation and learning in the classroom. As Teacher A expressed, “We’re taught to be very positive with the students,” and as students noted, teachers “kept pushing me to try my best”, further illustrating that the teacher who is motivating, “never gives up on me”. During another one of my observations, Teacher B was reviewing an independent practice with the students to assess their performance. Teacher B would ask, “What did everyone put for #?” and call on each student to share their response aloud. At first, students were quiet, likely hesitant to say the wrong answer, but Teacher B encouraged participation by saying, “It’s ok if you didn’t get the right answer, you learn from your mistakes.” Students became more responsive, and the teacher guided students to the correct answer when it was needed. To support motivation and learning, one student noted about this teacher in particular, “It’s okay if I get the answer wrong”, while another student noted, “He was there to help me when I was stuck in a question.” It is through these words and behaviors that teachers are increasing motivation, even though at times it may feel like teachers have, “tried everything under the sun” – as Teacher D said – to pick up student motivation.

Teacher’s approach to learning

The approach that teachers take towards student learning impacts motivation, especially when the teacher does “not understand how I think” or “doesn’t tell me what I’m doing wrong”, as students noted. Additionally, the use of timers and “moving a little too fast” was perceived by students as *not* motivating, as the words “hurry up” repeated often from teachers. Time constraints were also a challenge, as is every summer school semester. There was so much to review, practice, and prepare for the STAAR English exam that ten days is not enough instructional time, nevertheless, 3-hours of instruction for 10-days. One student expressed that while, “just being in the same class for 3-hours long is so frustrating”, for Teacher D, students

seem “disconnected from the classroom”, and students know they need support and want that support from their teachers.

When one student was asked, “When you are NOT motivated to learn, something you want your teacher to know is...” he noted, “them to ask if I need help”. With all things considered, students were provided the ongoing support that they not only wanted but found motivating. The acts from teachers walking around to help, going up to a student and “checking up on me”, and “reviewing” helped provide the support and motivation that students need. Students found it motivating when teachers “work with us” and “take time to explain when we don’t understand” because like one student noted, the teacher “helped me in my weak spots” whereas another student expressed, “there were many errors that I didn’t know [but] now I feel confident in my test.”

The use of immediate grading, feedback, and discussion supported motivation by keeping students on track with their progress and asking for help from their teacher in specific areas of need. In Figure 4, an English 2 student completed a STAAR reading passage independently in class while using test-taking strategies the teacher modeled. The teacher provided immediate grading, verbal feedback, and support based on the student’s annotations and responses, guiding the student through incorrect responses. Over the weeks, students were given independent practices to assess their individual knowledge and learning. In both English 1 classrooms, independent practice assessments, or Checkpoints, were given at the end of each week after 3-days focused on review and teacher-modeled instruction. While students independently worked through STAAR formatted passages and questions, English 1 teachers walked around the classroom to ensure students were completing test-taking strategies that had been modeled and practiced throughout the week. English 1 teachers would grade each Checkpoint, and after all

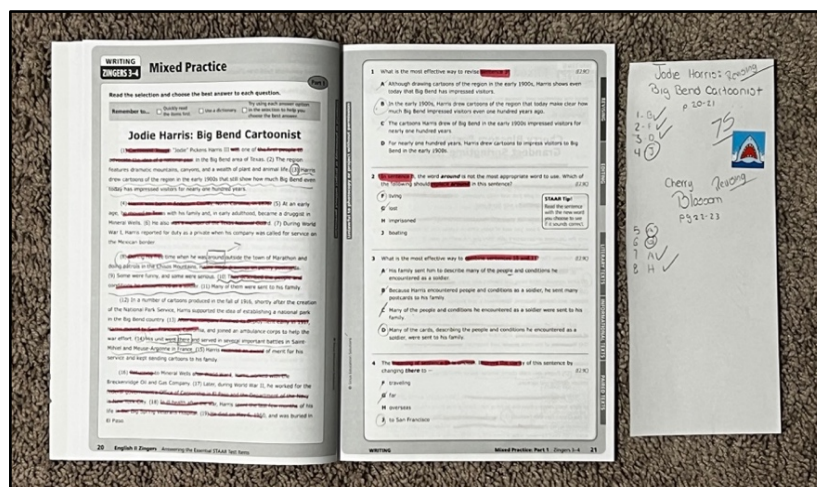
students had completed their assessment, English 1 teachers would review the reading passage and questions with all students, modeling test-taking strategies aloud and verbally guiding students through the correct answers. In one English 2 classroom, independent practice assessments were given daily during the last hour of the class, while the first 2 hours of class were focused on review and teacher-modeled instruction. Teacher A noted:

“We did try to give a lot of verbal feedback and praise. We graded their assignments like right on the spot so they can see if they were on the right track or if they needed to do a little bit more work, put in a little bit more work.”

English 2 students received immediate grading and feedback from their teacher as the work was scored and returned to the student. Initially, students were asked to reattempt incorrect answers prior to being provided with one-on-one support, in which the English 2 teacher would review errors and explain what was wrong with their selected answer choice. All STAAR English teachers used data from Checkpoints to address student weaknesses and content that needed to be retaught.

Figure 4

Example of student work completed independently in class shows the use of test-taking strategies the teacher modeled.

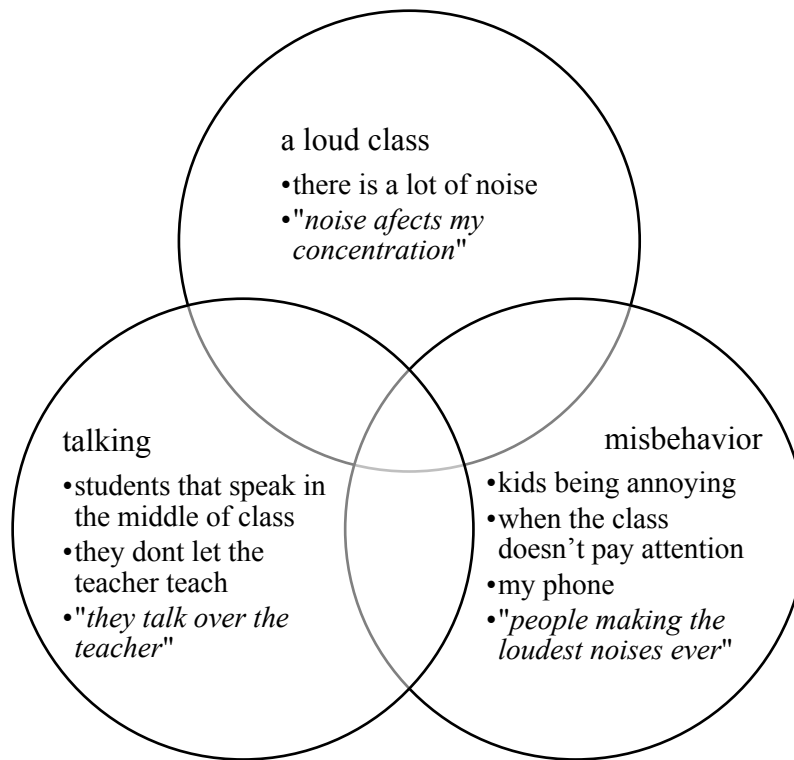


Teacher’s approach to the classroom

Last but not least, classroom climate and classroom management played a key role in motivating students. The teacher’s approach towards students and instruction together create the classroom climate; however, students noted particular distractions that got in the way of motivation and learning, building on the importance of classroom management. In the pre-survey, students described distractions as un-motivating, although these descriptors did not appear in the post-survey (See Table 13). This was important to note, as many times, these distractions are out of the teacher’s control. Teacher A expressed, “My STAAR classes have always been pretty big and that causes a lot of issues in the classroom”. School enrollment, master scheduling, and STAAR performance results affect the number of students in a classroom and with the shortage of teachers, STAAR classes are usually at full capacity. Recalling that STAAR classes include students re-attempting the STAAR for the first time or more, motivation is low and discipline issues are high. Referring to unmotivated students in the classroom, or those who caused distractions during instruction, Teacher D recalled, “when *those* kids were out of the room, the other kids were a lot more focused.”

Table 13

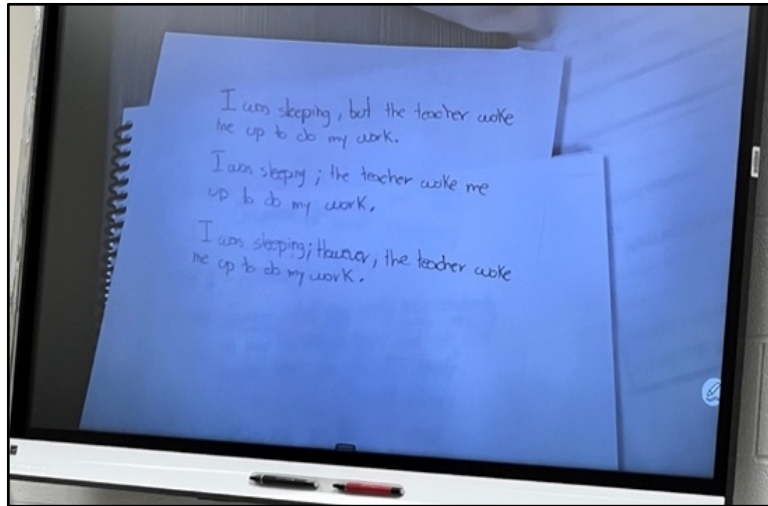
Students identify distractions that do not support motivation in the classroom.



In data from an English 1 observation, students were asked to write one sentence three times, each in the form of a compound sentence (See Figure 3). Students went off topic, held side-conversations with their friends, and had not attempted the activity. It was my first observation, so naturally I felt that I was the distraction. After waking up and getting on task, one student shared his compound sentence aloud with the class, “Summer school sucks. Summer school is for dumb people.” Teacher C approached this comment in what I would describe as proactive: one-to-one, she calmly reminded the student to stay on task, patiently redirected their thinking, and guided the student to “use a positive real-world experience.” The student’s new sentence, as seen in Figure 5, was praised with a high 5 and an “Awesome Job!”

Figure 5

Example of student work showing his understanding of a compound sentence in its three forms with the class while also sharing a real-world experience from summer school.



As previously discussed and seen from Figure 5, this same student in particular did not want to be at summer school and already had a negative perception, “Summer school sucks. Summer school is for dumb people.” Furthermore, he characterized his motivation through his behaviors, and used his sentences during instruction to express his feelings, “I was sleeping. The teacher woke me up to do my work.” From the pre-survey, one student noted, “Whenever I’m not motivated, most of the time I’m just falling asleep”, in which *falling asleep* was a recurrent characteristic of students who were not motivated. However, one other student noted that when they are not motivated, “Don’t tell me to talk in front of the class.” When asked to speak in front of the class, students may use this opportunity to be funny or mock a situation, as previously observed, or act in other ways that can negatively disrupt learning and impact the classroom. Ingemarson, Rosendahl, Bodin, and Birgegard (2021) stated that, “When students in class act in disruptive ways, it affects learning and peer interactions for all students,” (p. 219), which could create a negative classroom climate for other students.

Research Question #3: How do teachers describe ways to support student motivation to improve learning?

Sitting in a 3-hour class can be a challenge for students to remain focused and on-task, especially when, according to students, “time is going slow” and “all this time I would’ve had 2 months of summer but I’m stuck in summer school”. On the other hand, there is so much content to review and practice for the STAAR exam with only 10-instructional days to prepare. One student described, “Me being honest, I don't find much motivation, the teachers just give us examples and questions that the STAAR has given us previously” while another student described, “the bench is full of papers” as unmotivating. The workload during summer school was illustrated by students with too much work, long lessons, lots of reading, and “work that takes up the entire class” as one student noted. This workload was described by another student as “overworking the students”, so as Teacher B described, having a “brain-break” away from the books was not only needed but found to support motivation.

Teacher C expressed that teachers have “tried everything under the sun” to pick up student motivation and keep students engaged. As I have shared, I sat down with teachers to understand ways student motivation was supported in their classroom and three common themes emerged between all four participants: student motivation was supported through *praise*, *rewards*, and *online learning games*.

Supporting Student Motivation Through Praise

Many students identified praise as *something that* teachers do to support their motivation. Praise was defined by Ingemarson, Rosendahl, Bodin, and Birgegard (2021) as, “positive verbal or nonverbal attention to students’ behavior” (p. 219). During one observation, students were completing the DOL for the day, following along with the teacher, and to assess students’ knowledge, the teacher asked the students how to correct a sentence. Students had to identify

errors in a sentence and began to share their responses aloud, identifying corrections needed within the sentence. The teacher responded with verbal praise such as, “I love it!” and “Thank you, that was beautiful!” as well as physical praise, which included *high 5s* and *fist bumps*. When teachers praised student participation, efforts, and success, students smiled and celebrated with their friends over their accomplishment and even “breathed a breath of fresh air” after an independent activity, as I noted during one observation.

In the pre-survey, students were asked to, “Search for an image of a quote that you say to yourself when you need motivation,” and four general themes were established amongst all 36 images: *never give up*, *keep trying*, *stay positive*, and *believe in yourself* (See Figure 6). This data was collected to identify one way student motivation can be supported by teacher’s praise.

Figure 6
Motivational quotes students say to themselves.



Sun (2021) noted that praise provides encouragement, builds self-confidence, and creates good teacher-learner relationships while also supporting learning and good behaviors. Praise can be general or specific and can act as a form of motivation for students when teachers use it effectively. General praise is most commonly used in the classroom, using words and phrases

such as *Good Job* or *Very Good* when a student answers a teacher's question correctly or accomplishes a task, and it was most observed to support or acknowledge student success.

Behavior-specific praise, however, can improve academic behavior and student conduct, create a positive learning setting, and develop a positive self-concept in others (Burnett & Mandel, 2010; Neef, Kranak, Shapiro, Xu, & Catania, 2022; Sun, 2021). Students feel good when they are praised specifically for their efforts and abilities, and according to a study from Burnett and Mandel (2010), “[students] felt proud of themselves, [praise] was motivating (they wanted to try harder to get more praise), and they generally felt good inside” (p. 149). In the classroom, “praise should be associated with the performances or skills that the teacher desires to develop” (Sun, 2021, p. 4).

In one observation, Teacher A asked, “Where in this sentence do I need a comma? Why does this sentence need a comma?” Students did not respond to either of these questions but one student took out his class folder and started reviewing his notes. Teacher A praised this behavior saying, “Great Job, Jake (pseudonym)! I see you flipping through your notes to help me get a response.” Jake smiled and almost immediately, all the other students opened up their folder and reviewed their notes to provide a response to the teacher. Along with his notes, Jake responded correctly to the teacher and was able to identify correct comma placement in a sentence. This is an example of a student not knowing an answer to a question, but *not giving up* and working his way to a response.

Whether students are struggling to understand a particular concept or succeeding at performing a specific skill, efforts, abilities, and specific behaviors should be recognized in a way that will support student self-efficacy and motivation. Therefore, knowing what students tell themselves when they need motivation could help teachers understand what students need to

hear from the teacher as *someone* who supports motivation in the classroom.

Supporting Student Motivation Through Rewards

Throughout observations, I noted changes in both body language and behavior from students when their teacher said, “Winner of this [review] game will win a prize!” or “If we get all the questions right, I’ll bring everyone a candy tomorrow.” Like Teacher D said in her pre-interview, “Don’t underestimate the power of candy,” and with those words, I observed students sitting-up straight, leaning into their workbooks or computers, and asking questions so that they could get the answers correct. Nevertheless, external rewards can be consequential for supporting student motivation. In one observation, Teacher E praised successful student performance on a STAAR reading passage saying, “Yay! You all did so good!”, and a student responded with, “So what do we get?” Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, and Farley-Ripple (2017) suggested that when the use of external and tangible rewards are used to manage specific behaviors or highlight social comparisons between peers, intrinsic motivation is likely to be harmed. Consequently, extrinsic motivation is supported, and now actions and behaviors are based on the, “importance of external praise, rewards, and punitive consequences, and not to self-perceptions of competence and autonomy” (p.11).

One other consequential impact of using rewards to support motivation and learning in the classroom actually impacted motivation. As I stated, when the use of external and tangible rewards are used to manage behaviors, intrinsic motivation is likely to be harmed because actions and behaviors are based on the, “importance of external praise and rewards” (Bear, Slaughter, Mantz, and Farley-Ripple, 2017, p.11). During one of my earlier observations, English 1 students were independently working through a STAAR reading passage. The teacher said, “The first person to get a 100 on the first try will get a bag of Oreo cookies.” Two boys sat

near me, who I identify as Boy 1 and Boy 2. I observed Boy 1 working through the passage: *leaning forward into his workbook, annotating the selection, and using test-taking strategies.*

When Boy 1 finished, he called for the teacher and shared his thinking process with one question where he was debating between two answer choices. The teacher wanted to challenge Boy 1 to independently think through the question, and while he worked through both responses, Boy 2, who was sitting next to him, leaned over and copied his answer selections, which were already graded and correct. Boy 1 made his final decision, and unfortunately, it was incorrect. Boy 1 missed his chance at being “the first person to get a 100 on the first try” and winning a bag of Oreo cookies. However, Boy 2 heard and selected the correct answer, and as the “the first person to get a 100 on the first try,” he was rewarded with the bag of Oreo cookies. Boy 1 became completely unengaged, putting his head down for the duration of my observation. Rather than rewarding success and supporting motivation, this teacher unknowingly rewarded a behavior that caused one student to cheat while seemingly punishing another student for trying. Teachers who use rewards to support motivation should become mindful of these kinds of situations.

The above-mentioned situation was not observed by the teacher. I was not able to discuss this situation with the teacher because I did not want to impact my role as the researcher or the future of my observations since I had just started conducting observations. Furthermore, I had just started becoming acquainted with this teacher because of my research, and I did not want to make any one feel uncomfortable as observations continued.

Teacher C rewarded her students through external motivators, with challenges and competitions, “First person to get 100 wins!” and I immediately observed students get focused and competitive, working really hard for that first perfect score, and a snack. Just like Teacher D joked but also highlighted, “I know, [snacks] work like a charm. We need more snacks. We

should be supplied with buckets of snacks.” Summer school leaders provided snacks and other incentives to reward student attendance, but Teacher C shared that fellow colleagues used more “exciting snacks” that included candy, cookies, chips, and chocolate that appealed more to the students’ liking to reward classroom participation and support motivation.

Teachers also used stickers as a reward for good work. Teacher A shared, “Yes, I did do stickers. It kind of reminds them of their like elementary days, so when they see a sticker on their paper, they know that they did well and that motivates them.” Teacher D shared the following during our post-interview:

“I was sure to make sure that we did do the stickers on the grades, and I know that helps. There was a conversation about it in the afternoon class about the students wanting stickers. We even put them inside of the books just in case they peeked to see if the books were graded. Because I think it's important that the kids see that we grade everything, and check that it was done.

This goes back to teachers using immediate feedback as a means to motivate their students because students do want to know if they are progressing and doing good, and the use of stickers can be *something that* “brings you into a good mood”, “makes you keep going”, or “makes you work harder”, as students identified the *things* to support their motivation and learning. I observed that students only received a sticker when they achieved satisfactory results on independent practices, and like Teacher A noted, “Even though they're in high school, they love the stickers”. Along with words as simple as “great job!” or “perfect”, stickers were used to reward students who completed their assignments and received a passing score.

Another reward that teachers used to encourage participation and support student motivation was the use of brain breaks as an incentive to work towards. Teacher A used breaks

to give students something to look forward to: “Let's just get through this next passage and then we will get like a 10 minute break”, whereas Teacher B used breaks as a reward: “I'll give them down time to play games or eventually I even adopted what other teachers did, so I would just give them a 10 to 15 minute *just shut down and do nothing* break for what you've done.” As students described, summer school can be long, boring, and overworking, so like Teacher D said:

“We were always sure to give [students] their break, their 10-minute break, even whenever we didn't get as much done as we wanted to. We needed to give them that break because that's their little incentive for the day, and that's kind of the marker of the halfway point, like, we finished the reading section or we finish the writing section, so now we have that break in between.”

The use of brain breaks as a reward from the summer school curriculum encouraged students to accomplish a task or complete an assignment, which were typically modeled by and followed along with the teacher. This type of reward did not support learning or improve motivation to learn. During brain breaks, after students completed an activity independently, I would review their work and notice a non-passing grade, which showed me that students either completed the work quickly without much effort or simply did not understand the assignment.

Supporting Student Motivation Through Online Learning Games

Teacher A shared the following, “Students enjoy competitive games. Students *do* like to get competitive with each other and I feel like that motivates them instead of just answering questions from passages.” Online learning games were used during summer school as a reward, to encourage student participation, or like Teacher A noted, “to give them a little break from the passage”, and fortunately, as Teacher B pointed out, “Blooket was something that [students] seemed to latch onto motivational wise.” Teacher B further explained that online learning games

such as Blooket were, “something different other than the same kind of paperwork and review [students] do normally or just listening to lecture all the time.”

Blooket is an interactive online learning game that is intended to motivate students through reward and friendly competition with their classmates. Different game modes are available, but students enjoyed *Gold Quest* most. Students select a character or “friendly little block” (Stewart, 2022) to answer questions, and then compete against their classmates and battle for first place. When students answer questions correctly, they are able to earn gold or steal gold (points) from their classmates. When students answer questions incorrectly, students lose gold and the chance to steal from their peers. Questions repeat throughout the duration of the game, “driv[ing] students to perform well while reviewing” (Stewart, 2022). I observed Blooket being used in classrooms during summer school and as a teacher who also used it in the classroom, I found this activity rewarding and enjoyed by students. As students competed with one another for first place, Blooket allowed students to socialize with their peers while testing their knowledge and reviewing content in an entertaining and competitive manner.

Online learning games also included Kahoot, Quizizz, and Jeopardy, but many students noted Blooket as their favorite lesson and motivating activity during summer school. Prior to the start of summer school, Teacher C shared, “There's a new one I want to try out, Blooket. I hear it's good” and by the end of summer school, she expressed, “[Students] loved Blooket! They really did. They got very into [Blooket].” Competition can influence motivation and learning and also increase students' sense of belonging (Bostan, Stanciu, & Andronic, 2021; Kowalski, 2019). In earlier studies, Bostan, Stanciu, and Andronic (2021) found that students, “were enthusiastic when competing to others, leading them to be more motivated, to try harder, and exert more effort than when working alone” (p. 1). Additionally, competition can, “stimulate learner's

interest, improve their participation, and enhance their learning through challenges, rewards, and competing for ranking” (Liu, Zhou, Li, & Ye, 2022, p. 1). In a recent study, data from the use of a competitive learning game revealed that, “students in the competitive classes showed obvious learning enthusiasm, could actively participate in the game, and their vocabulary level improved” (Liu, Zhou, Li, & Ye, 2022, p. 12). Nevertheless, competition can also cause, “tension and frustration among lower-level students” (Liu, Zhou, Li, & Ye (2022, p. 1) and “undermine student motivation and subsequent achievement, particularly by shifting to *winning* instead of the intrinsic value of the task” (Kowalski, 2019, p. 389). So while student motivation is supported through the use of online learning games, learning may not actually be taking place, and the concept of winning or feeling a sense of belonging from peers may be the *something that* students actually find motivating.

Interaction between the Research and the Context

How the Context Impacted the Results

Although my research only allowed for 10-days of summer school instruction, the students who would be completing my survey and that I would be observing are students that have failed the STAAR exam once or more times, so I was looking forward to fully focusing on student behaviors within this limited time. Students in the English 1 and English 2 classroom consisted of incoming Sophomores and Juniors, so their perspectives and experiences would be useful because of school schedules and graduation plans. Testing during summer is the students last chance to pass the STAAR exam before the new school year begins, so if the student fails, they would be enrolled in a STAAR remedial class during the Fall semester and have to retest in December. At this point, students prefer taking a course that meets their personal interests and graduation plan.

STAAR remedial classes can seem very repetitive. As I observed in summer school, the Scope & Sequence consisted of one STAAR lesson after another with teachers drilling test-taking skills and strategies so students can have ample practice to prepare for the STAAR exam. Teacher D shared that in order to prepare students for the STAAR exam, “exposure to the test and the passages that they're going to see” was necessary:

“[Students] need to know what to expect and I feel that the more practice they get with that, the better and easier it will be to tackle the test. I know it's not always the most interesting content, but I try and tell them that it *is* interesting and that you don't always have to like what you read, but you can at least appreciate it because it has something to teach you...but a lot of kids are just like *it's boring*, but it's what is on the test.”

The daily and repeated use of the SIRIUS Zingers workbook during instruction was *something that* students identified as boring and unmotivating. This is the same approach that STAAR English teachers take during the Fall and Spring semesters, so attending a three- or seven-hour school day during summer is understandably not ideal for many students. Accordingly, motivation was expected to be low, but nevertheless, I was surprised to see how many students were actually engaged in the classroom and the small number of students that obviously did not want to be there. As I noted from interviews, surveys, and classroom observations, students who were not engaged usually had their head down, slept during class, used the phone during instruction, did not interact or respond to the teacher, or finished an assignment within a few minutes. Students who were engaged were typically following along with their teacher, completing teacher-modeled notes in their workbooks, and interacting with the teacher, asking questions and/or responding to questions.

Approximately 100 students for English 1 and 140 students for English 2 were anticipated to attend summer school. This number included students who needed one or both

STAAR exams as well as students exempt from the English 2 exam, so the number is not precise. Attendance varied day by day but as STAAR got closer, attendance numbers slightly increased. An unaccounted number of students were given the Parent/Student Consent to Participate in Research Study form (See Appendix C) by their STAAR English teacher – I made 125 copies and about 15 forms were left behind – this would include students who requested another copy because “they forgot” or “misplaced it”, according to teachers. Only 16 forms were signed and returned. The issue of forms being returned in a timely matter along with the uncertainty of student attendance did not allow me to focus data on STAAR English “bubble kids”. Thirty-six students completed the pre-survey, whereas 34 students completed the post-survey, yet only 26 students completed both pre- and post- survey. I did not have the turnout that I expected, but I had a reasonable outcome overall. The data that students provided will be valuable for STAAR English teachers to prepare for the upcoming school year.

The school principal was fully on board with the research, whereas the summer school administrator was skeptical, likely with apprehension that research would impact learning and instruction. All STAAR English teachers were also fully on board and very supportive with the research, participating in interviews and observations without hesitation even though I was not fully acquainted with four of the seven teacher participants. Each high school in Power ISD has a freshman campus due to the high population of students in our schools, and four of the seven teachers came from freshman campus. I appreciate that these teachers trusted me and allowed me into their classrooms in what I would consider as a vulnerable experience. As a teacher, I know that having someone sit in your class and observe you can be intimidating – as one teacher put it – but as I stated earlier, all teachers were reassured of no judgement, as well as protection and confidentiality of their name.

How the Research Impacted the Context

This past academic school year was our first school year fully returning to in-person instruction, and as I discussed earlier in my study, teachers and students had faced numerous challenges and setbacks in the classroom for the past two years. Along with instruction and learning, teachers encountered major declines in student motivation and increases in student behavior. *It was a long year*, as we would say, so this summer school semester, which started two days after the end of the school year, was likely too soon to recover from COVID-19. From all the pressures of teaching during the regular school semester versus the summer school semester, the atmosphere definitely appeared different. Teacher C highlighted her appreciation of the “laid back atmosphere of summer school” during her post-interview, and this seemed to appeal teachers who worked summer school, as all four teacher participants shared this same notion. Whether it was small group instruction or lesser discipline issues in the classroom, the shorter time frame or a pre-coordinated Scope & Sequence, teachers noted these positives as a reason to work summer school, which may have impacted their attitude and approach to the classroom, *something that* students identified to support motivation.

I observed teachers in their natural setting and behavior as anyone would see during a regular school semester. I learned that all but one teacher only provided instruction when I conducted observations. When I was not present in his classroom, independent practices were assigned and instructional support was provided if a student requested it. Furthermore, since the STAAR exam was to be administered 100% online during summer, the district’s Scope & Sequence focused on the use of technology, so I was able to view student work online. Students were not completing their work independently and the teacher was not providing feedback or discussion to support or improve learning. Even though instructional strategies and behaviors in were observed, noted, and identified to support motivation, it was made clear to me in

conversation that the instructional strategies and behaviors were not carried out during the day.

Coming in the Spring 2023 semester, the STAAR English exam will be redesigned so students can demonstrate their understanding and explain their thinking through writing. The following seven new questions types will be included: (1) text entry, (2) inline choice, (3) multipart, (4) match table grid, (5) multiselect, (6) short constructed responses, and (7) extended constructed response (Texas Education Agency, 2022). Table 14 presents an overview of the seven new question types that will appear on the STAAR English exam in the Spring 2023. This will make the STAAR exam more rigorous for students to practice and prepare for, nevertheless, meet academic passing standards. According to TEA (2022):

House Bill 3906 established a “multiple choice cap,” meaning that no more than 75% of points on a STAAR test can be based on multiple choice questions. Texas educators help[ed] design new question types that reflect classroom test questions and allow students more ways to show their understanding (para. 1).

Table 14
New question types in the redesign of the STAAR exam.

Question Type	Description
Text entry	Student responds by typing a number, word, or phrase.
Inline choice	Student selects the correct answer(s) from one or more drop-down menu(s).
Multipart	Student responds to a two-part question: Part B asks students to give evidence or explain their thinking for their answer to Part A.
Match table grid	Student matches statements to different categories presented in a table grid.
Multiselect	Student selects more than one correct answer from a set of possible answers.
Short constructed response	Student gives a brief explanation in their own words to demonstrate their understanding of reading content OR demonstrates proficiency in writing by constructing a sentence that corrects a revising or editing error.
Extended constructed response	Student writes an in-depth response explaining, analyzing, and evaluating information provided in a reading selection.

Teacher interviews, classroom observations, and student surveys were completed within 10-days of summer school instruction. Teacher participants were provided with a copy of both pre- and post- interview transcripts via school email and asked to member check for accuracy. Minor grammatical errors were noted (*incorrect period placement, sentence structure*) from the NVivo Transcription services, but not one of the participants shared any issues or concerns with their interview transcript, participant ideas, nor observations, which were available for review upon request at any time and discussed during debriefing sessions. Research data and findings were gathered from teachers and students enrolled in a summer school STAAR English remedial course. While the results of this research will serve as groundwork for how teachers can approach instruction in the coming semester, I also believe that the overall summer school experience served a starting point to initiate conversations that focus on the classroom climate, use of praise and rewards to support student motivation, and future professional development for ELAR teachers.

Summary of Chapter 4

High school student motivation in the STAAR English remedial classroom is low, one known reason being that students who have received a STAAR performance label of *Did Not Meet Grade Level* are repeatedly enrolled in STAAR remedial courses to receive additional support and tutoring (Texas Education Agency, 2021). Remedial classes and services are intended to improve learning and academic achievement. During summer school, teachers modeled aloud test-taking strategies and completed STAAR passages and questions along with the students to develop student self-efficacy, supporting the student's, "own ability to learn and carry out a given task" (Supervía & Robres, 2021, p.2). Teachers asked questions during modeled instruction to check for understanding, to ensure students were following along, and to

guide students to an answer, which I observed students engaged and correctly responding to the teacher. When students did not respond to the teacher, guiding questions were used to support students through the thinking process and the correct answer. Through modeled instruction, following along, and use of questioning, students were supported in the learning process in hopes of becoming confident in their ability to work through a problem independently and successfully. Furthermore, teachers used immediate grading, feedback and discussion (or review of the content) to make students aware of their progress, and also used verbal praise and rewards to acknowledge student learning growth or achievement.

Ultimately, teachers supported a classroom environment where learning and success were sought after, attainable, acknowledged, evident, and commended (McCabe, 2006; Ortlieb & Schatz, 2020), supporting student self-efficacy and developing motivation. The way students defined motivation using specific external and internal motivating factors – *someone, something that, feeling, and personality trait* – puts into perspective how the teacher plays a major role in developing student self-efficacy based on the instructional strategies, lessons, and behaviors that are implemented in the classroom.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings from Chapter 4

The goal of this research was to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that teachers implemented to support motivation in the high school STAAR English classroom. The teacher, as *someone*, and the classroom climate, as *something that*, played a key role to support students' motivation. Specific behaviors that related to the teacher's attitude, instruction, and classroom management were noted by students as *something that* supported motivation and learning, all which establish the classroom climate that a teacher creates. Additionally, students provided specific examples of behaviors that *did* and *did not* support motivation, ultimately illustrating that when positive teaching and learning experiences between teachers and students were present in the classroom, teachers were supporting student self-efficacy and promoting a positive, "perception of [students] own ability to learn and carry out a given task" (Supervía & Robres, 2021, p.2).

Discussion of Results in Relation to the Literature

Data from teacher interviews, student surveys, and classroom observations connected to the literature's classroom climate and use of explicit instruction. As students followed along, the teacher modeled aloud test-taking skills and strategies, using annotations and color-coding methods to illustrate how to approach STAAR reading passages and questions. Teachers used various questioning strategies to assess student understanding, ensure students were following along, and guide students through an answer. Additionally, teachers used differentiation and adapted, "instruction, materials, content, students' project, product and assessment to meet the learning needs of individual students," (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020, p. 137).

Creating a Positive Classroom Climate

The classroom is a place where social, emotional, and academic support should be present between the teacher and student so students can develop the motivation to, “work harder in the classroom, persevere, accept direction and criticism, cope better with stress and pay attention more” (Yunus, Osman, and Ishak, 2011, p. 2638). When students were asked how teachers supported motivation, students noted specific behaviors about the teacher that focused on the teacher’s attitude, instruction, and classroom management, illustrating the significance of creating a positive classroom climate.

The teacher as *someone* who influences student motivation can help develop students’ goals, beliefs, and experiences, as well as social, emotional, and academic skills (Koca, 2016; Öqvist and Malmström, 2016). Only one of the four teacher participants in this study identified the importance of the teacher-student relationships as a means to support student motivation, but I observed all teacher participants supporting student motivation throughout summer school by interacting with the students, as one student noted, “wants to know about us” and using praise and rewards to celebrate student success. However, when teachers use praise in the classroom, Neef, Kranak, Shapiro, Xu, and Catania (2022) differentiated between general praise typically used by teachers such as *Awesome*, *Good Job*, and *Great Work* versus behavior-specific praise that can improve, “both academic behavior and student conduct such as disruptions and task engagement” (p. 2). General praise was observed most in the classroom, and although students noted that motivation was supported when teachers praised their efforts and success, it does not support a desired change in behavior.

Additionally, teachers supported student motivation and learning by providing immediate grading and feedback to students and using this data to prepare targeted instruction the following

day. The manner in which teachers handled student discipline and distractions in the classroom was an approach that needs to be addressed as some teachers handled behaviors in a way that students defined as *not* supportive to their motivation and learning. The aforementioned data correlates with recent literature from Burns (2022), who described three features of a teacher–student relationship: effectiveness of communication, responsiveness to student need (behaviorally and academically), and deep knowledge of the classroom environment (p. 72).

Instructional Strategies for STAAR English Courses

STAAR remedial courses include students labeled as *Did Not Meet Grade Level* through the STAAR English exam. Discipline issues and distractions are generally high because motivation is low, but the teachers modeling testing-skills and strategies along with the students played a key role in supporting student motivation in the STAAR English class during summer school. Students identified that “doing strategies with the class” and “doing a lot of work together” supported learning because students were able to “ask questions” or “ask for help” if a particular concept was not understood.

However, teachers followed a very structured Scope & Sequence lesson plan created by district coordinators. This left little to no time for cooperative learning and social-emotional learning to occur even though both teachers and students noted that working in groups was one way to support student motivation and learning. As I observed teachers implement the Scope & Sequence during summer school, students were not given opportunities to engage with their peers nor learn from one another. Teachers did not utilize cooperative learning nor social-emotional learning strategies during summer school, which are generally implemented during the school year. Time as a limitation hindered teachers from giving students the space to learn with, by, and for each other (Fernandez-Rio, Sanz, Fernandez-Cando, & Santos, 2017; Alcalá, Garijo,

Perez-Pueyo, Fernandez-Rio, 2019), which may address the social needs of children (Reppy & Larwin, 2020). The think-aloud was not observed in the classroom as a means for teachers to verbally illustrate their thinking and approach to reading strategies.

Discussion of Personal Lessons Learned

A number of lessons were learned throughout the process of preparing for, conducting, and analyzing research data. First, the research process was an enjoyable experience as I was able to view and approach the classroom from a different lens. After fourteen years of teaching and being at the center of the classroom, I took a step back, listened and observed my fellow colleagues in action, some that I worked closely with while others I had just met through my research. I observed teachers preparing their lessons while following the district's Scope & Sequence and provide instruction each in very different ways. I listened to teachers discuss their experiences with one another of what *did* and did *not* work while planning for the next instructional day in hopes of being more successful. Through each of these moments, I also reflected on my own instructional approaches and behaviors in the classroom and realized that teachers are hardworking individuals who are key to creating positive learning environments and experiences that support student motivation.

I also recognized the imminent challenges ELAR teachers and students face as all students will be complete the STAAR exam 100% online and become more rigorous beginning in Spring 2023. According to TEA (2022):

House Bill 3906 established a “multiple choice cap,” meaning that no more than 75% of points on a STAAR test can be based on multiple choice questions. Texas educators help[ed] design new question types that reflect classroom test questions and allow students more ways to show their understanding (para. 1).

The redesign of the STAAR exam for English 1 and English 2 could include seven new question types that will ask students to demonstrate their understanding or explain their thinking through writing. I foresee this being a growing problem for high school students who have struggled with revising, editing, reading, and writing skills in the past and have been labeled as *Did Not Meet Grade Level* through the STAAR English exams. High school students enrolled in a STAAR English class have not demonstrated proficiency in reading and writing, so as they have moved up in grade level, their attitudes and motivation towards reading and writing have decreased (Süğümlü, Mutlu, & Çinpolat, 2019; Varuzza, Sinatra, Eschenauer, & Blake, 2014). While I hope the ELAR classroom does not further decline in motivation, undoubtedly, English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) is already a challenging content area, and for students who have not yet demonstrated proficiency in reading and writing, the redesign of the STAAR test will continue to decrease student motivation in high school ELAR classrooms.

This school year, I accepted a promotion in my school as the Testing Coordinator for the 9th grade campus. My responsibilities will focus on state testing and academics. I will be working alongside district leaders, my school administrators, and teachers to develop and implement various action plans to increase student participation and achievement. Through this research, I realized that administrators and coordinators need to be more involved with teachers and students in the classroom, so I am excited to take this step. When I engaged in conversations with teachers, conducted classroom observations, and gathered insight from students, all of this information was valuable data that initiated conversations about the classroom, instruction, and learning. The short timeframe, however, did not allow for much change to the curriculum. I recently reviewed various action plans from the district's Curriculum & Instruction department, and three new initiatives have been implemented to increase student learning: (1) bi-weekly

Checkpoints created by district instructional coordinators, (2) district PLC meetings with instructional coordinators to discuss Checkpoint data every 3-weeks, and (3) after-school tutorials that target student performance based on Checkpoint and STAAR data. I am curious to see how this data-driven approach will impact student motivation and learning, and I look forward to assessing the STAAR results in December.

Implications for Practice

Connections to the Context

STAAR scores were released in August 2022 and I was completely taken aback when I saw summer school's numbers. For English 1, 22 of the 67 students who tested met grade level standards, but for English 2, only 1 of the 77 students who tested met grade level. If teachers were modeling test-taking skills and strategies daily, using questioning, annotations and color-coding methods, how is it that students were unable to meet grade level standards? During the post-interview, Teacher D noted:

“Yeah [the students] are good with guided practices. That's why it's so annoying because when you're doing the lesson with them it's like *okay you guys you got it, now do it on your own* and then they bomb it and you feel like a failure. I feel like they just don't have the patience to do the work, you know, like on their own.”

Because students felt supported in their motivation and learning when teachers modeled instruction or “[did] strategies with the class”, I propose that STAAR English teachers receive a professional development to learn about and implement the think-aloud during classroom instruction. I recommend that this professional development carry into bi-weekly PLC meetings to give time for mentoring, observation, and discussion over the semester to provide support to

teachers and to ensure the think-aloud is being implemented appropriately in the classroom (See ROS Artifact).

The think-aloud is an instructional strategy in which the teacher regularly stops within a text to verbally illustrate their thinking and reading strategies, scaffolding, modeling, and supporting students to build new knowledge and language as well as engage, process, and understand a text in similar cognitive processes to the teacher (Ness & Kenny, 2016). At the same time, students are practicing the use of specific reading strategies alongside the teacher, becoming, “more aware of how to use [these] modeled strategies” (Wang, 2016, p. 1807) and eventually developing efficiency, automation, and independence (Jackson, 2016; Ness & Kenny, 2016; Wang, 2016). The think-aloud would benefit STAAR English classes because students recognized that following along with the teacher and “doing strategies with the class” supported their motivation and learning, and while the think-aloud is very similar to explicit instruction, Ness (2018) described think-alouds as:

- transparent efforts to show the deliberate reading actions by the teacher,
- where the teacher talks through the thought processes [employed] while reading,
- quick explanations of what is going through the mind of the proficient reader (p. 8).

Ness’s (2018) think-aloud follows a “What the Text Says” and “What I Think” (p. 6) model to illustrate reading skills and strategies used to approach and comprehend a reading text. When practiced over time along with the students, the thinking processes and approaches of the teacher become a learned behavior for the student.

Connections to the Field of Study

When teachers were asked to identify strategies that they implemented to support motivation in the high school STAAR English classroom, they did not consider instructional

strategies as a means to support student motivation or develop self-efficacy. Essentially, teachers recognized the use of praise, rewards, and online learning games. Teacher B shared the following in regards to online learning games, “I would like to be able to grow to keep [students] engaged and motivated constantly. I know sometimes that could be a hard thing to do and that's why I did come up with this system to try to gamify the classroom. I want to continue on that and by pure luck, there was a GT training on “Gamifying the Classroom” so I watched that [video] and added a few other things that I wanted to try to employ.” Using games as a break from the daily SIRIUS Zingers book and STAAR practices was implemented by all teachers as a means to re-energize, engage, and motivate students.

Teacher A was the only teacher who noted the importance of the teacher-student relationship, sharing the following during her post-interview:

“You know what? I think that kind of went off my mind because you forget how important it is to build those student-teacher relationships, to strengthen those relationships because it does play an important factor in the classroom. If the students trust you, they are going to be more motivated and they're going to do the work for you versus not having those relationships with them.”

The teacher-student relationship is important to shape a positive classroom climate and support student motivation. The way that teachers, “interact with students, the strategies they use to address low motivation, their use of classroom assessments, and the strength and type of relationships they foster with students” (Usher, 2012, p.5) can help create a positive classroom atmosphere and develop students’ social, emotional, and academic skills (Koca, 2016; Öqvist and Malmström, 2016). So when students described behaviors from teachers that *do* and *do not* support motivation, teachers who were described as *motivating*, *helpful*, *sociable*, having a *good*

attitude and good energy can support students to, “work harder in the classroom, persevere, accept direction and criticism, cope better with stress and pay attention more to the teachers” (Yunus, Osman, and Ishak, 2011, p. 2638).

Lessons Learned

The new school year has just started, and teachers in Border City have already dedicated countless days and hours to plan and prepare for the upcoming school year and STAAR exam. A new Scope & Sequence was designed for the upcoming school year by our newest instructional coordinators along with a cadre of teachers. With new students, rigorous academic standards, and rising accountability measures, district checkpoints and after-school tutorials are scheduled to begin by the fourth week of school with district PLC meetings beginning soon after. Data from district and state standardized tests will be used by instructional coordinators to address curriculum and instruction in ways to increase learning and academic achievement even though motivation continues to decline in the classroom.

State assessments are not going anywhere. As I previously discussed, testing standards are becoming more rigorous, and school districts are striving to earn a distinguished A accountability rating from TEA. As a result, district assessments are becoming more common in the curriculum. The pressures to improve reading and writing skills in order to meet state testing accountability measures have impacted teaching and learning experiences, as well as decreased student motivation. The focus on increasing learning and academic achievement in the curriculum needs to shift to instruction. Teachers need to be provided with frequent and effective professional development and support systems that will improve teaching because today’s students need instruction that will develop their self-efficacy and support motivation. Praise and rewards will only go so far as to support student motivation after students recurrently see that the

strategies they are doing alongside their teacher are not producing successfully learning outcomes.

During my last year working for Premier ISD, when I became the ELAR Master Teacher for English 2, I stated earlier that I worked alongside my colleagues to create lessons that would help our students meet state academic standards. That school year, TEA data revealed a remarkable increase in test scores from our English 2 department. We had increased by 8% compared to the prior year, and we were the only school in our district to demonstrate such growth. Reflecting on what made this possible, I realized that at the beginning of that school year, we had requested a professional development on how to support our students on the STAAR exam. As teachers, we wanted to know how to teach reading test-taking skills and strategies to our students to improve their learning. We attended a 2-day training with D.M.R. Educational Consulting, and during that training, teachers engaged in lessons that focused on STAAR formatted passages and questions, as well as test-item activities that centered on the four levels of Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge framework (See Table 15).

Table 15
Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Herman & Linn, 2014).

Level	Description	Examples
Level 1	Basic knowledge and rote learning	Reading comprehension questions
Level 2	Cognitive processing	Finding the main idea of a story
Level 3	Research, synthesize, reason with evidence	Using text evidence to support a response
Level 4	Extended planning, research, and problem solving	Synthesize and present information from multiple perspectives

Not knowing then what I know now, DMR used think-aloud instruction to model the thinking process through a reading selection and its test questions while we followed along. After the training, we brought back DMR’s work and modified it to address the high school TEKS. During our department meetings, we prepared DMR lessons and also provided mentoring and support to

one another in regards to instruction. We started classroom instruction at Level 1, using 8th grade STAAR reading passages, to ensure students had a foundational understanding of a story, and gradually moved our students into Level 2 and Level 3, introducing English 1 and English 2 STAAR reading passages as we saw success. Through each level, teachers were working alongside their students and modeling their thinking process aloud. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge and the think-aloud, we were developing self-efficacy and supporting motivation because students were learning how to approach a reading text and how to think through a question. Teachers were building up students’ knowledge as we moved from one level to the next, and thus many of our STAAR English students were finally successful on the English 2 exam.

The build-up of reading knowledge and skills is necessary for high school students in order for learning to take place and motivation to be supported. Especially for our students who have failed the STAAR English exam multiple times, instruction should begin from Level 1 and gradually increase as teachers model aloud and use annotations to illustrate the thinking process to a reading text and questions. This type of support, where the teacher is working alongside the student, “doing strategies” with the class, is the type of support students have identified as *something that* supports their motivation and learning in the classroom.

Recommendations

This study took place during 10-days of summer school, and a detailed Scope & Sequence was implemented during instruction that focused on STAAR formatted lessons in revising, editing, reading, and writing. Teachers used the SIRIUS Zingers workbook to explicitly model aloud test-taking skills and strategies. Annotations and color-coding methods were used to differentiate instruction, and various questioning techniques were used to ensure students were

following along. During classroom observations, students were generally engaged with the teacher, practicing test-taking skills and strategies in their workbooks. Nevertheless, summer school STAAR data revealed a very low success rate amongst all students who tested.

English 1 students (incoming Sophomores) appeared more engaged and motivated compared to English 2 students (incoming Juniors), so extending the time frame of instruction may hinder motivation and impact student engagement and learning. I recommend that the 10-days of instruction be maintained and structured so STAAR English teachers provide targeted instruction based on each student's Spring testing data. If summer school instruction is going to continue utilizing a STAAR Academies approach that focuses on practicing and developing test-taking skills and strategies then small-group, targeted instruction during 10-days should be adequate time for teachers to prepare students for the STAAR exam. Additionally, the explicit instructional strategies that students identified and teachers implemented during summer school to support learning and motivation should also be implemented during and throughout the regular school semester as a means to support students' self-efficacy, motivation, and learning. When students were following along with their teacher, copying test-taking skills and strategies, students were supported in the learning process and practicing a skill or strategy that they had not yet grasped.

I do not recommend grouping students by classes based on testing data. In one of my earlier English 1 observations, I noted a student telling another student, "Dude, how are you smarter than me? You have two summer school classes and I only have one." Students are very observant and once students acknowledge how classes are grouped, motivation will likely decline more. I do recommend identifying student's areas of weakness in order to provide instruction and support that can help improve their learning and academic outcomes. A "STAAR

English Student Profile” has been provided for teachers to consider using in the classroom to identify and address student needs (See ROS Artifact). I, along with colleagues, typically used student profile documents during the regular school semester to have one-on-one conversations with students and create action plans specific for their learning needs. It helped students in STAAR English classes recognize the skills they needed to focus and improve on.

December 2022 will be the last time students take the current STAAR exam before the redesigned format is introduced. During this semester at the 9th grade campus, I would like to introduce high school ELAR teachers to think-aloud instruction and provide a professional development on the think-aloud, along with mentoring and observation opportunities throughout the semester to support instruction and learning. A think-aloud resource I would like to introduce and model for teachers are the *PIRATES STAAR Reading Strategies* and *PIXIES STAAR Reading Question Strategies* that I created during my last year at Premier ISD and implemented in STAAR English classes.

I created these two STAAR reading strategies using test-taking strategies and steps that DMR modeled for teachers during our training. In my last year at Premier ISD, PIRATES and PIXIES were modeled for English 2 teachers and encouraged to be practiced in STAAR English classrooms. I do not have enough research to support whether PIRATES and PIXIES improved our STAAR scores, but that school year, our English 2 department demonstrated an 8% growth in the district. PIRATES and PIXIES supports explicit modeling instruction, think-aloud instruction, and student metacognitive thinking, “the knowledge of and monitoring of one’s thinking and learning processes” (Iwai, 2016, p. 110) because it serves as a roadmap that guides students to bring their thinking to paper. When students use PIRATES and PIXIES, they are asked to annotate their thoughts using pen and paper, which could help the teacher identify a

student's thought-process and address areas in need of support.

PIRATES and PIXIES can also improve reading comprehension, reading proficiency, reading strategy use, vocabulary, and academic achievement (Iwai, 2016). As the think-aloud is implemented in STAAR English classrooms, this research should be considered over the course of a full semester or school year, and presented to all high school students enrolled in the STAAR English classes. The data that students provided during summer school was plenty, but with only 10-instructional days, many students likely needed more time and support to practice and understand the content.

Closing Thoughts

The implementation of standardized testing has driven school leaders and teachers across the nation to explore innovative means that will improve teaching, increase learning, and raise academic achievement in order to meet rising accountability measures in education. The emphasis to meet state and federal accountability measures in education through the use of high-stakes testing, however, has impacted curriculum and instruction and also sparked a rift between students and their motivation to learn. "Tests and testing have undermined [student] motivation, interest, and enjoyment in learning" (Nichols & Brewington, 2020, p. 6), and today, students have become less motivated to learn as a result of the pressures and consequences that come with high-stakes tests (Amrein & Berliner, 2003).

The goal of this research was to identify key instructional strategies and behaviors that teachers implemented in the high school STAAR English classroom to support student motivation and learning. The teacher, as *someone*, and the classroom climate, as *something that*, played a key role to support students' motivation. Students revealed specific actions from their teachers that developed their self-efficacy. Actions focused on the teacher's attitude, instruction,

and classroom management, which ultimately creates the classroom climate, *something that* supports student motivation. Teachers are working hard to support students by finding ways to support and increase their motivation. Teachers spoke about the use of rewards and praise, projects and online learning games, as well as group work or team work, not recognizing the significance of modeled instruction, as well as immediate grading, feedback and discussion specific to the content and learning.

It is so important to work alongside students enrolled in a STAAR English remedial class, providing guided instruction and modeling specific reading strategies step-by-step, gradually releasing students towards independent thinking and application after observing successful practice of particular reading skills. Students labeled as *Did Not Meet Grade Level* on the STAAR EOC English exam, who continue to be enrolled in STAAR English remedial courses, have gone through so much in the classroom and faced many challenges with curriculum and assessments. Understandably, motivation is very low by the time students reach high school. While teachers shared that the use of praise and rewards were used to support student motivation, I would like to shift this frame of thinking. There are other ways students can be supported in the classroom, and as they clearly noted, working alongside the teacher, “doing strategies” and “doing a lot of work together”, is *something* that students identified to support their motivational needs. By use of the explicit instruction and the think-aloud, student self-efficacy can be developed which will increase motivation and improve learning in the high school STAAR English remedial class.

REFERENCES

- Adler-Greene, L. (2019). Every Student Succeeds Act: Are schools making sure every student succeeds? *Touro Law Review*, *35*(1), 11–23.
- Ahmad, A. R., Chew, F. P., Zulnaidi, H., Sobri, K. M., & Alfitri. (2019). Influence of school culture and classroom environment in improving soft skills amongst secondary schoolers. *International Journal of Instruction*, *12*(2), 259-274.
- Alcala, D. H., Garijo, A. H., Perez-Pueyo, A., & Fernandez-Rio, J. (2019). Cooperative learning and students' motivation, social interactions and attitudes: Perspectives from two different educational stages. *Sustainability*, *11*(7005), 1-11.
- Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-analysis. *Educ Psychol Rev*, *30*, 1-34.
- Amrein, A.L., & Berliner, D.C. (2003). The effects of high-stakes testing on student motivation and learning. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(5), 32-38.
- Anwer, F. (2019). Activity-based teaching, student motivation, and academic achievement. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, *6*(1), 154-170.
- Bae, S. (2018). Redesigning systems of school accountability: A multiple measures approach to accountability and support. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *26*(8), 1-32.
- Barnes, T. N. (2019). Changing the landscape of social emotional learning in urban schools: What are we currently focusing on and where do we go from here? *The Urban Review*, *51*, 599-637.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. Routledge, New York, NY.

- Bear, G. G., Slaughter, J. C., Mantz, L. S., & Farley-Ripple, E. (2017). Rewards, praise, and punitive consequences: Relations with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 65*, 10-20.
- Bishop, J. P., & Jackson, J. H. (2015). Fifty years later: A chance to get ESA back on track. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 23*(14), 1-6.
- Boberg, J. E., & Bourgeois, S. J. (2016). The effects of integrated transformational leadership on achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration, 54*(3), 357-374.
- Booher-Jennings, J. (2005). Below the bubble: “Educational triage” and the Texas accountability system. *American Educational Research Journal, 42*(2), 231-268.
- Bostan, C. M., Stanciu, T. & Andronic, R. L. (2021). The moderation role of being valued by teachers over the association between school children motivation and need for competition. *SAGE Open, 1-9*.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., Debnam, K. J., & Johnson, S. L. (2014). Measuring school climate in high schools: A focus on safety, engagement, and the environment. *Journal of School Health, 84*(9), 593-604.
- Brenchley, C. (2015). What is ESEA?. *The Official Blog of the U. S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from <https://blog.ed.gov/2015/04/what-is-esea/>
- Burnett, P. C., & Mandel, V. (2010). Praise and feedback in the primary classroom: Teachers’ and students’ perspectives. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology, 10*, 145-154.
- Burns, R. (2022). Developing effective teacher-student relationships: *Learning from the experts. Professional Learning and Development, 15*, 70-73.

- Carrabba, C., & Farmer, A. (2018). Language Teaching and Educational Research. The impact of project-based learning and direct instruction on the motivation and engagement of middle school students. *Language Teaching and Educational Research, 1*(2), 163-174.
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum, 41*(5), 545-547.
- Cavendish, W., Marquez, A., Roberts, M., Suarez, K., & Lima, W. (2017). Student engagement in high-stakes accountability systems. *Educational Thought, 44*, 167-188.
- Celik, A. (2021). An analysis of Turkish and Russian teachers' of English approaches to effective instructional strategies. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews, 10*(3), 439-461.
- Clark, S. (2014). Avoiding the blank stare: Teacher training with the gradual release of responsibility in mind. *English Teaching Forum, (2)*, 28-35.
- Creswell, J. W. (n.d.). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Deagon, J. R. (2021). I do, we do, you do home economics: Explicit instruction connecting content with ideology. *CEPS Journal, 11*(4), 135-150.
- Dee, T. S., & Jacob, B. (2011). The impact of No Child Left Behind on student achievement. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 30*(3), 418-446.
- Evans, M., & Boucher, A.R. (2015). Optimizing the power of choice: Supporting student autonomy to foster motivation and engagement in learning. *International Mind, Brain, and Education Society, 9*(2), 87-91.

- Every Student Succeeds Act. (2015). Retrieved from [congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf)
- Fan, W., & Williams, C. (2018). The mediating role of student motivation in the linking of perceived school climate and achievement in reading and mathematics. *Frontiers in Education, 3*(50), 1-12.
- Fernandez-Rio, J., Sanz, N., Fernandez-Cando, J., & Santos, L. (2017). Impact of a sustained cooperative learning intervention on student motivation. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 22*(1), 89-105.
- Flitcroft, D., & Woods, K. (2018). What does research tell high school teachers about student motivation for test performance? *Pastoral Care in Education, 36*(2), 112-125.
- Gale, J. J., & Bishop, P. A. (2014). The work of effective middle grades principals: Responsiveness and relationship. *RMLE Online, 37*(9), 1-23.
- Godfrey, D. (2020). From peer review to collaborative peer enquiry: Action research for school improvement and leadership development. *London Review of Education, 18*(3), 373-389.
- Haymon, C., & Wilson, A. (2020). Differentiated reading instruction with technology for advanced middle school students' reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Research & Practice, 10*(1), 70-89.
- Herr, K. & Anderson, G. L. (2015). *The action research dissertation*. (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Huddleston, A. P., & Rockwell, E. C. (2015). Assessment for the masses: A historical critique of high-stakes testing in reading. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education, 3*(1), 38-49.

- Humphries, M. L., Williams, B. V., & May, T. (2018). Early childhood teachers' perspectives on social-emotional competence and learning in urban classrooms. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 34*(2), 157-179.
- Ingemarson, M., Rosendahl, I., Bodin, M., & Birgegard, A. (2018). Teacher's use of praise, clarity of school rules and classroom climate: Comparing classroom compositions in terms of disruptive students. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 23*(1), 217-232.
- Iwai, Y. (2016). The effect of explicit instruction on strategic reading in a literacy methods course. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 28*(1), 110-118.
- Jackson, V. (2016). Applying the think-aloud strategy to improve reading comprehension of science content. *Current Issues in Education, 19*(2), 1-35.
- Koca, F. (2016). Motivation to learn and teacher-student relationship. *Journal of International Education and Leadership, 6*(2), 1-20.
- Kowalski, M. & Christensen, A. L. (2019). "No one wants to be a loser." High school students' perceptions of academic competition. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 31*(4), 389-406.
- Liu, Y.J., Zhou, Y. G., Li, Q. L., & Ye, X. D. (2022). Impact study of the learning effects and motivation of competitive modes in gamified learning. *Sustainability, 14*, 1-14.
- Louick, R., Leider, C. M., Daley, S. G., Proctor, C. P., & Gardner, G. L. (2016). Motivation for reading among struggling middle school reader: A mixed methods study. *Learning and Individual Differences, 1-10*.

- Louis, K. S., Murphy, J., & Smylie, M. (2016). Caring leadership in schools: Findings from exploratory analyses. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 310-348.
- Magableh, I. S. I., & Abdullah, A. (2021). The impact of differentiated instruction on students' reading comprehension attainment in mixed-ability classrooms. *Interchange*, 52, 255-272.
- Maulana, R., Opendakker M-C., & Bosker, R. (2016). Teachers' instructional behaviors as important predictors of academic motivation: Changes and links across the school year. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 50, 147-156.
- McCabe, P. P. (2006). Convincing students they can learn to read. *Heldref Publications*, 79(6), 252-257.
- Melesse, S., & Molla, S. (2018). The contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement: The case of secondary and preparatory schools of Assosa Zone, Benshangul Gumuz Regional State, Ethiopia. *Research in Pedagogy*, 8(2), 190-203.
- Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- Moldovan, O. D. (2014). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to primary school children. *Journal Plus Education*, 10(1), 203-211.
- Moses, M. S., & Nanna, M. J. (2007). The testing culture and the persistence of high stakes testing reforms. *Education and Culture*, 23(1), 55-72.
- Munter, C., & Haines, C. (2019). "Students get what flows downward": District leaders' rationalizations of the standardized testing of children. *The Educational Forum*, 83(2), 160-180.

- Nagashibaevna, Y. K. (2019). Students' lack of interest: How to motivate them? *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 7(3), 797-802.
- Nagler, K. S. (2016). Effective classroom-management & positive teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 9(1), 163-172.
- Nayir, F. (2017). The relationship between student motivation and class engagement levels. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 71, 59-78.
- Neef, N. A., Kranak, M., Shapiro, M., Xu, Z., & Catania, A. C. (2022). Changing what teachers say changes what they do: Increasing their specific praise of student behavior. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 1-14.
- Ness, M. (2018). *Think big with think alouds. A three-step planning process that develops strategic readers*. Corwin.
- Ness, M. & Kenny, M. (2016). Improving the quality of think-alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), 453-460.
- Nichols, S. L., & Berliner, D. C. (2008). Testing the joy out of learning. *Educational Leadership*, 65(6), 14-18.
- Nichols, S. L., & Brewington, S. (2020). Preservice teacher's beliefs about high-stakes testing and their working environments. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 28(3), 1-38.
- Oluwatayo, A. A., Aderonmu, P. A., Aduwo, E. B., & Peter, N. J. (2016). Learning environment, motivation, and self-regulated learning among students in technical fields. *Journal of Education Research*, 10(3), 201-213.
- Onyishi, C. N., & Sefotho, M. N. (2020). Teachers' perspectives on the use of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms: Implication for teacher education. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 9(6), 136-150.

- Öqvist, A., & Malmström, M. (2016) Teachers' leadership: a maker or a breaker of students' educational motivation. *School Leadership & Management*, 36(4), 365-380.
- Öqvist, A., & Malmström, M. (2018) What motivates students? A study on the effects of teacher leadership and students' self-efficacy. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 21(2), 155-175.
- Ortlieb, E., & Schatz, S. (2020). Student's self-efficacy in reading – connecting theory to practice. *Reading Psychology*, 41(7), 735-751.
- Özgenel, M. (2020). The role of charismatic leader in school culture. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 86(2020), 85-114.
- Pless, M., & Katznelson, N. (2019). New insights on young peoples' motivation in lower secondary education in Denmark. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 8(1), 60-88.
- Reppy, D., & Larwin, K. H. (2020). The association between perception of caring and intrinsic motivation: A study of urban middle school students. *Journal of Education*, 200(1), 48-61.
- Reutzell, D. R., Child, A., Jones, C. D., & Clark, S. K. (2014). Explicit instruction in core reading programs. *The Elementary School Journal*, 114(3), 406-430.
- Ross, K. M., & Tolan, P. (2018). Social and emotional learning in adolescence: Testing the CASEL model in a normative sample. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 38(8), 1170-1199.
- Saccomano, D. (2014). How close is close reading? *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 2(2), 140-147.
- Saeed, S. & Zyngier, D. (2012). How motivation influences student engagement: A qualitative case study. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 1(2), 252-267.

- Saldaña, J. (2021) *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Serin, H. (2018). A comparison of teacher-centered and student-centered approaches in educational settings. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 5(1), 164-167.
- Shana, Z., Lahiani, H., & Mahmoud, S. (2020) The effects of kagan structures on UAE sixth grade students' performance of reading comprehension: A pilot study. *Education 3-13*, 48(8), 988-999.
- Shelton, S. A., & Brooks, T. (2019). "We need to get these scores up": A narrative examination of the challenges of teaching literature in the age of standardized testing. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 15(2), 1-17.
- Shindler, J., Jones, A., Williams, A. D., Taylor, C., & Cardenas, H. (2016). The school climate – student achievement connection: If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the climate. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development*, 1(1), 9-16.
- Sirius Education Solutions. (2020). *English zingers. Answering the essential STAAR test items*. Sirius Education Solutions LLC, TX.
- Sloane, F. C., & Kelly, A. E. (2003). Issues in high-stakes testing programs. *Theory into Practice*, 42(1), 12-17.
- Springer, M. G. (2008). Accountability incentives. Do schools practice educational triage? *Education Next*, 75-79.
- Stewart, B. (2022). Blooket. *Blooket LLC*. <https://www.blooket.com/>

- Strahan, D. B., & Poteat, B. (2020). Middle level students' perceptions of their social and emotional learning: An exploratory study. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 43(5), 1-15.
- Süğümlü, U., Mutlu, H. H., & Çinpolat, E. (2019). Relationship between writing motivation levels and writing skills among secondary school students. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 11(5), 487-492.
- Sun, Y. (2021). The effect of teacher caring behavior and teacher praise on students' engagement in EFL classrooms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 21, 1-9.
- Superfine, B. M. (2005). The politics of accountability: The rise and fall of Goals 2000. *American Journal of Education*, 112(1), 10-43.
- Supervía, P. U., & Robres, A. Q. (2021). Emotional regulation and academic performance in the academic context: The mediating role of self-efficacy in secondary education students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(5715), 1-10.
- Teach for Texas. (2022). Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). Retrieved from <https://www.teachfortexas.org/>
- Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs. (n.d.) "Background on the Colonias." *Background on OCI*. Retrieved from www.tdhca.state.tx.us/oci/background.htm
- Texas Education Agency. (n.d.) *Texas Academic Performance Reports*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting/texas-academic-performance-reports>
- Texas Education Agency. (2018). *2018 Accountability Manual for Texas Public School Districts and Campuses*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/Entire%202018%20Accountability%20Manual.pdf>

- Texas Education Agency. (2020). *Comprehensive Glossary. 2019-20 Texas Academic Performance Report*. Retrieved from <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2020/glossary.pdf>
- Texas Education Agency. (2021). *TEA Releases Spring 2021 STAAR Grades 3-8 and End-of-Course Assessment Results; Outcomes for In-Person Learners Appreciably Higher Than for Those Who Were Remote*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/news-releases/news-2021/tea-releases-spring-2021-staar-grades-3-8-and-end-of-course-assessment-results-outcomes-for-in-person-learners-appreciably-higher-than-for-those-who-were-remote>
- Texas Education Agency. (2022). *STAAR Redesign*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/assessment-initiatives/hb-3906/staar-redesign>
- Texas Education Agency. (2022). *Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/educator-evaluation-and-support-system/texas-teacher-evaluation-and-support-system>
- Usher, A. (2012). What can schools do to motivate students. *Center on Education Policy*. 1-20.
- United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the nation and the secretary of education*, United States Department of Education. Washington, DC: The Commission: [Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O. distributor].
- U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *The federal role in education*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html>

- U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *Improving basic programs operated by local educational agencies (Title I, Part A)*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2019). *Standards, assessments, and accountability*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa.html>
- Varuzza, M., Sinatra, R., Eschenauer, R., & Blake, B. E. (2014). The relationship between English Language Arts teachers' use of instructional strategies and young adolescents' reading motivation, engagement, and preference. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 3(2), 108-119.
- Vedder-Weiss, D., & Fortus, D. (2013). School, teacher, peers, and parents' goals emphases and adolescents' motivation to learn science in and out of school. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 50(8), 952-988.
- Vinovskis, M. A. (2019). History of testing in the United States: PK-12 education. *The ANNALS of the American Academy*, 683(1), 22-37.
- Vosoogh, N. S. H., Tavakolizadeh, J., & Pakdaman, M. (2021). Research paper: The role of self-efficacy in the relationship between classroom climate and students' educational motivation. *Journal of Research & Health*, 11(4), 225-234.
- Von der Embse, N. P., & Witmer, S. E. (2014). High-stakes accountability: Student anxiety and large-scale testing. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 30(2), 132-156.
- Walker, T. (2012). Where does student motivation fit in the education debate? Retrieved from <http://neatoday.org/authors/tim-walker>

- Wang, Y.H. (2016). Reading strategy use and comprehension performance of more successful and less successful readers: A think-aloud study. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 16*(5), 1789-1813.
- Watson, C. E., Johanson, M. J., Loder, M., & Dankiw, J. (2014). Effects of high-stakes testing on third grade through fifth grade students: Student voices and concerns for educational leaders. *Journal of Organizational Learning and Leadership, 12*(1), 1-12.
- Wyman, P. J., & Watson, S. B. (2020). Academic achievement with cooperative learning using homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. *School Science and Mathematics Association, 120*, 356-363.
- Yilmaz, E., Sahin, M., & Turgut, M. (2017). Variables affecting student motivation based on academic publications. *Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(12), 112-120.
- Yunus, M. M., Osman, W. S. W., & Ishak, N. M. (2011). Teacher-student relationship factor affecting motivation and academic achievement in ESL classroom. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 15*, 2637–2641.

APPENDIX A

DIVISION OF RESEARCH



NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

February 18, 2020

Type of Review:	Initial Review Submission Form
Title:	STUDENT VOICES: RECOGNIZING FACTORS IN A SCHOOL SETTING THAT AFFECT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
Investigator:	Mary Margaret Capraro
IRB ID:	IRB2020-0141
Reference Number:	105882
Funding:	
Documents Received:	IRB Application (Human Research) - (Version 1.0)

Dear Mary Margaret Capraro:

The Institution determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations. Data gathering efforts are intended only for the student's record of study and will not yield generalizable data.

Further IRB review and approval by this organization is not required because this is not human research. This determination applies only to the activities described in this IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made you must immediately contact the IRB about whether these activities are research involving humans in which the organization is engaged. You will also be required to submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Please be aware that receiving a 'Not Human Research Determination' is not the same as IRB review and approval of the activity. IRB consent forms or templates for the activities described in the determination are not to be used and references to TAMU IRB approval must be removed from study documents.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Administrative Office at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636.

Sincerely,
IRB Administration

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701

1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186

Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

APPENDIX B

Teacher Consent to Participate in Research Study

This research is being conducted by Mrs. Cassandra Rios Bailey, doctoral candidate for Texas A&M University. You have been selected to participate in this research study because you are a teacher for a *STAAR End-of-Course English class*.

Key Information:

- The purpose of this research study is to identify key instructional strategies used in high school STAAR English classrooms that support student motivation and learning.
- This study will take place during summer school, within 10 instructional days.
- All names will be **protected** and remain **confidential** throughout the research.
- Interview and survey responses will be completed by participants to identify common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies that have been expressed by both teachers and students.
- Observations will be conducted by the researcher to observe common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies used in the classroom.
- Student data will not be analyzed until after summer school concludes. The research will not impact student performance in class.

Description of the Study Procedures:

- Teachers, if you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in two face-to-face interviews before summer school begins and after summer school concludes. The interview is expected to take 15-30 minutes and will be recorded on a recording device. Observations will be conducted daily in your classroom. Your name will be protected and remain confidential throughout the research.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact the researcher of this study, Cassandra Rios Bailey, at cassandrarios22@tamu.edu. You may also contact faculty advisors, Dr. Sharon Matthews, sharon.matthews@tamu.edu or Dr. Radhika Viruru, viruru@tamu.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in this research study. You have read and understood the information provided above. Thank you for your time and cooperation in my study.

Participant Name (Print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX C

Parent/Student Consent to Participate in Research Study

This research is being conducted by Mrs. Cassandra Rios Bailey, doctoral candidate for Texas A&M University. You have been selected to participate in this research study because you are a student in a *STAAR End-of-Course English class*.

Key Information:

- The purpose of this research study is to identify key instructional strategies used in high school STAAR English classrooms that support student motivation and learning.
- This study will take place during summer school, within 10 instructional days.
- All names will be **protected** and remain **confidential** throughout the research.
- Survey responses will be completed by participants to identify common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies.
- Observations will be conducted by the researcher to observe common characteristics, behaviors, and instructional strategies used in the classroom.
- Student data will not be analyzed until after summer school concludes. The research will not impact student performance in class.

Description of the Study Procedures:

- Students, if you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey on the first and last day of summer school. The survey is expected to take 30-45 minutes. Your name will be protected and remain confidential throughout the research.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the research study, please contact the researcher of this study, Cassandra Rios Bailey, at cassandrarios22@tamu.edu. You may also contact faculty advisors, Dr. Sharon Matthews, sharon.matthews@tamu.edu or Dr. Radhika Viruru, viruru@tamu.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to participate in this research study. You have read and understood the information provided above. Thank you for your time and cooperation in my study.

Student school email: _____

Participant Name (Print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Parent Signature: _____

APPENDIX D

ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet

ROS Motivational Strategies Observation Sheet

Through my record of study, I will observe and take note of specific instructional strategies and behaviors that support motivation and learning in the high school STAAR English classroom in regards to classroom climate and student engagement.

Date of observation: _____ Location of observation: _____ Teacher/Pseudonym: _____

Start time of observation: _____ End time of observation: _____

Activity	Instructional Strategy and Behaviors	Teacher Behavior (Evidence) What is the teacher doing?	Student Behavior (Evidence) What is the student doing?	Researcher's Observation Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-Student Relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Explicit Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Think-Aloud Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiation <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Social Emotional Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-Student Relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Explicit Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Think-Aloud Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiation <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Social Emotional Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-Student Relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Explicit Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Think-Aloud Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiation <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Social Emotional Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other			

APPENDIX E

Teacher Pre-Interview Questions [Face-to-Face]

Date of interview:

Interviewee/Pseudonym:

Start time of interview:

End time of interview:

1. Tell me about yourself. How long have you been teaching? What subject area do you generally teach and what are teaching this summer? How many years have you taught summer school? Why are you teaching summer school?
2. Describe motivation in today's classroom.
3. How do you ensure student motivational needs are met in your classroom? What challenges do you face in this process?
4. What behaviors and characteristics do you recognize when a student is motivated to learn in your classroom? How do you support students who are motivated? How do you know whether these behaviors or approaches are helpful?
5. What behaviors and characteristics do you recognize when a student is NOT motivated to learn in your classroom? How do you support students who are not motivated? How do you know whether these behaviors or approaches are helpful?
6. How do STAAR English classes prepare students for the STAAR exam?
7. What aspects of the STAAR English class are motivating and not motivating for students?
8. How do you build motivation in your STAAR English classes? What behaviors do you recognize in yourself that have supported or increased student motivation?
9. What instructional strategies or approaches, lessons or activities do you implement in your STAAR English classroom that you notice to support student motivation? How do you know whether these are helpful or not?
10. What are your experiences in teaching a STAAR English class?
11. What can you identify as motivating and NOT motivating in teaching a STAAR English class?
12. What direction do you foresee STAAR English remedial classes going as the STAAR exam becomes more rigorous? How can STAAR English classes support student motivation and learning? What works? What does not work?
13. How would you like to grow in motivating your students?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX F

Student Pre-Survey Questions [Google Form - Online]

Section 1: Motivation & Learning

1. What does motivation mean to you?
2. When you are motivated, you are ready to learn, engage in activities, and complete tasks for which one of the following reasons:
 - a. enjoyment
 - b. the learning and preparation it allows
 - c. a feeling of accomplishment
 - d. to gain rewards, praise, or acceptance from others
 - e. to avoid consequences (punishment, failure, etc.)
3. What are some things that motivate you in the classroom? Please share at least 3 examples.
4. What are some things that do NOT motivate you in the classroom? Please share at least 3 examples.
5. Use Google to search for an image of a quote that you say to yourself when you need motivation.
6. When you are not motivated to learn, something you want your teacher to know is...

Section 2: My STAAR English Class

1. What does it mean for you to be enrolled in a STAAR English class?
2. Do you feel your STAAR English classes better prepare you for the STAAR exam? Explain your response.

Section 3: Complete the following sentences.

1. When you are motivated and ready to learn, 3 behaviors your teacher will notice are...
2. Use Google to search for a meme or gif that best shows how you feel or how you look when you are motivated and ready to learn
3. 3 things your teacher does in the classroom to support your motivation and learning are...
4. Using your previous response, do these things help you learn in the classroom?
5. Using your previous response, describe how these things help you learn in the classroom.

Section 4: How You Learn Best

1. I learn best when I work:
 - a. following along with my teacher
 - b. alongside my teacher
 - c. independently
 - d. with a partner
 - e. in a small group
2. I learn best like the picture above because...
3. Reflect on the activities and assignments you have completed. 3 of your favorite lessons were...
4. Using your previous response, how did these lessons support your learning in the classroom?

Section 5: Social Emotional Learning

1. What does social and emotional learning mean for you? Google images of social emotional learning. Upload an image that best shows your understanding of what social emotional learning means.
2. 3 ways your teacher supports your social emotional learning needs are...
3. When your social emotional needs are met, you feel _____ to learn.

Section 6: Many Thanks!

Thank you for your time and responses!

APPENDIX G

Student Post-Survey Questions [Google Form - Online]

Section 1: Motivation & Learning

1. Reflect on the activities and assignments you completed this summer in your STAAR English class. Please share 3 of your favorite lessons that supported your learning.
2. What were some things that your teacher did this summer to support your motivation and learning in the STAAR English class? Please share at least 3 examples.
3. What were some things that your teacher did this summer that did NOT support your motivation and learning in the STAAR English class? Please share at least 3 examples.
4. This summer, I learned best when I:
 - a. following along with my teacher
 - b. alongside my teacher
 - c. independently
 - d. with a partner
 - e. in a small group
 - f. hands-on (paper, pencil, color...)
5. Do you feel your STAAR English teacher supported your social emotional learning needs this summer? Explain your response.
6. Do you feel your STAAR English summer class prepared you and/or motivated you for the STAAR exam? Explain your response.

Section 2: Many Thanks!

Thank you so much for your time and responses! I truly appreciate your cooperation, experiences, and reflections you shared with me. Good luck on your STAAR exam this summer! -Gig 'em & God Bless

APPENDIX H

Teacher Post-Interview Questions [Face-to-Face]

Date of interview:

Location of interview:

Start time of interview:

End time of interview:

Interviewee/Pseudonym:

1. Describe student motivation during this year's summer school semester.
2. How did you, as a STAAR English teacher, prepare students for the STAAR exam?
3. After your pre-interview about motivation, did the idea of supporting student motivational needs become a focus in your classroom? If *yes*, how so? If *no*, why not?
4. How did you ensure student motivational needs were met in your classroom? What challenges did you face in this process?
5. What behaviors and characteristics did you recognize when a student was motivated to learn in your classroom? How did you support students who were motivated? How did you know whether these behaviors or approaches were helpful?
6. What behaviors and characteristics do you recognize when a student was NOT motivated to learn in your classroom? How did you support students who were not motivated? How did you know whether these behaviors or approaches were helpful?
7. How did you build motivation in your STAAR English classes? What behaviors do you recognize in yourself that supported or increased student motivation?
8. What instructional strategies or approaches, lessons or activities did you use in your STAAR English classroom that you noticed to support student motivation? How do you know whether these are helpful or not?
9. What were your experiences in teaching a STAAR English class this summer school semester?
10. What direction do you foresee STAAR English remedial classes going as the STAAR exam becomes more rigorous? How can STAAR English classes support student motivation and learning? What works? What does not work?
11. How would you like to grow in motivating your students?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX I

ROS Artifact



Professional Development

Using Explicit Instruction (Gradual Release of Responsibility model) and Think-Aloud Instruction to support Student Motivation in a high school STAAR English class

1. Discuss STAAR scores and results
2. Karin K. Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix (Reading CRM)
3. Proposal: Molly Ness “Think Aloud”
 - a. Reading Comprehension Strategies Commonly Applied During Think-Alouds
 - b. Think-Aloud Three-Step Process
 - c. Think-Aloud Blank Chart
4. Looking into the Data & Applying the “Think Aloud” from Molly Ness
 - a. STAAR EOC English Student Profile
 - b. Explicit Instruction & Think-aloud instruction
 - i. Reading Strategy (PIRATES & PIXIES) – supports metacognitive thinking
 - ii. Introduce and Model using SIRIUS Zingers
5. Follow-up
 - a. Observations
 - b. Coaching/Mentoring
 - c. Checkpoints, Data Review, and Discussion

Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix (Reading CRM)

From Karin K. Hess

 HESS COGNITIVE RIGOR MATRIX (READING CRM): Applying Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels to Bloom's Cognitive Process Dimensions				
 Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 Recall and Reproduction	Webb's DOK Level 2 Skills and Concepts	Webb's DOK Level 3 Strategic Thinking/Reasoning	Webb's DOK Level 4 Extended Thinking
Remember Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory; recognize, recall, locate, identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall, recognize, or locate basic facts, terms, details, events, or ideas explicit in texts Read words orally in connected text with fluency and accuracy 	Use these Hess CRM curricular examples with most close reading or listening assignments or assessments in any content area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (quote, example, text reference) Identify or make inferences about explicit or implicit themes Describe how word choice, point of view, or bias may affect the readers' interpretation of a text Write multiparagraph composition for specific purpose, focus, voice, tone, and audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how concepts or ideas specifically relate to other content domains (e.g., social, political, historical) or concepts Develop generalizations of the results obtained or strategies used and apply them to new problem-based situations
Understand Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare-contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify or describe literary elements (characters, setting, sequence, etc.) Select appropriate words when intended meaning or definition is clearly evident Describe or explain who, what, where, when, or how Define or describe facts, details, terms, principles Write simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify, explain, show relationships; explain why (e.g., cause-effect) Give nonexamples or examples Summarize results, concepts, ideas Make basic inferences or logical predictions from data or texts Identify main ideas or accurate generalizations of texts Locate information to support explicit-implicit central ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a concept in a new context Revise final draft for meaning or progression of ideas Apply internal consistency of text organization and structure to composing a full composition Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers' or viewers' interpretation of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate how multiple themes (historical, geographic, social, artistic, literary) may be interrelated Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to research a novel problem
Apply Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation; carry out (apply) to a familiar task, or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use language structure (pre-, or suffix) or word relationships (synonym/antonym) to determine meaning of words Apply rules or resources to edit spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use Apply basic formats for documenting sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to identify the meaning of words or phrases Obtain and interpret information using text features Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze information within data sets or texts Analyze interrelationships among concepts, issues, problems Analyze or interpret author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to create or critique a text Use reasoning, planning, and evidence to support inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze multiple sources of evidence, or multiple works by the same author, or across genres, time periods, themes Analyze complex or abstract themes, perspectives, concepts Gather, analyze, and organize multiple information sources Analyze discourse styles
Analyze Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant/irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, and confer; deconstruct (e.g., for bias or point of view)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g., map, chart, table, graph, T-chart, diagram) or text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, captions) Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorize or compare literary elements, terms, facts or details, events Identify use of literary devices Analyze format, organization, and internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts Distinguish: relevant-irrelevant information; fact-opinion Identify characteristic text features; distinguish between texts, genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods Verify reasonableness of results Justify or critique conclusions drawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, and completeness of information from multiple sources Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application
Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	"JG"—unsubstantiated generalizations = stating an opinion without providing any support for it!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information within one source or text Develop a complex model for a given situation Develop an alternative solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective
Create Reorganize elements into new patterns or structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic, principle, or concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information within one source or text Develop a complex model for a given situation Develop an alternative solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective

Available for download at resources.corwin.com/HessToolkit and www.karin-hess.com/free-resources

© Karin Hess (2009, updated 2017). A local assessment toolkit to support deeper learning: *Guiding school leaders in linking research with classroom practice*. Permission to reproduce is given only when authorship is fully cited [karinhessvt@gmail.com]

Reprinted from Hess, K. K. (2017). A local assessment toolkit to promote deeper learning: Transforming research into practice. *Corwin*. Retrieved from <https://resources.corwin.com/HessToolkit>

Reading Comprehension Strategies Commonly Applied During Think-Alouds

From Molly Ness & MaryBeth Kenny (p. 455)

Strategy	Brief Description
Overviewing the Text	When a reader looks over the text before reading, paying particular attention to the text features and how those features are relevant to his or her purpose for reading
Visualization	When a reader creates and adapts mental images to make reading three-dimensional
Activating Prior Knowledge	When a reader thinks through what he or she already knows about a topic to make sense of how the text connects to that prior knowledge
Asking Questions	When a reader constructs, revises, and questions the meanings he or she makes during reading
Recognizing an Author's Writing Style	When a reader recognizes an author's vocabulary choice, sentence complexity, connection between sentences and paragraphs, length of paragraphs, and introduction of ideas (Block & Israel, 2004, p. 160)
Making Inferences	When a reader forms a best guess using evidence from the text to make predictions and draw conclusions
Making Connections	<p>When a reader makes personal connections with the text by using his or her background knowledge. There are three types of common connections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-to-Self (T-S): Connections made between the text and the reader's personal experience • Text-to-Text (T-T): Connections made between a text being read and a text that was previously read • Text-to-World (T-W): Connections made between a text being read and something that occurs in the world
Making and Revising Predictions	When a reader uses information from the text and from his or her own personal experience to anticipate what he or she is about to read
Determining the Most Important Ideas	When a reader distinguishes between what information in a text is most important and what information is interesting but not necessary for understanding
Synthesizing Information	When a reader not only restates the important points from a text, but also combines ideas to allow for an evolving understanding of text
Monitoring Comprehension	When a reader identifies what he or she does and does not understand and applies appropriate strategies to resolve any problems in comprehension
Restatement	When a reader rephrases portions of the text in simpler terms
Determining Word Meanings	When a reader tries to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and/or concepts in a text to deal with inconsistencies or gaps in knowledge
Backtracking or Rereading	When a reader monitors his or her understanding and makes adjustments in his or her reading as needed

Reprinted from Ness, M. & Kenny, M. (2016). Improving the quality of think-alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), 453-460.

Think-Aloud Three-Step Process
From Molly Ness & MaryBeth Kenny (p. 459)

TAKE ACTION!

Our three-step process to planning think-alouds is as follows:

- Step 1: Peruse the text to identify juicy stopping spots. Use sticky notes to mark up to 15 potential stopping spots.
- Step 2: Examine each stopping spot and critically reflect upon the need for that particular spot. Use the reflective questions provided to determine the usefulness of each stopping spot. Reduce the number of stopping spots to 5–7.
- Step 3: Use the Think-Aloud Blank Chart (Table 3) to write the corresponding script aligning with each stopping point. Write out your script on a sticky note, then put that sticky note on the back cover of the book. Use the prompts provided to write your script.

Reprinted from Ness, M. & Kenny, M. (2016). Improving the quality of think-alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), 453-460.

Think-Aloud Blank Chart

From Molly Ness & MaryBeth Kenny (p. 457)

What the Text Says (Write out the last few words of the sentence before you will think aloud.)	Teacher Think-Aloud Script (Write exactly what you will say, in first-person narrative.)	Associated Reading Comprehension Strategy (Name the comprehension strategy you are employing in this think-aloud.)

Reprinted from Ness, M. & Kenny, M. (2016). Improving the quality of think-alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), 453-460.

STAAR EOC English Student Profile

Student Name	ID Number	Grade
--------------	-----------	-------

English I Passed English I Did Not Pass English I

1	2	3	4	5	6	Scale Score
Paired Questions	Literary Text	Informational Text	Expository Composition	Revise	Edit	
___/8	___/13	___/13	___/16	___/9	___/9	___/39

52 multiple choice + 16 point essay = 68 total points = 39 points needed to pass

English II Passed English I Did Not Pass English II

1	2	3	4	5	6	Scale Score
Paired Questions	Literary Text	Informational Text	Persuasive Composition	Revise	Edit	
___/8	___/13	___/13	___/16	___/9	___/9	___/42

52 multiple choice + 16 point essay = 68 total points = 42 points needed to pass

PIRATES

STAAR Reading Strategies

Preview the selection.

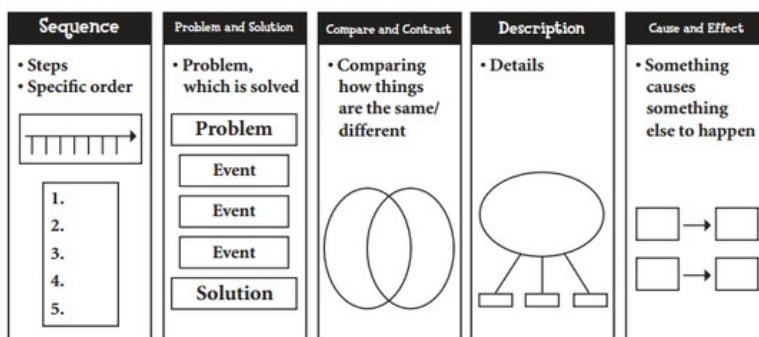
Look at the title and its meaning, text features, and genre.

Interpret the selection questions *before* you read.

To set a purpose and targeted focus on specific reading skills.

Read the selection.

Pause to comprehend and analyze the text. Stop at the end of each paragraph to identify the text's organizational structure.



Annotate.

Underline, circle, highlight, box, or use other symbols as you are reading.

Translate.

Define unknown/unfamiliar words and figurative language.

Evaluate the Author's Purpose.

- Fiction: *lesson learned, universal message, moral, theme*
What did you learn from the character or situation?
- Non-Fiction: *main topic: persuade, argue, inform, or explain.*
Find the thesis or position statement in the introduction and conclusion.
The author's purpose for writing this selection is to _____ about _____.

Summarize the selection.

- Fiction: *Beginning. Middle. End.*
- Informational: *Main Topic. Supporting Idea #1. Supporting Idea #2...*
- Persuasive: *Position. Reasons... Evidence and Support. Counter-Argument; examples of Ethos, Logos, Pathos.*

PIXIES

STAAR Reading Question Strategies

Pick 2-3 key words or phrases in the question and circle them.

Focus on the BIG IDEA (*characters, action verb, literary elements*).

Identify the 2-3 key words or phrases in each answer choice.

Focus on the BIG IDEA (*characters, action verb, literary elements*).

X-out words or phrases that do not match or connect to the question.

Identify words or phrases that do match or connect to the question.

These can be *explicit* (direct) or *implicit* (synonyms or similar).

Evaluate your final answer choices.

Which answer choice makes a stronger match or connection to the question?

Use textual evidence and support.

Select the answer choice that makes the strongest and BEST match or connection to the question.