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Motivation in the School Reading Curriculum

Linda B. Gambrell

It is not enough to teach children to become readers and writers; we want children to leave our school with the continuing desire to read, write, and learn. Our task is to pursue this vision so that it becomes a reality.

—Carol Minnick Santa

In a perfect world, all our students would be highly motivated to read for pleasure and to acquire information; their motivation and excitement for learning to read as kindergarteners and first graders would continue throughout their lives. Unfortunately, this is not the world we live in. Data from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report revealed that 65 percent of fourth graders did not have reading as a favorite activity, 73 percent did not read frequently for enjoyment, and 59 percent did not believe they learned very much when reading books (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). Perhaps more important, the NAEP data revealed that students' intrinsic motivation to read decreased from 2002 to 2005. According to Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda (2007), "These statistics indicate that a substantial majority of grade four students are not intrinsically motivated to read" (p. 237).

The Important of Motivation in the School Reading Curriculum

The construct of motivation has been widely researched by psychologists and educators. Although motivation in general has been studied extensively, only in recent decades has attention focused on the role of motivation in reading development. Motivating students to read is a practical concern and a demanding task for both classroom teachers and parents alike. Consequently, there is great interest in exploring motivational factors that are specifically associated with reading development so that we can create more motivating classroom, school, and home contexts for literacy learning. One of the primary reasons motivation is so central to the school reading curriculum is the simple but profound understanding that the more one reads, the better reader one becomes (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Gambrell, 2009). While all students deserve high-quality reading instruction in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, it is clear that if our students are not motivated to read, they will never reach their full literacy potential (Gambrell, 1996).

Motivation to read can be defined as the likelihood of engaging in reading or choosing to read. This definition

has been used for decades in research conducted by behavioral, humanistic, cognitive, and social-cognitive psychologists. Students who are highly motivated to read will pursue reading, make time to reading, and develop the reading habit. Unfortunately, there is no single formula for motivating students to read. Not all students are motivated by the same needs, desires, or values. One student's background knowledge, interest, ability, and efficacy for a particular reading task will likely be quite different than that of nearly every other student in the classroom. Therefore, researchers and educators have cautioned against viewing motivation as a general phenomenon.

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Theories of Motivation: Implications for the School Reading Curriculum

Theories of motivation deal with the "whys" of behavior: the choices individuals make about whether to engage in an activity or not, their persistence at the task, and the amount of effort they expend as they engage in the activity (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Wigfield, 1997). This history of motivation theory demonstrates the complexity of the construct of motivation. Early theories suggested that an individual is motivated to act if consequences seem pleasant, and unmotivated if he or she perceives the consequences to be unpleasant. While these early theories accounted for much human behavior, theorists and researchers recognized they failed to explain an individual's response in a situation that was completely unfamiliar. For example, how would an individual be expected to act if the consequences are unclear or unknown? Researchers then began to explore behaviorists theories of motivation in terms of an individual's response to external stimuli (Phillips & Soltis, 1991). Learning, in this view, takes place as we become conditioned to certain stimuli—

in other words, individuals are motivated to act depending on how the behavior or task has been rewarded or punished previously. The glaring flaw in behaviorist theory is that it fails to explain an individual's response in a novel situation or a situation involving new information with no reinforcement.

Social learning theory soon emerged with an emphasis on the role of experience and imitation (Bandura, 1986; Thomas, 1985). Social theorists began to emphasize *self-efficacy*, the belief that feelings of competence influence human motivation. This theory suggests the importance of students developing positive self-concepts as readers. Students need to experience success with increasingly challenging texts so that they view themselves as competent and successful readers. This theory has clear implications for the classroom, as it suggests that students need to see and hear their teachers reading aloud with enjoyment and appreciation.

Learning theorists then turned to cognitively based theories to more fully explain motivation to learn. Cognitive theorists are concerned with issues that are difficult to observe, such as perception, memory, and attention (Bruner, 1966; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). In contrast to behaviorists, cognitive theorists believe observable behaviors are not simply responses to external stimuli. Rather, these behaviors are not simply responses to external stimuli. Rather, these behaviors represent the active structuring and organization of knowledge in the mind. Cognitive theorists do not view motivation solely in terms of how past reinforcement affects behavior or how an action might feel to an individual; instead, they see it as a process of thoughts and decision making. Cognitive theorists believe people do not passively respond to the environment—they believe people actively make choices, attend to salient factors, and organize information in an effort to understand or to seek a goal. However, cognitive models of reading do not adequately account for all behavior. For example, a purely cognitive theory of reading would not explain why some students do not choose to read even though they are very skilled and proficient readers.

The social cognitive theory, primarily developed by Bandura (1986, 1997), integrates constructs of both social and cognitive theories of learning. This theory emphasizes that cognition is central to learning and that individuals learn by interpreting the behavior of others. In other words, learners don't thoughtlessly imitate others. The practice of teacher modeling of reading and writing processes during instruction is grounded in social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory also emphasizes the role of self-efficacy in learning. In keeping with this theory, students with positive self-concepts as readers are more likely to put forth more effort, read more, and sustain their engagement with text for longer periods of time than students with negative self-concepts.

A theory that draws on social cognitive theory and has strong implications for the reading curriculum is the expectancy-value theory of motivation (Fishbein, 1967, 1968; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This theory draws on ear-

lier theories, particularly the social cognitive theory. According to the expectancy-value theory, the motivation to engage in a behavior is the product of the degree to which students (1) expect to be able to perform the given task successfully (self-concept), and (2) value the process of engaging in the task. Students' motivation to read, then, is a result of their self-perception of their capability or competence as readers (expectancy) as well as their appreciation of reading engagement (value). If a student's expectancy or value is low, then there is a decreased likelihood that he or she will be motivated to engage in reading. On the other hand, if a student has a strong self-concept as a reader and values reading, there is an increased likelihood that he or she will be highly motivated to read.

A newer theory that integrates expectancy-value and social cognitive theories with strong implications for the reading curriculum is based on the engagement perspective (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). The engagement theory articulates the differences between engaged and disengaged readers and focuses on the characteristics of the engaged reader. In keeping with this theory, engaged readers are intrinsically motivated to read for a variety of personal goals, strategic in their reading behaviors, knowledgeable in their construction of new understandings from text, and socially interactive about the reading of text.

Guthrie (2004) notes that data from the 1998 NAEP report revealed that the correlation between engaged reading and reading comprehension achievement was higher than the correlation between reading comprehension and other demographic characteristics, such as gender, income, or ethnicity. Also, nine-year olds from low-income and low-education family backgrounds, but who were highly engaged readers, substantially outscored students who came from high-education family background, but who were highly engaged readers, substantially outscored students who came from high-education and high-income family backgrounds, but were less engaged readers. According to Guthrie, these findings suggest the "stunning conclusion that engaged reading can overcome traditional barriers to reading achievement, including gender, parental education and income" (p. 5).

Instructional practices based on the principles of engagement theory include the characteristics of relevance, choice, success, and collaboration. A review of research on the effects of reading instruction based on these principles revealed that students demonstrated increased intrinsic motivation for reading, increased use of strategic reading behaviors, and increased gains in conceptual knowledge (Guthrie et al., 2007). Engagement theory provides clear implications on how to support students in becoming more motivated and proficient readers.

Motivation is Multidimensional

Motivational theorists make a distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1972; Lepper & Green, 1978). *Extrinsic motivation* refers to forces that are external to an individual that influence his or her inclina-

tion to engage in a behavior. Behavior that is motivated by internal needs or feelings is considered *intrinsic*. Students who behave appropriately because doing so provides the with a sense of pride would be said to be intrinsically motivated. Students who engage in reading for its own sake, because they find it enjoyable or because they want find out how to put together a model airplane, would be intrinsically motivated. On the other hand, students who engage in reading for an incentive or reward, such as good grades or prizes, would be extrinsically motivated (Guthrie et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to Deci (1992), intrinsic motivation has two components: experience and disposition. The experience component involves excitement, curiosity, interest, and enjoyment in participating in the task or activity, while the disposition component involves the desire to interact with the task or activity.

A number of studies have demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is associated with achievement. Gottfried (1990) reports correlations of intrinsic motivation with reading comprehension for students in the upper elementary grades. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that intrinsic motivation is positively associated with standardized reading comprehension test scores. Intrinsic goals for reading have also been shown to increase conceptual learning from text to a greater extent than extrinsic goals (Guthrie, Wigfield, & Von Secker, 2000; Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004). A number of studies have concluded that intrinsically motivated students have higher achievement and more positive classroom attitudes than extrinsically motivated students (Deci & Ryan, 1992; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Guthrie et al., 2007).

Researchers and theorists agree that motivation is multidimensional and have identified at least nine components of motivation (Baker & Wigfield, 1999; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997):

1. Curiosity
2. Preference for challenge
3. Task involvement
4. Self-efficacy
5. Competition
6. Recognition
7. Grades
8. Social interaction
9. Work avoidance

Some of these components are intrinsic reasons for reading, such as curiosity and task involvement, while others are extrinsic reasons for reading, such as earning recognition and grades. Research suggests that instructional intervention supporting intrinsic motivation for reading increases students' curiosity, involvement, and preferences for challenge (Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2004). Of particular importance is the finding that intrinsic motivation for reading (reading for its own sake, reading for enjoyment) is associated with reading achievement (Gottfried, 1990; Guthrie et al., 2004; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). Guthrie et al. (2007) assert that "the association of intrinsic motivation to achievement lends it a decisive

urgency" (p. 238).

Classroom Practices Associated With Intrinsic Motivation to Read

Research and descriptions of best practice suggest that certain aspects of classroom environment and teacher's instructional practices can support and encourage reading motivation (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Malloy, Gambrell, & Williams, 2006; Malloy, Marinak, & Gambrell, 2010; Wigfield et al., 2004). The following classroom features and practices have been identified as those that nurture and enhance students' reading motivation and achievement:

1. Access to a range of reading materials
2. Opportunities for students to choose what they read
3. Adequate time for students to engage in sustained reading
4. Opportunities for success with challenging texts
5. Opportunities for social interactions about text
6. Opportunities to engage in reading tasks that have relevance
7. Incentives that reflect the value of reading and learning

(Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1993; Anderman & Midgley, 1992; Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2009; Gambrell & Marinak, 1997; Guthrie et al., 2007; Turner & Paris, 1995)

Access to a Range of Reading Materials

Classrooms that provide easy access to an abundant array of interesting reading materials support students' development of intrinsic motivation to read and their engagement with reading. Research suggests student motivation to read increases (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1993; Guthrie et al., 2007; Morrow, 1992) and reading achievement increases (Kim, 2004, 2006; Neuman & Celano, 2001) when the classroom environment is rich in reading materials and includes books from a variety of genres and text types, magazines, access to the Internet, resource materials, and real-life documents. Providing a variety of reading materials that reflect authentic forms of text communicates to students that reading is a worthwhile and valuable activity and sets the stage for students to develop the reading habit. According to Velluntino (2003), instruction that focuses on students' interests and "surrounds them with high-interest reading materials at their level of proficiency is more effective than instruction that does less" (p. 77).

Researchers have made recommendations about the number of books needed in the classroom library. Reutzell and Cooter (2004) recommend a minimum of three books for each student in the classroom, while the International Reading Association recommends seven books per student. It stands to reason that increasing the number of books and other reading materials in the classroom will have a positive effect on the amount and quality of students' reading experiences.

It is worth noting, however, that researchers and educators caution that access to books is not sufficient for improving reading motivation or achievement (Byrnes, 2000; Kim & White, 2008). While access to books sets the stage, there are a number of factors that need to be coupled with book access to promote reading motivation and achievement, including time to read and teacher-directed reading instruction.

Opportunities for Students to Choose What They Read

Choice is a powerful force that allows students to take ownership and responsibility for their learning (Rettig & Hendricks, 2000). Research indicates that intrinsic motivation is increased when students have opportunities to choose what they want to read and believe that they have some autonomy or control over their own learning (Deci et al., 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). According to Sweet et al. (1998), perceived autonomy in the form of liking to make choices in reading is associated with higher academic grades in reading.

Guthrie et al. (2007) explored fourth-grade students' motivation and reading comprehension growth and reported that allowing students to select their own books supports their autonomy, as compared to teachers or other adults choosing books for them. Students' autonomy was further supported when they acquired strategies for choosing books to read.

Many students, especially struggling readers, often choose books that are far too easy or too difficult; therefore, it seems important to provide students with opportunities to make choices and guidance in how to make appropriate choices about texts and literacy activities (Carver & Leibert, 1995; Kim & White, 2008). Antonio and Guthrie (2008) suggest that teachers consider the following guidelines for scaffolding student choice:

1. Offer simple choices at first.
2. Help students practice making good choices.
3. Provide feedback about student choices.
4. Have students make team choices.
5. Offer feedback that clarifies good choices.
6. Provide choice within a task. (For example, allow students to choose the sequence of text materials to read or the questions they answer after reading a text).

Studies have found that the books students find most interesting and enjoyable to read are those they have selected for their own reasons and purposes (Gambrell, 1996; Schiefele, 1991; Spaulding, 1992). It appears that students who are allowed to choose their own reading materials are more motivated to read, expend more effort, and gain better understanding of the text.

Adequate Time for Students to Engage in Sustained Reading

Hiebert (2009) argues that time to read, or opportunity to read, is a critical but neglected area in the school reading curriculum. Classroom cultures that support motivation to read and provide sufficient amounts of time to

read create the necessary foundation that is essential for supporting students in becoming proficient readers. Research studies have documented that time spent reading is associated with reading achievement and the development of intrinsic motivation to read. Observational and interview studies conducted by Heathington (1979), Midgley (1993), and Mizelle (1997) concluded that increased amounts of time for free reading in the classroom were associated with increased motivation to read.

Reading practice, or time spent reading, is vital to becoming not only a proficient reader, but a motivated and engaged reader who chooses to read for pleasure and information. Research studies have explored the amount of time that students read during instructional, self-selected reading time, both throughout the school day and outside of school. A study conducted by Brenner, Hiebert, and Tompkins (2009) revealed that students in classrooms where ninety minutes or more was devoted to reading/language arts instruction spent an average of only eighteen minutes actually engaged in the sustained reading of text. During the ninety-minute reading/language arts period, the teachers talked to the students about reading strategies and skills, and students later practiced aspects of reading; however, their time engaged in sustained reading was very limited.

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A study by Foorman et al. (2006) examined time allocation during reading instruction. Observations of first and second graders and their 107 teachers revealed that the amount of time allocated to text reading was positively associated with growth in reading proficiency. Only time devoted to text reading significantly explained gains on posttest measures, including word reading, decoding, and passage comprehension. No other time-allocation factors, including time spent on word, alphabetic, or phonemic awareness instruction, contributed to reading growth.

Studies have also investigated the effects of students reading in school and outside of school on reading achievement. In a study by Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama (1990), time spent reading in school was highly correlated with reading achievement, while the correlation between reading outside of school and reading proficiency was much lower. More important, when differences in students' prior knowledge, reading ability, and time allowed for reading at school were controlled, in-school reading

time was a significant factor in reading growth. In a subsequent study, Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) reported that the amount of time spent reading in and outside of school predicted reading comprehension. Given the evidence that time is strongly associated with reading proficiency, it is surprising that the time students spend in sustained reading of text in the classroom has not increased substantially over the years (Hiebert, 2009).

The school reading curriculum should include ample opportunities for students to read—both at home and during the school day. Encouraging students to take books home to read for pleasure is a simple but effective way to encourage reading at home. It is critically important that sufficient time during the school day be devoted to the sustained reading of books and other reading materials of interest to the student. In addition to reading instruction time in the classroom, devoting time to self-selected reading, or independent reading, during the school day demonstrates the value of reading and allows for the reading practice necessary for the development of proficient reading.

Opportunities for Success With Challenging Texts

According to Turner (1995), a hallmark of good reading instruction is offering reading tasks and activities that advance, rather than overwhelm, the reader. If activities are too complex or confusing, the reader is more likely to choose not to continue engaging in the reading task. On the other hand, if the reading tasks and activities are too easy, the reader is more likely to become bored with the task. The most motivating reading tasks and activities are moderately challenging, where the student must put forth some effort. Success with challenging tasks provides the student with evidence of accomplishment, resulting in an increase in self-concept or self-efficacy (Schunk, 1989; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). Accomplishing a challenging task has been shown to enhance students' intrinsic motivation (Guthrie et al., 2007; Weiner, 1992).

Motivated readers are constantly extending their skills to meet new challenges. As Turner (1995) notes:

These elements are cyclical: individuals improve skills to meet challenges, and then, equipped with greater skills, they seek new challenges. The result is synchrony between the demands of the activity and the individual's ability to respond. When challenges and skills are out of balance, students may feel either frustration or boredom—familiar motivation problems in the classrooms. (p. 187)

The research clearly indicates that students who believe that they are capable and competent readers are more likely to outperform those who do not hold such beliefs (Paris & Oka, 1986; Schunk, 1989; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Opportunities for Social Interactions About Text

Social interaction is defined as communicating with other individuals or groups, through writing and discus-

sion, about what has been read (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). In a study conducted by Guthrie et al. (2000), social interaction included talking about books with others, reading together with others, borrowing and sharing books with others, talking about books with peers in class, and sharing writing about books with others. Instruction that incorporates social interaction about texts has been found to increase students' perceived social support for reading as well as their reading comprehension achievement (Ng et al., 1998). Guthrie et al. (2007) concluded that instruction that incorporates social interaction increases intrinsic motivation.

Turner and Paris (1995) suggest several ways in which social interaction supports motivation to read. First, peer comments can pique students' curiosity. Second, students' observations of their peers' progress may increase their confidence in their own ability to succeed. Third, working with others promotes student engagement in work. Literacy tasks and activities that encourage collaboration and social interaction provide opportunities for students to develop competence and efficacy as readers and writers. Intrinsic motivation to learn is enhanced in classrooms where students can join groups of students with the same reading interests.

Opportunities to Engage in Relevant Reading Tasks

Students who perceive reading as valuable and important and who have personally relevant reasons for reading will engage in reading in a more planful and effortful manner (Ames & Archer, 1988; Guthrie et al., 2007). Relevant or "authentic" reasons for reading are reflected in tasks in which the goal of reading is to comprehend the text well enough to use the acquired information for real purposes, such as engaging in a book discussion, putting together a toy airplane, or finding out what to feed a pet gerbil. Instructional practices that focus on connections between school reading and authentic, real-life reading enhance student motivation. In a study of authentic instruction, Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau (2007) found that the most effective instruction combined reading for real-world purposes, interesting texts, and student choice.

A number of studies provide evidence that involving students in authentic reading tasks and activities accelerates reading motivation and achievement (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Gambrell et al., 2009; Knapp, 1995; Purcell-Gates et al., 2007). Gambrell and her colleagues conducted a study of authentic literacy tasks in which elementary students engaged in reading books, exchanging letters with an adult pen pal, and participating in peer-led discussions about both the books and the pen-pal letters. The results revealed statistically significant increases in literacy motivation on a pre- and post-assessment and provided evidence that the discussions about the books and pen-pal letters engaged students in critical thinking. Purcell-Gates et al. (2007) explored student growth in reading and writing informational text genres and the degree of authenticity of literacy activities in elementary classrooms.

They defined authentic literacy activities as those serving a communicative purpose outside of a learning-to-read-and-write context and purpose (for example, reading to complete a task and writing a thank-you letter). The results of the study indicated that classrooms with more authentic reading and writing tasks increased in reading and writing proficiency at a faster rate than those with exposure to less authentic literacy tasks. Literacy tasks that are authentic and have relevance to real-life are supportive of intrinsic motivation because they enable students to see the connections between school reading and real-life, out-of-school reading.

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Incentives That Reflect the Value of Reading and Learning

Many teachers and administrators believe that extrinsic rewards or incentives spark students' reading motivation (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009). Moore and Fawson (1992) surveyed five diverse public school districts and found that 95 percent of elementary teachers used some form of incentive program to encourage students to read. These teachers reported that the main reason they used an incentive program was to develop students' intrinsic motivation to read.

Theories of extrinsic motivation maintain that behaviors, such as reading, are performed for external incentives or consequences. Numerous studies have investigated the effects of both nontangible (verbal praise and feedback) and tangible incentives on learning. These studies suggest that not all extrinsic incentives have the same effect on motivation and achievement. Some external incentives appear to support motivation and learning, while others have a diminishing or undermining effect.

Nontangible incentives. Nontangible extrinsic incentives such as teacher praise and feedback have been shown to positively influence students' intrinsic motivation and achievement (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Deci, 1971). Lepper and Cordova (1992) conducted a study with upper elementary students on the effects of teacher praise and feedback on student performance. The results revealed that teacher praise provides verbal scaffolding, support, and direction to the students and leads to increased student motivation to learn. In addition, the study revealed

that elaborated or embellished teacher praise is more motivational than tangible incentives (prizes).

According to Brophy (1981), effective teacher praise is given contingent on the student's effort and achievement, specifies the particulars of the student's accomplishment, attributes success to the student's effort, orients the student toward a better appreciation of his or her own work, and fosters appreciation of task-relevant strategies. However, teacher praise is not always effective. If students perceive teacher praise to be dishonest or undeserved, motivation may decline because the students may feel that they are being manipulated (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). When teachers give praise and students interpret it as recognition of achievement, it can increase students' feelings of competence and motivation (Fink, Boggiano, Main, Barrett, & Katz, 1992; Gambrell & Marinak, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Tangible incentives. Research is less clear about the effects of tangible incentives on student motivation and performance. Giving tangible incentives such as gold stars, points, candy, or other prizes is paradoxical: tangible rewards can increase short-term attention on specific activities, but in general they have been found to undermine the development of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1992). Clear and replicable research findings on the effects of rewards reveal that offering students tangible rewards for performing an intrinsically motivating activity leads to a decrease in intrinsic motivation for engaging in the activity (Deci, 1971, 1972, 1975; Lepper & Green, 1978).

A number of studies by Deci (1971, 1972, 1975, 1992) investigated the effects of rewarding students with money and other tangible incentives for engaging in a task that was already intrinsically interesting. Students who engaged in a task in one session and were then paid during a second session tended to show less intrinsic motivation toward the task than did the comparison group that was not paid. These studies suggest that offering students prizes, money, or other tangible rewards results in a decrease in their interest in engaging in a task they already find interesting. Thus, Deci (1992) concluded that tangible rewards undermine intrinsic motivation.

The reward proximity hypothesis. One notable feature of both teacher praise and teacher feedback is that they are always closely linked to the desired student behavior, while tangible incentives (such as gold stars and stickers) are usually unrelated to the desired behavior. Drawing on this discrepancy, the reward proximity hypothesis (Gambrell, 1996) posits that intrinsic motivation is enhanced when the incentive or reward is linked to the desired behavior. Teachers foster students' intrinsic motivation in an activity when the incentive not only rewards the desired behavior, but also reflects the value of and encourages future engagement in the behavior. For example, to develop intrinsic motivation to read, students would get appropriate incentives that are clearly linked to the desired behavior of reading, including books, bookmarks, extra time for pleasure reading, and extra teacher read-aloud time.

Marinak and Gambrell (2008) examined the reward proximity hypothesis and the conditions under which rewards influenced reading motivation. They assessed intrinsic motivation using a series of task-persistence measures: choosing to read, time spent reading, and number of words read. The major finding was that students who were given a book as a reward (proximal reward) and students who received no reward were more motivated to engage in subsequent reading than students who received prizes other than books as rewards. This finding is in keeping with Deci's (1971, 1972, 1975, 1992) work indicating that tangible rewards undermine motivation.

However, the findings of Marinak and Gambrell suggest that when a tangible reward is related or proximal to the desired behavior, such as a book reward for reading, reading motivation is not undermined. This study suggests that if incentives are used in the classroom, the proximity of the reward to the desired behavior of reading is a particularly salient factor in supporting motivation to read.

If we want our students to value reading and academics, we have to be clever enough to create classrooms where the message is clear that reading and learning are the best reward.

We should carefully consider the use of rewards and incentives to promote reading motivation in the classroom. Our students know that rewards and incentives, by definition, are usually things that are regarded as having high value, whether it is teacher praise or a pizza. If we want our students to value reading and academics, we have to be clever enough to create classrooms where the message is clear that reading and learning are the best reward. Some examples of reading incentives that are related to reading and support reading engagement include additional time for teacher read aloud, opportunities to read aloud to younger students, or even the option to choose which homework assignment to complete (for example, either page 9 or page 10 from the textbook).

Research suggests that nontangible incentives, such as teacher praise and teacher feedback, can increase student motivation. When teachers give frequent, positive, and honest feedback about student reading performance, it supports students' belief that they can read well and increases their motivation to read. With respect to tangible incentives offered for reading, research suggests that the incentives should be a natural extension of the desired reading behavior, such as books and extra time for reading.

A Critical and Necessary Foundation

While the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000) encourages schools to focus on quality instruction in the five research-based instructional areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, it is also incumbent upon principals, teachers, and other educational leaders to promote and support classroom cultures that encourage and nurture motivation to read. Classroom cultures that support students' motivation to read provide a critical and necessary foundation for life-long learning.

An understanding of the dimensions of motivation as they relate to instructional practices can assist teachers and administrators in developing a school reading curriculum that fosters a love of reading and supports students in developing the reading habit. The following seven questions will guide teachers, principals, and other educators in assessing the motivation-to-read climate of their classrooms:

1. Is the classroom rich in reading materials?
2. Are students provided with opportunities to choose the books they read?
3. Are students supported in learning how to choose appropriate-level books for independent reading?
4. Is adequate time allotted during the school day for independent reading?
5. Is time devoted to student book sharing and discussion?
6. To what extent do reading tasks and activities reflect real-life reading?
7. If incentives are given, do they reflect the value of reading and learning?

These questions address the essentials of classrooms that reflect a high value of reading and the expectation that all students can become independent, proficient readers. Answers to these questions can provide information that is needed to make recommendations about resources and best practices for creating highly motivating classroom climates where students develop both a love of reading and a "need to read."

The research is clear: motivating classroom climates support reading achievement and the development of the reading habit. We all want students who are eager to read and who read for pleasure and information. We all want students who get excited about stories they read and new information they have discovered. We all want students who enjoy sharing book experiences and want to read increasingly challenging materials. Simply put, we want our students to want to read.

The most basic goal of any school reading curriculum is the development of readers who can read and who choose to read. Instruction in the most essential reading skills is necessary, but not sufficient, to reach this goal. If our students are not motivated to read, they will never reach their full literacy potential. ■

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