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# Student motivation : encouraging children to read in school

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# Student motivation : encouraging children to read in school

## **Abstract**

Teaching students how to read, comprehend, and enjoy text are goals that many teachers make in their classrooms each year. Yet, the biggest challenge that goes along with these goals is often student motivation. Motivating students happens in many forms in classrooms around the world. There are research-based techniques for males and females, English speaking and English language learners, each of the multiple intelligences, and overall individual student needs. There is no one proven catchall method for motivating students in the classroom. Instead, teachers are encouraged to find the motivation strategies and techniques that work for specific individuals. This paper discusses many of these techniques and the research that supports them. There are also recommendations included on how to implement these motivational strategies in a meaningful way into the classroom.

STUDENT MOTIVATION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO READ IN SCHOOL

A Graduate Review

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Kelly White

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This Review by: Kelly White

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Abstract

Teaching students how to read, comprehend, and enjoy text are goals that many teachers make in their classrooms each year. Yet, the biggest challenge that goes along with these goals is often student motivation. Motivating students happens in many forms in classrooms around the world. There are research-based techniques for males and females, English speaking and English language learners, each of the multiple intelligences, and overall individual student needs. There is no one proven catchall method for motivating students in the classroom. Instead, teachers are encouraged to find the motivation strategies and techniques that work for specific individuals. This paper discusses many of these techniques and the research that supports them. There are also recommendations included on how to implement these motivational strategies in a meaningful way into the classroom.

## Introduction

What if classroom management was not something teachers needed to worry about? Can you imagine what a classroom would be like if the teacher did not need to interrupt instruction to ask students to stop talking during independent reading time, remind students to be on task, or tell them to pay attention? How much more would be accomplished in a classroom that did not require the teacher's energy to be consumed with redirecting student learning? This scenario may seem like a dream or even impossible to some people. However, many people believe that the key to actually achieving such a well-managed classroom is motivation. If we could motivate our students enough to the point where they would be able to read independently and could manage their own learning, teachers would be more able to instruct students in large groups, small groups, and individually without constantly halting their teaching to reengage their students.

Many teachers have research-based reading workshop systems in place in their classrooms. They have incorporated time to read independently, given students a wide variety of texts to choose from within a classroom library, and set up cozy reading nooks. Yet, students are not engaged in their texts. What is the problem? They are not motivated to read. Many students do not understand the importance of reading or maybe just have not been explicitly taught the best way to read.

### *Background on Motivation*

*Definition of intrinsic motivation.* “Students who read for the sheer enjoyment of reading are intrinsically motivated” (McRae & Guthrie, 2008). Those students who need no outside reward for reading, yet practice reading frequently are said to be intrinsically motivated. Some students are excited about books and do not need to be coaxed into spending their time reading.



They are actively engaged in the book for a multitude of reasons without the pressure of an outside motivating factor including teacher redirection, tangible gifts, or consequences.

“Students who are intrinsically motivated spend 300% more time reading than students who have low intrinsic motivation for reading” (McRae & Guthrie, 2008). The motivation to read independently also includes a sense of wonder, curiosity, and the hunger for knowledge.

“Intrinsically motivated reading consists of text interaction for enjoyment, to satisfy curiosity, and to gain the rewards of vicarious adventure or gaining new knowledge that may be challenging” (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2000, p. 6).

*Definition of extrinsic motivation.* “Suppose we define extrinsic motivation as engaging in a behavior out of expectations of reward” (Reiss, 2009). Students who work so they can get a good grade, receive praise from their teacher, or earn a sticker are practicing extrinsic motivation. They are not driven from within to do their best work; instead they are persistent in order to gain something that they can see.

*Definition of social motivation.* Social motivation involves time to collaborate with peers to read together or discuss what has been read. McRae & Guthrie (2008) state:

Sharing reading is a social experience, whether students are reading in unison, discussing a novel, or working together to decode and define a new word. When given the opportunity to interact with a friend during class time, students will approach the given task with more enthusiasm.

*Definition of mastery motivation.* “The quest for deep understanding or conquering reading skills is mastery motivation” (McRae & Guthrie, 2008). Students who experience mastery motivation are intrinsically motivated to do their best learning and reading. They have a

drive and desire to gain knowledge and will utilize all of their skills and strategies available to achieve this.

### *Teacher's Role in Reading Motivation*

“Students must actively engage with text to extract and construct its meaning, and they will become better readers if they are taught reading comprehension in an engaging, motivating context” (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010, p. 34). This panel of researchers listed steps teachers can take to ensure that students are working in an environment that is both motivating and engaging to young learners.

1. Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading.
2. Create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers.
3. Give students reading choices.
4. Gives students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers. (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010, p. 35-37)

Tapping into Gardner's Multiple Intelligences is another way to motivate young students to read. Some students are visual learners while others retain more information when it is presented in a bodily-kinesthetic way. Buschick, Shipton, Winner, & Wise (2007) state:

If reading is to become a motivational experience, we, the educators, must chip away at the traditional classroom (get out of our comfort zone) and begin to sculpt a progressive classroom. This classroom would allow the student to experience reading as a wonderful, fulfilling, and motivating occurrence. (p. 36)

Teachers can no longer stand at the front of the classroom and dispense knowledge to a roomful of students who are expected to memorize the information all day. Great teachers are able to get to know each child in their classroom as an individual. They know the best way for each child to

learn, their interests, their struggles, their background, and their skill levels. Examples of strategies to use when implementing each of the above four steps will be described later in this review.

In addition to knowing their students, teachers must also have teaching styles and strategies that support engagement in the material being taught. “Instructional context fosters engagement processes and reading outcomes” (Guthrie, 2000). According to Guthrie’s research, there are instructional priorities every teacher must have. He outlines them in his Engagement Model of Reading Development (Appendix A for complete graphic of the model). These instructional priorities include learning and knowledge goals, real world interaction, autonomy support, interesting texts for instruction, strategy instruction, collaboration, praise and rewards, evaluation, teacher involvement, and coherence of instructional processes (Guthrie, 2000).

Along with teachers having a role in student reading motivation is the school librarian. Librarians have the opportunity to get children excited about books through motivating lessons and activities on specific authors and series. A study completed by the American Association of School Librarians researched New York school libraries’ impact on student motivation and achievement. Actions and findings were released in three separate phases. Phase III results indicated that “librarians and library programs appear to positively influence students’ research-skills development and motivation for research and inquiry, particularly in the use of information technologies such as databases and the Web” (Small, Shanahan, Stasak, 2010). The more adults that surround students who can provide a positive attitude about learning, the better off our students are. Small, Shanahan, & Stasak (2010) state:

“Results from the previous two phases of this research study supported previous research efforts (e.g., Lance, Wellborn, and Hamilton-Pennell 1993; Todd 2006) by demonstrating

a positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement, regardless of educational need (school district or student poverty) or the financial resources of the school district.

Libraries need to remain not only in individual classrooms, but in buildings as well. A central location for students to find books and seek advice on great books has proven in this study to be motivational for students.

### *Significance of the Review*

“Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) documented that students who are intrinsically motivated spend 300% more time reading than students who have low intrinsic motivation for reading” (McRae & Guthrie, 2008). Students who practice reading will be more successful with reading. We encourage students to read at school using many motivational techniques. Each child requires special motivation that is unique to their specific learning needs. Until teachers can motivate students to practice reading and learning independently, they will be overworked and exhausted from doing the work for students. Teachers are in the classroom to support students as they learn new academic skills. It is up to the students to gain a sense of intrinsic motivation. This literature review provides teachers with a variety of strategies to use in the classroom to motivate the many types of learners that walk through their doors each year. In order for students to experience academic success, they need to practice. How do we get students to practice? We motivate them until the desire becomes internal.

### Methodology

Motivation to read appears to be a topic that many teachers are searching to improve among their students. Without motivation, reading success begins to decrease and teacher frustrations increase. Upon learning that John Guthrie is one of the leaders in reading

motivational research, I utilized many of his research findings to form this literature review. To find even more valuable resources, I went to authors that I rely on daily in my own classroom for help with motivation, such as Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, creators of The Daily 5 and CAFÉ. In addition, I utilized the ERIC database to gather more findings on other aspects of motivation such as gender differences, multiple intelligences, and the benefits of a highly motivational environment for both students and teachers.

### Literature Review

Student motivation to read is complex and one strategy does not support the needs of all learners. The following section addresses the various factors and diverse strategies for motivating students to read. Specifically, the needs of male versus female students, teaching strategies such as Daily 5, CAFÉ, CAR, and CORI, and matching student reading behaviors with methods will be addressed. It is hoped that this literature review supports educators as they help their students gain an intrinsic motivation to read.

#### *Motivating Male and Female Students*

Many teachers want to find the best strategies and techniques for motivating their students to read. They study professional literature, have discussions with colleagues, or pursue further education to find answers. What teachers tend to forget is that often times, boys and girls have different needs when it comes to reading motivation. Allen Wigfield and John Guthrie (1997) completed a thorough study of 100 fourth and fifth grade students concerning the breadth of their reading and its correlation to their motivation for reading. Among many observations they made, it was found that gender appeared to cause a pattern in motivation within this group of students. “Boys and girls also differed in their motivation for reading, with girls showing more positive motivation for reading (although there were fewer differences between boys and

girls at the spring time of measurement)” (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p. 430). Since it was found within this study that boys have less motivation when it comes to reading, teachers should be concerned that this will ultimately reflect negatively on their overall achievement in school. Strategies for motivating boys to read in the classroom include more time for buddy reading and creating a library that appeals to their interests. Giving boys the freedom to choose from a variety of texts including, but not limited to, fantasy, sports, nonfiction, and adventure will promote excitement for reading (Buschick, et. al, p. 44). Tap into their multiple intelligences in order to motivate them. Get to know them as individuals in order to serve their learning needs. “The ideal reading environment for a boy is with peers, through dancing, singing, and an activity afterwards that satisfies their need to build and create” (Buschick, et. al, p. 44). Boys have a more difficult time sitting and reading quietly. They enjoy being tactile and moving in order to engage with the story. Great teachers will see this need for bodily-kinesthetic or musical interactions and provide an outlet for them.

### *Teaching Methods*

*The Daily 5.* Students can become motivated to read based on the structure of the literacy block used in the classroom. Gail Boushey and Joan Moser (2011) have designed a literacy block that motivates students to read through independent reading, buddy reading, word work practice, and time to work on writing. Boushey and Moser (2011) state:

Based on literacy learning and motivation research, The Daily 5 has been practiced and refined in our own classrooms for 10 years and shared with thousands of teachers throughout the United States. The Daily 5 is a series of literacy tasks which students complete daily while the teacher meets with small groups or confers with individuals.

Boushey and Moser have written a book called, *The Daily 5*, which walks teachers through these daily tasks and even provides a day-by-day implementation schedule to use at the beginning of the year. Although the book is incredibly detailed, it is important to note that teachers must implement this literacy block while keeping their individual student's needs in mind. The grade level of the students, their level of achievement, the classroom space, and resources available all must be taken into account when this is brought into a classroom for the first time. The following is one way the Daily 5 can be adapted and brought into a primary classroom.

Once the whole group shared reading lesson is complete in the morning, the class can begin the Daily 5 immediately. Send students a few at a time to get their individual book bins. Each child should have a bin with 3-5 books inside at their independent reading level. In a typical classroom library, books should be labeled according to some sort of leveling system and include a variety of genres. "Providing balanced book collections at all grade levels is vital to engagement during both reading instruction and self selection" (Gambrell & Marinak, 2009). After students have been introduced to a book at small group guided reading time, they should keep it in their book bins for a period of time for practice. This way they will always have books from their small group that are at their instructional level and books from the classroom library at their independent level.

The first 15-20 minutes is called, "Read to Self" time. Students can self-select their reading spots or a teacher can assign them a place. It all depends on your students' needs. Some students are on the floor and some are at tables. The key is to keep students working in a place where they will have minimal distractions and the best environment possible for quiet reading. This time is built up slowly at the beginning of the year as described in *The Daily 5* book. Expectations for this time are explicitly taught and both good and bad behaviors are modeled.

This is a tip Boushey and Moser highly recommend when you first begin implementing this style of a reading block. It is important to give children time in text throughout the day. Richard Allington (2002) completed a study on great teachers and found an important element that set the elite teachers apart from the not so great. “These teachers routinely had children actually reading and writing for as much a half of the school day – often around a 50/50 ratio of reading and writing to stuff (stuff is all the others things teachers have children do instead of reading and writing)” (Allington, 2002).

The motivational piece here is that the texts they are experiencing are things they can successfully read. “If children are to read a lot throughout the school day, they will need a rich supply of books they can actually read” (Allington, 2002). Because they are choosing texts that are within their ability range, students are able to spend longer amounts of time consumed in them. “Therefore, when students believe that reading tasks are troublesome and difficult to handle, they are unlikely to approach them positively. Thus, perceived task difficulty likely relates negatively to students’ reading comprehension, whereas reading self-efficacy should relate positively to reading comprehension” (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2000, p. 10). They can also apply comprehension strategies to these texts because they understand the content. For example, when students study the questioning strategy during shared reading time, they are expected to record and think about questions they have about their own texts in a literacy journal. If these texts were too difficult, students could not be applying comprehension strategies and would become frustrated. “Efficacious students participate more readily, work harder, persevere longer in the face of difficulties, and achieve at higher levels. Thus, efficacious readers believe they are capable of performing reading activities and are willing to attempt more challenging texts” (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2000, p. 6-7). Confidence often equals success and



willingness to participate when it comes to young readers. “An important implication of this work for motivation for reading is that when children believe they are competent and efficacious at reading they should be more likely to engage in reading” (Wigfield, & Guthrie, 1997, p. 421).

During the second 15-20 minute time frame, teachers can give students a choice. They can either “Read to Someone” or “Work on Writing.” If they choose “Read to Someone” time, students find their assigned partner and sit side-by-side reading a book together. If they choose to “Work on Writing,” students get their journals and continue stories they have been working on independently.

This portion of the literacy block includes Social Motivation. By allowing students to experience reading with a buddy, it makes the task more enjoyable and holds them more accountable. If one student is reading, their partner is listening and vice versa. The element of choice is also motivating. Students take ownership in their learning once they get the power to decide between “Reading to Someone” or “Work on Writing.” The element of choice in any aspect of academics increases reading motivation. “Worthy and McKool (1996) found that allowing students to make choices about their reading material increased the likelihood that they would engage more in reading” (Gambrell & Marinak, 2009).

The final 15-20 minutes of the Daily 5 can consist of “Word Work” time. Students follow a work board and participate in different word work activities with a partner or independently. Each activity is designed for differentiation so that students are as challenged as possible without becoming frustrated.

*CAFÉ*. The *CAFÉ* method is another teaching strategy than can support student motivation for reading. The *CAFÉ* acronym stands for comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expanding vocabulary. Boushey & Moser (2011) state:

“... The system includes goal setting with students in individual conferences, posting of goals on a whole class board, developing small group instruction based on clusters of students with similar goals, and targeting whole class instruction based on emerging student needs and fine tuning one on one conferring.

CAFÉ is one method teachers can use when designing their small group reading instruction. By breaking down the whole group into smaller groups or even into individuals when teaching guided reading, instruction is more specific to each child’s need. “In their discussion of motivation for reading, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) focused on students’ efficacy for reading, intrinsic motivation for reading, and reading goals as crucial influences on reading motivation” (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2000, p. 4). By setting goals for students, they have something to work toward. They have an attainable task and goal to complete as they read.

It is also important to note that when children are involved in a one on one conference with their teacher during a CAFÉ lesson, they have a say in the goal they will be working on and the texts they will use to practice and achieve that goal. “Schiefele (1991) concluded that when students were allowed to self-select reading material, they demonstrated greater effort in comprehending material. The more influence the student feels she has, the more that learning becomes personally relevant as curiosities are examined and explored” (Putman & Walker, 2010, p. 3).

*CAR*. Another teaching method to use with students in the classroom, especially those who don’t speak English, is called the *CAR* strategy. *CAR* is a method used to motivate English language learners to read in the classroom. Students who are learning English as they also learn to read tend to not be motivated by external factors as other students often are, but instead rely on internal factors. The *CAR* acronym stands for (C) competence, (A) autonomy, and (R)

relatedness. Competence refers to students feeling that they are capable of reading. To build up and support an English language learner's competence, teachers must create clear and attainable goals. Students should be challenged, but able to reach success (Komiya, 2009, p. 34). "The need for autonomy is satisfied when students feel that they are in control of their own behaviors" (p. 34). The author of this research says that when teachers praise students for good work, if said incorrectly, students could perceive the comment as controlling. When providing positive comments to English language learners, be sure to keep the learning in their hands and not in yours. Relatedness involves students being connected to their classmates and their teachers (p. 36). To help these students increase relatedness within the classroom, encourage students to participate in buddy reading and jigsaw reading times. When reading with a buddy, try to pair higher achieving students with English language learners to build up a feeling of support. This opens dialogue with their peers in a less public setting. To motivate these students to read further, involve them in a whole group discussion to be part of the classroom community. The bottom line here is to encourage as much conversation around texts as possible with these students. They need more specific types of motivational techniques because they have different needs and hesitations than other students (p. 26). As said throughout this entire review, teachers need to move away from a one size fits all method of teaching. All children are individuals who have specific skills, areas of need, and traits that require a variety of teaching methods. If needs are not seen by the teacher, they will not be learning in an optimal environment and will not reach their full academic potential. The CARS strategy is one way teachers can attempt to alter their instruction to better suit their English language learners.

*CORI*. This teaching method combines reading motivation with teaching content across various subject areas. The acronym stands for Concept Oriented Reading Instruction.

Developed by John Guthrie and colleagues, this strategy “combines instruction in cognitive reading strategies, motivational supports, and science learning in order to increase reading comprehension and intrinsic motivation and engagement around reading” (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010, p. 40). The instructional framework for CORI includes four phases: Observe and Personalize, Search and Retrieve, Comprehend and Integrate, and Communicate to Others (Guthrie & Cox, 2001, p. 285-286). It has been the most widely researched method concerning student motivation. It integrates reading, writing, and science aspects to create a meaningful and authentic environment for learning about various science topics. Through observations, research, and questioning, students have shown an increased sense of reading motivation in classrooms that use the CORI program. In 2000, a study was conducted utilizing several motivational teaching methods among students. The student achievement levels were studied and reports show that the CORI method tends to be successful concerning student motivation and outcomes. “The CORI intervention focused on enhancing students’ learning or mastery goals. Thus, our results support correlational findings that a mastery orientation is associated with students’ intrinsic motivation” (Guthrie, Wigfield, & VonSecker, 2000, p. 338). Thus intrinsic motivation, as previously mentioned, is a key factor in student motivation to read.

### *The Continuum of Readers*

In order to find the motivational strategy that will work best for each student, teachers must first monitor their reading behaviors to pinpoint their needs. The Continuum of Readers categorizes students based on their motivational reading behaviors. It was developed to help teachers first identify student needs and then select specific motivational strategies to use with each child. Michelle Kelley and Nicki Calusen-Grace (2009) defined a continuum of readers

using a variety of terms to describe different types of readers that will be explained in detail below, in addition to suggestions for how teachers can motivate these diverse types of readers. Each of these readers can be found in a typical classroom at any given time. They believe that once a teacher is able to recognize the engagement problems a child is having during independent reading time, the more likely they will be able to diagnose the motivational issue and correct it. As Kelly & Clausen-Grace write, “If we want to support readers during independent reading and help them with engagement, it is critical for the teacher to identify the various types of readers in the classroom” (2009, p. 313). The following list defines each type of reader and possible motivational strategies to use with each student:

1. Fake Readers. These students may look like they are actively reading, but really are not. “Some appear to be reading- books are open, pages are turning, and eyes pass print, but really, they’re pretending. They’re universal characteristic is that they rarely ever read” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p.314). Teachers can motivate fake readers by providing a lot of guidance and support during their independent reading time. “By keeping a close eye on these readers the teacher sends the message that she cares and is not going to let them settle for anything less than engaged reading” (p.314).

2. Challenged Readers. These students have the desire to read, but have struggled with their reading skills for so long that they have ultimately given up for one reason or another. “Their common trait is that reading is difficult for them and they read below grade level” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p.314). Motivation for these students includes providing them with a purpose for reading. They need to have a specific task to complete in order to continue on with the reading process for the day. “These readers need frequent feedback and asking them to place a summary on a sticky note at the

teacher's table acknowledges their progress. Peer discussion also supports these readers and provides an additional reason for reading" (p.315).

3. Unrealistic or Wannabe Readers. Characteristics of these students include announcing completion of book, frequent inaccurate text selection, switching books out of frustration, and competitiveness. "They have mastered decoding but because they select texts that are too difficult, they have comprehension issues" (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p.316). In order to motivate these young readers, teachers can complete a "Status of the Class" in which teachers walk around the room and write down book titles kids are reading and the number of pages they've completed. A "Book Pass" can also be administered in which books are selected for specific children according to interest and text level.

4. Compliant Readers. These students follow routines and expectations by reading during the required time at school. There is not much reading practice happening outside of school time. Teachers can motivate these students by getting them excited about books and authors in a text-filled environment. "These readers need to be part of a culture that values books (and reading)" (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 316).

5. Does Nonfiction Count? Readers. These students enjoy gaining actual facts and information from their texts. They are not motivated or engaged in a text when it is fiction. Be sure to have a classroom library rich in both fiction and nonfiction texts to accommodate the needs of all readers in a classroom.

6. I Can But I Don't Want To (Even Though I Enjoy It) Readers. These students do not have problems with the actual act of reading, but do not have a desire to read for fun. "When given the opportunity to read or do something else, they do something else" (p.

317). Teachers can motivate students in this category by helping them to select texts that are exciting and thrilling. Find characters and story lines that the child will find engaging. “Thrilling plots, a good series, or a specific author usually can draw these readers in” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 317). It is all about motivation for these students. If teachers and parents want to get these children on the reading train, they need to really get children to be motivated to read on their own.

7. Stuck in a Genre (or Series) Readers. These students are already motivated to read, but they are sticking to the same types of books every day. The job of a teacher here is to open the door to all types of books in hopes of interesting them in something new. “Peer discussion, status check-ins, teacher conferences, and book talks will help them find new books” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 317).

8. Bookworms. “Having them in the classroom is an added benefit because they are role models for engaged reading” (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009, p. 317). These readers always have their noses in a book and rarely need encouragement to begin reading.

Because reading is not a challenge for these students, the idea is to challenge their thinking while they read through reflection. Create discussion groups for these students to participate in where they can share their feelings, questions, and inner thoughts.

Provide them with a place where they can record their thoughts as well such as a literacy journal. “By feeding them a steady diet of good reads the teacher (and readers) will be satisfied and the other students will see the teacher as a source for good book selections” (p.317).

Being aware of each child’s motivational needs helps teachers and parents to move them up the engagement continuum. Knowing the behaviors each child exhibits as a reader allows

teachers to diagnose the reading issue and help increase students' motivation. Without the desire to read or the daily authentic engagement in text, students are not going to heighten their reading abilities.

### *Benefits of Reading Motivation*

This next section will highlight some of the benefits related to reading motivation for both teachers and students, including comprehension skills, student achievement, and classroom management.

*Comprehension.* By bringing more engaging lessons and teaching strategies into the classroom, students are more likely to be motivated to read. The more engaged students are in each lesson, the more reading success they will experience. "Among 14 studies that tested the effectiveness of engaging practices, 10 found that the practices improved reading comprehension" (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010, p. 35). Teachers in the classrooms, which experienced improved reading comprehension utilized strategies and methods in the classroom that encouraged students to participate in have confidence in what they did. This study conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences provides four suggestions on how to establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.

The first suggestion is "help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading" (Shanahan et. al, 2010, p. 36). Examples of this include teachers stopping to read notes and signs in the building in front of students, hanging student work on classroom walls, and creating a library space within the classroom filled with a variety of engaging texts of all genres.

The second suggestion is to "create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers" (p. 36). Examples of doing this include bringing activities into the classroom



that, with effort, are attainable for students, praising students for their ability to comprehend what they read, and set high but reasonable goals with students to continue motivating them.

The third suggestion in this study is to “give students reading choices” (p. 36). By allowing students to self select what texts they read during independent reading times, students are more likely to actually read. They’ve chosen a series, genre, or particular author that they enjoy, not what the teacher thinks they will enjoy. But keep in mind, during reading times when students are meant to be reading in order to become more skilled, keep it to a limited choice. This means that teachers should allow students to select their own texts from a limited grouping of books at their independent reading level. Once students are able to independently read a text, their motivational level will increase. If students become frustrated with the difficulty of the text, they will no longer be motivated to read it. Along with giving students a choice of what to read, researchers suggest giving choice in where students read. Some students prefer to read at their desks while others may need a quiet corner of the classroom that allows them to concentrate better.

The fourth and final suggestion from the study is to “give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers” (p. 37). Examples of this include pairing students together with a single text to share, providing guiding questions students can ask each other as they move through the story to aide comprehension, and teaching students how to provide support to one another when a difficult word comes up in the text or in the form of praise.

The conclusion of this study suggests that in order to increase the comprehension skills of readers, we must find ways to motivate them to read in the classroom. Motivational tactics include speaking to students about the importance of reading, providing a classroom atmosphere in which students can experience success, providing choice in text selection, and allowing for

collaboration time with their peers. Comprehension is the very reason people read. Many students can decode words and read almost anything you put in front of them. The great readers among us have a deep understanding of what is happening within the text they are reading. They process, think, and question the information. By motivating students of all ages, comprehension will increase, and more learning will take place.

*Student achievement.* When it comes to motivating young readers, there is no benefit more worthwhile than an increase in their achievement. As author Debbie Miller (2002) writes:

I want to teach kids how to read. I want to teach them how to go after something if they really want it, I want to teach them the rewards of hard work and determination, and I want to teach them that if they're sincere, I'll do everything I can to support them.

With correct teacher support, students can be motivated to read and learn each and every day they are in school. If students are not motivated to work hard and do their best, they are simply going through the motions of being at school.

Teachers must encourage their best work through providing exciting lessons and ample opportunities to practice the new skills they are learning. "Students' reading amount and breadth contribute substantially to several valued aspects of their achievement and performance, such as reading achievement, world knowledge, and participation in society" (Wigfield. & Guthrie, 1997, p. 420). To set students up for success in reading, it is crucial to lay the foundation at the beginning of the school year. Teachers must provide an environment rich in text, books that are attractive and interesting, and display excitement and energy about reading themselves. The set up of the daily literacy block must also allow time for independent reading so that students can enjoy time in text. Young readers especially, need to be explicitly taught how to enjoy books during this independent time so that it is used to the fullest potential. As Miller (2002) suggests:

Reader's Workshop in September is less about teaching children how to read and more about modeling and teaching children what it is that good readers do, setting the tone for the workshop and establishing its expectations and procedures, and engaging and motivating children to want to learn to read. (p.16)

Thus, teachers should spend the beginning of their school year showing students good reading behaviors and sharing expectations for their classroom reading environment. Getting students motivated to read is the first step in the reading process.

*Classroom management.* One of the most obvious ways to tell if a student is motivated to read in school is to watch their behavior. During independent reading times are students engaged or are they participating in other non-academic activities?

A study conducted in 2007 aimed to change motivation in students during Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) time. The researchers watched students in classrooms during SSR and completed checklists according to the behaviors they noticed. They also surveyed the students and their teachers. Once it was found that behavioral issues caused by lack of motivation were indeed a problem during this portion of the day, the teachers began looking for a solution. "The teacher researchers chose to implement multiple intelligences as their primary solution to increasing reading motivation in elementary and middle school students" (Buschick, Shipton, Winner, & Wise, 2007, p. iii). Although many of the students' off-task behaviors went unnoticed because they were non-movement tendencies such as staring off into space, they needed to be addressed in order for students to experience more motivation towards reading.

Researchers found that it is often the traditional learning setting that causes students to be disengaged. With teachers talking at students most of the day, many of the students' multiple intelligences went unnoticed and therefore caused them to checkout of what was happening in

the classroom. If students are unmotivated to practice reading either at home or at school, their reading abilities are going to remain stagnant. Teachers learned about each of the multiple intelligences and strategies that will help support the learning of their individual students. An example of a strategy is to allow bodily-kinesthetic learners the opportunity to get up and read with a buddy or allow them to walk around the room as they read (p. 4).

Once teachers learned about the multiple intelligences and a variety of strategies they could apply to their teaching in order to support their learners, they implemented them into their teaching. Throughout the implementation piece of the study, surveys were conducted weekly to track student and teacher attitudes about motivation and reading. The results at the end of the study proved that addressing the dominant multiple intelligences of each student increased student motivation. “One of the most notable results of this study was a major decrease in non-movement and movement behaviors during SSR. Students became skilled in selecting books and choosing activities that suited their dominant intelligence” (p. 40).

Feelings and attitudes were more positive towards reading due to the focus on multiple intelligences. Teachers were more tolerant of student behaviors such as pencil tapping and fidgeting during SSR. Once the teachers who participated in this study pinpointed the dominant multiple intelligences of each of their students, they were better able to teach to their specific needs. If a student needed to tap a pencil while reading, they learned to accept that. If a student wanted to create a song about what they read, they embraced it. If students who had bodily-kinesthetic tendencies, they allowed them to walk around the room as they read. If students are motivated to read, it doesn't matter how they are doing it. We need to move away from traditional teaching methods and classroom designs and into more student-centered mind frames. Our classroom environments and expectations should set students up for success. How do they

achieve success? They do so with motivation from their teachers, parents, peers, and community.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

After researching motivation, it is obvious that motivating students to read is a top priority for many teachers. How teachers motivate students to read is where the real work happens. Teachers must get to know each of their students on an individual level in order to find the right motivational strategy to use with each one. It is worth all of the time and effort teachers spend doing this, because motivation is the key for successful reading. “An engaged reader comprehends a text not only because she can do it, but because she is motivated to do it” (Guthrie, 2001). Therefore, it is best practice for an educator to seek out the best motivational strategies for reading and to use them with students in order to provide them with the best context for success.

Although it is not easy to motivate students to read in the classroom, teachers need to recognize the importance and urgency of using motivational techniques to encourage engaged reading. As Guthrie notes, “Researchers have found motivation to be multifaceted. This means that within an individual, some types of motivation will be stronger than others” (Guthrie, 2001). When selecting a motivational technique to use with a particular students, teachers need to take into consideration their dominant intelligence, personality, age, sex, ethnic background, and language. If one method does not appear successful, try another. Reading motivation is too important to give up on. Guthrie (2001) brings to life the whole essence of motivation and its influence on reading achievement as he summarizes his research and the research of his colleagues:

Motivational processes are the foundation for coordinating cognitive goals and strategies in reading. For example, if a person is intrinsically motivated to read and believes she is a capable reader, the person will persist in reading difficult texts and exert effort to resolve conflicts and integrate text with prior knowledge. A learner with high motivation will seek books known to provide satisfaction. The cognitive abilities needed to find books, avoid distraction while reading, and assimilate new ideas are activated if the text is fulfilling internal goals. This is consistent with both a cognitive science of reading and a situated account of the acquisition of expertise (Greeno & The Middle School Mathematics Through Applications Project Group, 1998; Lorch & van den Broek, 1997), as well as the development of intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1992). In sum, becoming an excellent, active reader involves attunement of motivational processes with cognitive and language processes in reading. (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p .408 as cited in Guthrie 2001)

Thus, having the motivation to read is important for active reading. The more a child wants to read a text, no matter how challenging, the more likely they will be to learn to read it.

Motivation is a powerful force. Finding texts that are engaging for children will create a more engaging atmosphere and leave them hungry for more.

Reading motivation is so much more than making students feel good about what they are doing in school. It is about giving them the tools and the skills to be successful with any new books or reading that comes their way. Teachers can do this. They can prepare students for learning today, tomorrow, and throughout their future by motivating them to work hard.

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Appendix A

The Engagement Model of Reading Development

