SENIOR THESIS

My journey through this project and all the nuts and bolts behind the scenes.
Define

**Problem**
Choice reading is hard for high school teachers to implement into lesson plans

**Audience**
High school English teachers and students

**Success**
It is easier to implement choice reading into lesson plans
Define

Objectives
Create a system that will effectively ease teachers into choice reading lessons. The end result should be beneficial to both students and teachers.

Schedule
1. Research and define the problem
2. Interview experts in the field
3. Survey students and teachers
4. Concept initial solutions
5. Refine solutions
6. Test final solution
7. Adjust and finalize solution
Research

Brainstorming

Some initial sketches and concepting for potential solutions. I spent a lot of time playing out as many ideas as possible using problem mapping and quick doodles.
CHECK-IN

Provide a brief summary

Key Points

Stack of "Check-in" serve as study guide for tests.

For teacher/school admin:

BOOK SELECTION

For students:

BOOK

Student

3 Parts
2. Read & discuss book.

1. Choose a book
2. Read & Discuss
3. Analyze

Sheets for choosing book & details about book

Outline for group discussion

Sheets to guide questions

Review: Summary sheets

Test alternatives
Link material to CC
RESEARCH

Chapter Review

Summary:  

name:  

Book:  

predictions:  

These alerts could fit w/ point system. More points means students get more and can go above to receive bonuses.

To keep kids thinking about the book. A quick summary w/ predictions ensures students are reading as at least involving themselves.

potentially add: key idea, open-ended question student may write.

Book Review

Quick Summary: Describe how a scene made you feel.

Explain how the protagonist changes through the book: some more shift.

Relate to one source or your own life.

overview of entire book.

Questions relate to material & CC wants to meet 4th grade level.

could be made into available template easily.

Discussion Q's

who's reading?

100 pts - Pass the Book Assignment

150 pts - Help w/ 2 test answers

200 pts - Help w/ 3 test answers

25 pts - exempt from a quiz

etc.

Key points & standards met.
How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It

Kelly Gallagher

Foreword by Richard Allington

To get a better understanding of the problem and current solutions, I read material written by experts in the field. This was critical to creating an effective solution that wasn’t redundant or uninspired.
I conducted a survey of approximately 430 high school students about their experiences with choice reading and reading in general. The goal of this was to figure out what students really liked about choice reading and what elements of school-required reading they enjoyed.

**When choosing a new book, what methods help you decide? (Check all that apply)**

- Personal Recommendations (Friend, Family, etc.) - 75.36% (315)
- Required Reading (For school, work, etc.) - 69.47% (289)
- Online Reviews - 16.11% (67)
- Ask a Librarian - 8.55% (36)
- Visiting a Bookstore - 26.20% (109)
- "Something caught my eye" - 67.31% (280)

**SURVEYS**

Using online tools, I conducted a survey of approximately 430 high school students about their experiences with choice reading and reading in general. The goal of this was to figure out what students really liked about choice reading and what elements of school-required reading they enjoyed.

- Being able to have group discussions about the book. Having the freedom of reading something I enjoy.
  - 2/23/2015 3:11 PM - View respondent's answers

- It's in the name - the choice
  - 2/23/2015 2:29 PM - View respondent's answers

- We got to pick from a group of selected books which narrowed down the options
  - 2/23/2015 1:59 PM - View respondent's answers
THE CHALLENGES

Teacher attitudes towards choice reading
Funding for books & materials
Difficulty in producing lesson plans
Time spent adjusting schedule
Meeting state standards / passing teacher review
Pressure from boss regarding choice reading

WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

Research about why choice reading is effective
Books to help inform about choice reading lessons
A lot of suggestions about how to improve choice reading
Teachers advocating choice reading

STUDENT LIKES/DISLIKES

Group discussions are a great part of choice reading
Enjoy the freedom to explore new books
Many were more likely to read after choice reading
The grades seemed harsh with such a loose subject material
Students felt rushed during reading process

OVERALL FINDINGS

The major findings from my research and brainstorming stages of the project.
**EARNING POINTS!**

- 15 PTS - Discussion Sheet
- 20 PTS - Peer Review
- 10 PTS - Weekly quiz

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**INITIAL PROTOTYPES**

Three prototypes made it through the brainstorming process and got a light design treatment. From here, I chose which was most viable as a solution and proceeded forward.

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**A READING ADVENTURE**

Gamification of the choice reading process, geared towards making it less grade-based and offer other incentives for good work.
**Choice Made Easy**

A system to help students and teachers find appropriate books to allow them to best enjoy their reading experience.
This kit of parts focuses on improving group discussions and provides topics for teachers to use as lectures in choice reading lessons.

**BUILD A DISCUSSION**

**What was your favorite part?**

**THE CONNECTOR**

Your job is to find connections between the book and you, and between the book and the wider world. This means connecting the reading to your own past experiences, to happenings at school or in the community, to stories in the news, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You may also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author.

**Chapter Review**

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<th>Provide a brief summary of the reading</th>
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<th>Describe two key ideas from the reading</th>
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<th>Make a prediction based on the reading</th>
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FEEDBACK AND RESULTS

Each concept was well-backed by my research and findings, but some stood above the rest. It became clear quickly that Build A Discussion had the most room for advancement and refining, while also providing a strong solution to my problem. This prototype was selected to be pushed further.
ADVANCEMENT

The key to making Build A Discussion work was a kit of parts that all interact with students at different levels in order to create a fulfilling discussion and reading experience. For this to happen, I needed to make a lot of different pieces and parts for each activity. The goal was to cover many aspects of a choice reading lesson based on my surveys and emphasize the best experiences, while minimizing tasks students complained about.
Scenario Refinement

Each booklet is designed to lead a small discussion on general reading topics. These are meant to help teachers when students are reading a variety of books and planning a formal lecture would be difficult. Here’s a quick look at how they changed based on feedback.

**SCENARIO**

**Fantasy vs. Science Fiction**

How do you define the distinction between Fantasy and Science Fiction?

The two genres have seen a lot of overlap throughout the years, so the differences might not be so clear. Often times, science fiction environments will contain large amounts of fantasy elements within them. For instance, The Force is a character-driven narrative heavily involved in science fiction advancements, but also plays host to the Force, a more fantasy-based magic. This is just one example of where these two genres start to blend together.
The final design for each scenario booklet. After multiple rounds of revision, the book finally started to look branded and cohesive. Major revisions include changing page dimensions, icon treatment, and tag in upper left corner.

How do you define the distinction between Fantasy and Science Fiction?

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Let's go on an adventure.

**Define**

How would you define the Adventure genre?

Adventure can be a tricky genre to tie down because it often incorporates a lot of other elements within. For instance, you could say that Bilbo Baggin's journey in "The Hobbit" was an adventure tale. But, at the same time, that book would often be categorized as fantasy over adventure. This brings up the question of what really defines adventure writing.

**Compare**

What other genres often exist alongside Adventure?

As noted with "The Hobbit" comparison prior, adventure can exist within a lot of different contexts. Whether it be through the epic journey Bilbo takes, or maybe Harry Potter's adventure through the wizarding world, adventure is present in many fields of writing. What other comparisons can you make that tie adventure in with other material?

**Refine**

What are your thoughts on the following statement, and how might you further refine it?

"Adventure fiction is a genre of fiction in which an adventure, an exciting undertaking involving risk and physical danger, forms the main storyline."

**Relate**

What themes present in Adventure stories are shared with other books you have read?

Adventure often deals in extreme situations and grand character journeys, both mentally and physically. With this in mind, how many other genres or books share this key concept? Try and think of some other recurring themes in Adventure literature that can relate to other media, such as film and television.

Many movies will take an adventurous spin on books in order to be more appealing to audiences and keep their attention.

**Conclude**

How do you feel about Adventure after having this discussion?

Think about all the different adventure stories you are familiar with. Has this discussion changed your views on any of them? What elements have you identified that might be indicative of adventure in otherwise different genres? Adventure can be easier to spot in some cases than others. A book about climbing Mount Everest presents pretty clear adventure elements, but often times the adventure themes will be more subtle.

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**Scenario booklets**

4.25" x 5.5"
FINAL WORKS

An overview of all the final designs and applications of the project.
USER GUIDE AND ICON SET

A guide to help teachers understand best usage for each piece included. The icons begin to introduce major branding elements of the project.
CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

A form for students to fill out after their out of class readings. The questions can vary from week to week.
**Question Cards and Role Cards**

Used to help create content during discussions and prevent awkward silences. The role cards are used out of class in order to benefit discussions before they begin.

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**The Artist**

Your job is to create an illustration related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or other depiction. You can choose to illustrate a scene, an idea, a symbol, or a character. Show your illustration to the group without any explanation. Ask each group member to respond, either by making a comment or asking a question. After everyone has responded, you may explain your illustration and answer any questions that have not been answered.

**The Connector**

Your job is to find connections between the book and you, and between the book and the wider world. This means connecting the reading to your own past experiences, to happenings at school or in the community, to stories in the news, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You may also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author.

**The Reporter**

Your job is to identify and report on the key points of the reading assignment. Make a list or write a summary that describes how the writer develops the setting, plot, and characters in this section of the book. Consider how characters interact, major events that occur, and shifts in the setting or the mood that seem significant. Share your report at the beginning of the group meeting to help your group focus on the key ideas presented in the reading. Like that of a newspaper reporter, your report must be concise, yet thorough.

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**Build a Discussion**

**What's the bad guy up to?**

**What would make this book better?**

**Make a prediction!**
How would you define the Adventure genre?

Adventure can be a tricky genre to define because it often encompasses a lot of other elements within. For instance, you could say that Bilbo Baggin's journey in "The Hobbit" was an adventure tale. Yet, at the same time, that book would often be categorized as fantasy over adventure. This brings up the question of what really defines adventure writing.

What other genres often exist alongside Adventure?

As noted with "The Hobbit" comparison prior, adventure can exist within a lot of different contexts. Whether it be through the epic journey Bilbo takes, or maybe Harry Potter's adventure through the wizarding world, adventure is present in many forms of writing. What other comparisons can you make that tie adventure in with other material?

What themes present in Adventure stories are shared with other books you have read?

Adventure often deals in extreme situations and grand character journeys, both mentally and physically. With this in mind, how many other genres or subgenres share this key component? Try and think of some other recognizable themes in Adventure literature that can extend to other realms, such as film and television. How movies will take on adventurelighten novels in order to be more appealing to audiences and keep their attention.

What are your thoughts on the following statement, and how might you further refine it?

"Adventure fiction is a genre of fiction in which an adventure, an exciting undertaking involving risk and physical danger, forms the main storyline."

How do you feel about Adventure after having this discussion?

Think about all the different adventure stories you are familiar with. Has this discussion changed your views on any of them? What elements have you identified that might be indicative of adventure in otherwise different genres? Adventure can be seen to span in some cases from others. A book about climbing Mount Everest presents plenty of adventure elements, but often-times the adventure themes still be more subtle.
MY EXPERIENCE

This was a long process, over six months including early research stages. I believe I did a good job really learning about my topic through reading, but my most important information was gained through talking with a high school teacher actively implementing these ideas into his classroom. If I could do this all again, I would really try to reach out to more teachers and get their insights into what would help them specifically.

As far as design goes, I was told by a visiting designer that my project could really use one "sexy" piece that stands above the rest. I liked this feedback a lot because it spoke to something I felt as well. I think that would really finish up my project in a strong way.