**Student Survey:**

I informally asked my third and fourth grade students what they were currently watching, reading, and doing for fun. Here are a few things that I took away from my kids that I feel I could use in the future to help guide a student-centered curriculum.

**Books:**

Most of the books the kids listed are books that have been read aloud to them in class. I love that they are engaged in a book through listening to an adult read it, even at this age. Many of them are involved in a lot of activities, so, like most adults, reading for fun isn’t high on their list of priorities. They also favored series of books because once they found something they liked, it made it easy for them to choose the next book.

The standout favorites:

The *Baseball Card Adventures* series by Dan Gutman-This was a universal hit with most of the boys in the class, and some girls, too. Wahoo takes its athletic teams pretty seriously, and the majority of my students are big sports fans and they participate in team sports. I’m not sure Simon would be interested in the series, but a lot of my students were excited to talk about it.

*I Survived* series by Lauren Tarshis- This series is a creative non-fiction series of accounts of survivors of natural and man-made disasters. The kids especially liked “I Survived the Attacks of September 11th.” Kids love reading about disasters! I remember being fascinated by a book about the San Francisco Earthquake when I was in third grade. I wonder what it is about those situations that kids are so drawn to. Perhaps it’s the idea that when we know and understand something we feel a sense of control. Or maybe we want to read about people overcoming the odds and surviving. This seems like the kind of book Simon would really like. It’s based on reality and about kids taking on circumstances beyond their control.

**TV:**

Duck Dynasty was a big favorite, as were Top Gear and Myth Busters. They also like the show called I Survived, which is unrelated to the book series. Once again, just like in books, nonfiction had the biggest draw. Other shows of interest were iCarly and SpongeBob.

**Movies:**

I’ve found through this experience as well as being around 8-year-olds for several years, that the favorite movies are the ones they just saw or see advertised currently on TV, or movies that they think are probably too mature for them, and they say those movies for bragging rights around their friends. Some of their favorites right now are Wreck-it-Ralph, The Hulk, and Despicable Me 2.

**Activities:**

My students do some amazing things. I went to the county fair this summer, and had several students give me tours of their animal barns, introduce me to their livestock, let my son play with their chickens, etc. I try to go every year to the Nutcracker Ballet in Lincoln where several of my students audition and win dance chorus roles. I have a student whose family participates in community theater in Omaha, and a pair of students who started a business selling duct tape fashion accessories. One student always takes my order at the local Chinese restaurant his family owns, and another tells me a fishing story almost daily. I try to attend sporting events when I can, not just where my students are participating, but where they are in attendance watching sibling. I feel like having these conversations and sharing these experiences are incredible opportunities for me to learn about my students and their interests.

**Some of the activities my students listed:**

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts

Lego Club

Chess Club

4H

Flag football/youth volleyball

Karate

Dance

Band and youth choir

Church youth groups/volunteer programs

Participating in community theater

Duct tape craft business (bows, notebook covers, etc.)