A need for motivation: increasing engagement to bolster success

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A need for motivation: increasing engagement to bolster success

Abstract
Educators want to create a sustained, life-long reader in their students. This overview of the literature will share with educators valuable insight into how increasing motivation and student engagement will help create more involved readers. Key themes in the literature include: increasing literacy motivation, increasing literacy engagement, and applying thoughtful literacy practices. This review will also highlight several helpful strategies on how educators in today's classrooms can help increase student motivation and engagement related to literacy.
A Need for Motivation: Increasing Engagement to Bolster Success

A Graduate Paper

Submitted to the

Division of

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

By

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July, 2013
This Research Paper by: Libbie M. Willert

Titled: A Need for Motivation: Increasing Engagement to Bolster Success

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Abstract:

Educators want to create a sustained, life-long reader in their students. This overview of the literature will share with educators valuable insight into how increasing motivation and student engagement will help create more involved readers. Key themes in the literature include: increasing literacy motivation, increasing literacy engagement, and applying thoughtful literacy practices. This review will also highlight several helpful strategies on how educators in today’s classrooms can help increase student motivation and engagement related to literacy.
Purpose:

The purpose behind this literature review is to increase awareness of the importance of reading motivation to the overall success of a reader. The design of the review is to view various sources and previously conducted studies in order to compile information in regards to the notion that a student motivated to read is therefore more likely to read, and again therefore more likely to be/become a proficient reader (Guthrie, Coddington, & Wigfield, 2009).

As an educator, I have found lack of student motivation to be a personally relevant issue. After teaching several years of middle school, and currently teaching fifth grade, I have seen a large number of students unmotivated to read. This has left me to wonder whether that lack of motivation was situational, age-related, or perhaps a general trend amongst students today. In my reading, I have been pleased to discover that this ‘trend’ seems to be cross-generational and is not directly related to students today. This perceived lack of motivation seems to be loosely connected to the ever-changing likes and dislikes of adolescents (Conradi, et al, 2013). However, there is still a need to increase overall motivation of these readers to, in turn, increase overall reading achievement. Students who struggle to read are far more likely to drop out of school, as well as have a higher likelihood to break the law and become juvenile offenders (Conradi, et al, 2013). The cycle of poverty and crime is then perpetuated and may continue throughout the individual’s life due to a lack of reading proficiency (Wise, 2009).
Methodology

After several years of working with adolescents the same question kept entering my mind, “How can I help students find enjoyment and purpose in reading?” It seemed that every time I asked students to read or gave an assignment that involved reading, I was met with the greatest resistance. At times students were unwilling, but often they outright refused. Therefore, I began the hunt for resources to help aid me in increasing the reading motivation and engagement of students within my own classroom, as well as provide an understanding for the attitudes towards reading that I observed on a regular basis.

My first general database search on reading motivation led me to an article by Applegate and Applegate on thoughtful literacy (2010). The idea that the article focused on was that the more involved students are with a literacy task, the more likely they are to appreciate what they are doing and therefore become engaged. As an educator, I feel this is the key to learning and appreciated the ideas and strategies offered by the husband and wife team.

After reading the aforementioned article, I then began a search on thoughtful literacy. This search did not result in many helpful articles, but did introduce me to the world of showing students how to become critical and active readers. Much of John Guthrie’s work is based on these ideas, as well as concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI). I greatly respected the materials that I was reading from Guthrie, however I wasn’t looking for engagement ideas that were as specific as CORI for my own personal use. After reading many of Guthrie’s articles I followed many of the references cited in those articles to further my own investigations.
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Throughout my queries I used the databases *Education Full Text* and *ERIC*. These database searches were fueled by a combination of various key terms. Subject searches were conducted with the terms ‘reading motivation’ and ‘reading engagement.’ Specific authors, such as Guthrie, Kelley, and Allington were also searched.

After reviewing the articles above, and beginning the formation of this review, subsequent searches on student accountability and ways to monitor student progress were also searched. These results proved to be less than helpful in finding resources on literacy activities or record keeping tools. I then decided to try a sort of backward thinking, and conducted a search on reading logs; in hopes to find other related articles that may give alternative activities to traditional reading logs. This search did help uncover several resources that helped aid this portion of the review.

All article searches were limited to the years 2000-Present and those included in this review were all peer reviewed from scholarly journals. These searches were conducted between the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013.

**Terminology Used**

**Struggling readers:** Readers who are reading significantly below grade level, as measured by a teacher administered reading inventory.

**Reading motivation:** The general inclination to want to read, and to also read for enjoyment.

**Reading engagement:** The interplay of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interaction during literacy activities (Guthrie, 2000).
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**Independent Reading:** The act of reading on one’s own from a text that was chosen by the reader.

---

**Literature Review**

Step into any elementary classroom during their reading time and you will find children with books in hand, pages turning, teacher’s working with children, etc. However, now, take a closer look. Are those children you are observing truly reading? Are they decoding the words on the page and putting them together to create meaning? Will they be able to sit with their peers later and discuss what they’ve read? Will they have time to share their favorite new transpiring with their teacher? It is a concern for many educators that many children are not choosing to read on their own and that independent reading opportunities during the school day appear to be diminishing (Williams, Hedrick, and Tuschinski, 2008).

In today’s classrooms, it is all too common that students appear to be reading, but in reality they are not. Each student is unique, as is each reader, and a students’ level of reading engagement can range from completely disengaged to obsessive. A student’s engagement may waver according to the content task, and text (Kelly and Clausen-Grace, 2009). Many factors play into this ever-growing problem of lack of engagement. One of the main components that appear to be missing is the opportunity for children to be able to thoughtfully respond to the text that they are reading. Opportunities to respond to text increase engagement. Response activities may include being asked to make connections and then to share those connections with friends and teachers. “Students with fewer reading skills than their peers read relatively less and avoid the task when possible…This
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avoidance clearly accounts for less exposure and in turn fewer learning-to-read opportunities. Due to the fact that engagement in reading and achievement in reading are mutually causal, they must both be cultivated within the school” (Guthrie, J.T., 2004, pg. 6). A possible way to increase this level of engagement to help create a higher level of motivation may be to have students share some aspect of their reading with others (Williams, et al, 2008).

While reading, *A Study of Thoughtful Literacy and the Motivation to Read*, by Anthony and Mary Applegate (2010), I examined their research questions and yielded some valuable insight into reading motivation and inclination to read. The most valuable question being: “Would the inclination to respond thoughtfully to narrative text be related to the overall motivation, the value ascribed to reading, and the reading self-efficacy of elementary school children” (p. 229)?

The results of their research showed that, yes, being inclined to respond to text meant a significant increase in motivation to read. (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). One of the main goals of schools needs to be fostering intrinsic motivation and helping students find the enjoyment and fulfillment in reading (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

After reading the Applegate and Applegate article, it became evident that many teachers are facing similar struggles to get their students engaged and motivated to read independently. My question became, ‘so what can be done to increase motivation and engagement?’ In the following sections, I will highlight research that supports independent reading as a means of increasing motivation and engagement. I will also review various strategies that can help increase classroom motivation and engagement with literacy tasks.
In Sarah Parks Duncan's (2010) article, Instilling a Lifelong Love of Reading, she lays out many great habits to help kids to become more involved readers. She lists various strategies that can be used by teachers to get students thinking about what they are reading; as well as showing how to help students pick books that will get them interested in the words on the page. The ideas discussed were: being a reading model, reading aloud to children of all ages, and giving student choice in book selection. This author is not alone. Williams, Hedrick and Tuschinski (2008), also state that choice and control, as well as social interaction are two guiding principles to help increase students' motivation and engagement. These ideas will be elaborated on later within this paper.

When the phrase independent reading is used, educators need to recognize that though the students may be doing the act of reading by themselves, it should not remain a solitary activity. “Although the label of independent has often been applied to the practice of providing students with time with text without direct oversight, true autonomy only appears to apply in limited circumstances and degrees” (Sanden, 2012, pg. 226). It is worrisome to think that the lack of guidance and overseeing of some of struggling readers may aid in increasing some of their ineffectiveness (Sanden, 2012). When a struggling student is left to read in a truly solitary manner they may begin to doubt their abilities. They find themselves “retreating from all text interactions and reducing their own opportunity to do what they want to do more than anything – be a good reader” (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, pg. 17). For a reader who is struggling, they often don’t even realize that they are not making meaning of the text. “Poor readers do not seem to know that they are supposed to make sense of the text and do not seem to realize when meaning
breaks down” (Diehl, 2005, pg. 59). Without an adult finding some way to ‘check-in’ with their students many of these struggling readers may continue to struggle, and in fact may become even less interested. “Students who initially find reading a little tough tend to avoid the book whenever possible and put in minimum effort. Obviously, this prevents them from gaining skill and they enter a cycle of failure to read and avoidance” (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, pg. 25). What then can be done to help them?

Motivation and engagement seem to be some of the most likely keys to success in reading. “However, the fact remains that teachers may have a wealth of knowledge and experience and a full repertoire of proven teaching strategies at their disposal, but if a child cannot or will not muster the motivational resources to respond, then there is virtually nothing that teachers can do” (Applegate and Applegate, 2010, pg. 226). Key themes in literature about motivation and engagement in reading are choice and control, communication and collaboration over text, and student accountability. These themes are highlighted in the following sections, which discuss strategies to get students motivated through the act of reading.

Fostering Student Choice and Providing Control

A concern that many educators have when students are independent reading is that they have not chosen an appropriate text. However, “a favorite motivator of many teachers is choice” (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, p. 22). Promoting appropriate book choice is an important factor in the independent reading block. Students often get a sense that their interests and opinions rarely matter to their learning because current mandates call for teachers to use specific materials in which to teach from. Personal text selection
is therefore one chance that students can have to feel a sense of power and control over their education (William, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008). “[Students] feel uninhibited during the self-chosen activities and are able to make decisions about when, how, and whether to pursue them” (Quirk, et al, 2010, 97). Supporting a student’s own autonomy is not an opportunity to completely remove the teacher’s role in the classroom, which may create bedlam. Instead, students have a mini-choice in their own learning and teachers can facilitate this process in many ways. Students are automatically more invested due to the fact that the text selection was of their own choosing (Guthrie, 2004).

With the aforementioned in mind, the organization of a classroom library is also an important factor to consider when providing opportunity for student choice. As Sanacore suggests, children like an easily accessible and understandable arrangement, just like adults. He suggests that books and resources should be displayed with covers facing outward, materials should be arranged by interest, topic, or genre, and the materials should be easily reached and at eye-level (2006). A classroom library with little organization makes independent book selection more difficult.

Along with the organization of a classroom library, the materials housed in that library are also an important component to any classroom. “A well-stocked library serves as a nucleus for browsing, selecting, and enjoying resources. Therefore, the library should consist of a variety of materials to accommodate a diversity of interests” (Sanacore, 2006, pg. 33). This should include texts of all genres of fiction, and a variety of non-fiction and informational texts too. “When classroom libraries represent a better balance of fiction and nonfiction, our students will have more opportunities to read materials that interest them” (Sanacore, 2006, pg. 34). This will lead to better student
choice and readers who are more compelled to read, as they have a book that suits them and their interests.

Educators need to remember that, “Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read” (Allington, 2010, pg.10). All people appreciate the option to choose various things for themselves. However, we are all aware that not everything in our daily lives is up for choice, yet when we are given the opportunity to choose. While I understand that students will not be able to make choices at every point in their learning, when given the opportunity to do so, students appreciate the chance to do so. This is the same for students choosing independent reading materials.

Communication and Collaboration with Text

Another aspect that seems to increase motivation and engagement in an independent reading block is social interacting with text. Social interaction with text can be conducted in a variety of ways; but often integrates dialogue with others about text. “Children appear to have high motivation to read when they will be sharing some aspect of their reading with others” (Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008, p. 136). Whether using think-pair-share, whole class discussion, teacher conferences, or book talks, educators need to find ways to get children talking and connecting with each other about literature. “Enjoyment of the learning activity, and the desire to participate in similar activities in the future, were accelerated by the collaborative learning structures” (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, p. 23).

Teachers should be urged to move beyond the independent read, reflect, and respond stages. While time should be dedicated for students to read on their own,
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teachers must give students time to share their ideas with peers. “After students engage in reading experiences, teachers should follow up with discussion – a natural after-reading activity for most lifelong readers” (Duncan, 2010, pg. 92). According to the work of Vygotsky (1978), the best learning occurs with the availability to collaborate with others who have more knowledge. Allowing the opportunities for students to share their ideas with others helps to increase their participation, as well as make personal connections to various texts they are reading. “Motivation for using comprehension strategies and reading deeply is increased when students are afforded opportunities to share their questions, opinions, and newly gained information. Collaborative activity enables students to clarify their understanding of core concepts” (Guthrie, 2004).

*Literature circles.* The use of literature circles is a common instructional structure used to facilitate student conversation about texts. First introduced in the 1980s by Harvey Daniels, literature circles have been used worldwide as a sort of children’s book clubs. However, they can take on various forms depending upon teacher interpretation and purpose of the circle. Daniels suggests that children create their own literature circles (2006) by choosing their own book and select their own people to hold conversations with about that book. In other common forms, literature circles involve students discussing either the same book that they are reading as a group, or forming conversations around the different books they are reading and making connections. Often, if the books are differently titled, they share a similar theme, which will help aid discussion. Teachers usually initially lead this process, and the gradually release the students to have discussions on their own (Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinski, 2008).
Originally, Daniels used role sheets that gave students specific jobs to perform within their group, with the hope that eventually those roles would become natural and, the sheets would then serve as an aid to learn the process; this idea is good for those educators wanting to try the process. This format may be useful for those educators wanting to try the process, yet need guidance (Daniels, 2006).

Online Forums. Another common form of socially interacting through text is through online forms, often built upon the same structure described above. Sometimes teachers utilize blogs or various classroom pages to help guide discussion, and yet provide the students an opportunity to share without having to physically discuss with their classmates (Zawilinski, 2009). For some, this method is more successful because it also allows for students in secondary levels to interact with students from various class sections, not just their own (Beach, 2012).

When observing today’s classrooms, “No group is more acutely aware than literacy educators of the difference between lessons that engage and challenge thinking and those that stultify and deaden the mind” (Applegate, 2010, pg. 233). No one wants to be the teacher that deadens the mind of their students! Discussion is one way to ensure that educators are not ‘mind-deadeners’ and that reading is more engaging for students. “Good discussions give students opportunities to identify specific text material that supports their position and to listen as other students do the same. In the course of an effective discussion students are presented with multiple examples of how meaning can be constructed from text” (Kamil, et al, 2008, pg. 24). There are many ways to make reading enjoyable for all students, it is a teacher’s job to find those ways.
Ideas and Strategies to Maintain an Engaged Independent Reading Block

Though many of the aforementioned articles offer the foundational knowledge about the importance of engagement, they lack the information teachers need to make their own independent reading block more successful. The article entitled, *R^5: The Sustained Silent Reading makeover that transformed readers*, by Michelle Kelley and Nicki Clausen-Grace, helped do just that. Kelley and Clausen-Grace described how a successful reading program was implemented within one school, across grade levels. They shared the five components of the successes that they were able to achieve, which are: Read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap/share. They collected data before and after implementation using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), which poses questions regarding both engagement and comprehension. This particular assessment has a component that involves a student survey on reading habits and student interest. With the use of these collection tools the researchers were able to see motivational growth within the collection sample.

*Mini-lessons.* Teachers are coming to a crossroads on deciding best instructional practices for teaching national and state standards. They need to be able to take a road that leads to both reading for enjoyment, as well as helping students to gain important reading skills. Teachers know that “as the debate over reading instruction continues, teachers are hard-pressed to help students see the joy in reading when associated only with isolated reading skills and drills” (Duncan, 2010, pg. 91). Therefore, Kelly and Grace suggest several methods for increasing engagement during independent reading time, while still teaching valuable skills. One of the methods suggested is through the
use of daily mini-lessons. A mini-lesson is when a teacher briefly teaches a helpful reading and then models that strategy with meaningful text. After this direct instruction teachers have the time to meet with students in a guided reading type fashion, while other students are independently reading at their seats or around the classroom (Kelly & Grace, 2006).

*Record keeping.* Monitoring students who are independently reading is another very important part of setting up a successful classroom routine. “Students must not only be allowed to choose their own books and have the time to read them, but they must also be accountable for the decisions they have made” (Johnson and Blair, 2003, pg. 187). However, teachers need to be careful to not make the assigned tasks evaluative. Tasks shouldn’t be assigned a score or grade, but be viewed as an accountability activity. For example, Kelley and Grace (2006) make mention of a daily status sheet that a teacher can use to record data on all students’ progress. “The status sheet had cells for student’s text, and the page they were on each day. It took 5 to 10 minutes for the teacher to circulate and record the information” (Kelley & Grace, 2006, pg. 153). This log, though simple in design, gave teachers a chance to see how many pages are being read by their students. Also, through the use of a daily reading log, students are asked to pick a writing stem and respond with one quick thoughtful sentence in relation to their text (Kelley & Grace, 2006). For example productive stems could be: I’m thinking that, or When I read _________ I was reminded of _________. Though these ideas are quick for students to complete, they do require students to think about the text that they are reading.
Another strategy that exists for the same purpose is a learning log. Learning logs are similar to a journal but typically involve a given prompt or task that aids students in tracking their learning and thinking as they read (Carr, 2002). Often they are used as a pre-reading tool that gives a prompt in order to help students find purpose in the text that they are reading for the assigned task or allotted time (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). This log is then exchanged between the teacher and student for feedback and communication on the student’s progress and participation during the independent reading block.

The importance of instruction cannot be overlooked. Students who struggle with reading may not have internalized or do not yet know what it is that proficient readers do. Teachers need to have on-going conversations with these struggling students. Holly Diehl (2005) models metacognition as follows, “Good readers have to listen to the voices going on in their heads while they read. By paying attention to our voices, I can tell when my mind starts to wander” (pg. 60). This is just one example of how teachers can help students learn what it is proficient readers do.

Writing to Learn. Other ideas that can be incorporated into an engaged reading block include various writing to learn activities. “Writing to learn engages students, extends thinking, deepens understanding, and energizes the meaning-making process...The purpose for writing to learn is meant to be a catalyst for further learning and meaning making...Writing to learn is an opportunity for students to recall, clarify, and question what they know about a subject and what they still wonder about with regard to that subject matter” (Knipper & Duggan, 2006, pg. 462). Knipper and Duggan (2006) suggest a wide variety of applicable activities to use during and after reading.
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And though some of the activities listed are most applicable in secondary levels, others appear to be applicable at lower levels as well. Included in those activities are quick writes, learning logs, and framed paragraphs.

A quick write is an activity that is formatted by the teacher, usually with some sort of prompt, however, and open-ended writing or summary could also be used. With a quick write, students are usually given one minute to write, and then their writing is selected. Sometimes this is referred to as an admit/exit ticket, depending upon its placement within instruction (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). Allowing only one minute keeps students engaged and creates a response that takes little time for the teacher to review.

An additional strategy that could be implemented to evaluate and gauge the learning occurring with independent readers is through the development of a framed paragraph or writing frame response (Knipper & Duggan, 2006). Boyles suggests that a “frame offers the most substantial level of concrete assistance we can provide by reducing the need for competence with the written language structures. Giving students sentence starts makes success attainable for even our lowest-performing students” (Boyles, 2003). A writing frame includes various parts of a paragraph leaving blanks spaces and lines for student response. Therefore, even though many of the structures of how to write are given, the response from the student is still authentic and shows their understanding without having to do the additional work of deciding how to gather and record their ideas.

The above named practices are all researched options to improving the motivation and engagement of independent readers. There are a plethora of resources available to
build on these ideas and to help educators find more. However, once readers are actively involved with their own learning, the act of reading should become more enjoyable and make student more active within their learning environment.

**Conclusion**

This review has discussed several important aspects in creating an engaged independent reading program. Included in the discussion was the notion that providing students with choice and control, as well as opportunities to communicate and collaborate, will help make readers more naturally engaged in what they are doing through involvement and participation.

When thinking of a typical classroom, it is hard not to see it as a microcosm of life. As adults, we are afforded choice and control over nearly aspect of our lives. We are also given the opportunity to talk with friends and colleagues when we have ideas and wonderings. Students should have those same opportunities. Think about your own personal reading lives. As mentioned earlier, adults do not get online to take a quiz when they have completed a book. Nor are they asked to create something like a diorama or poster (Williams, Hedrick, & Tuschinksii, 2008). Also, when considering your own personal adult book choice, does someone tell you what to read? This is certainly not typical. Authentic choices in classrooms will support lifelong readers. Educators may not always be able to provide book choice for every literacy task, but they need to afford choice where they can. Educators can also provide opportunity for mini-choices throughout their literacy instruction, for example, whether a student responds to their reading through a written task, or by sharing with a partner (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).
The learning that takes place within classrooms needs to get students highly engaged and involved. “Without engagement, learning is difficult. Engaged readers actively interact with text, seeking to understand what they have read” (Kelly & Grace, 2009, pg. 313). All instruction needs to be purposeful and meaningful. Educators need to provide a time for authentic learning and communication with peers. Along with those collaboration opportunities, there also should be time allotted to reflect on their goals and ideas for their own independent reading block, and then communicate those expectations and ideas to their students (Kelly & Grace, 2009).

Throughout my readings, I discovered that though there are a plethora of resources on why engagement matters to learning, as well as ideas and strategies on how to increase motivation; the literature seemed to lack in research that provided a wide variety of ways in which teachers can assess learning and understanding. The strategies that were discussed throughout this review are generally well-known and practiced, but in depth review of their effectiveness was missing. Additionally, innovative techniques were hard to find. As our view of literacies change with our technological society, I hope to see that research about the methods for assessing learning will greatly increase and provide educators and students with even more choices in displaying their knowledge.

Educators should also be reminded that the act of being a reader, and reading, is what produces better readers. “Highly engaged readers are internally motivated to read, while reading frequently and deeply. These processes of engagement in reading are facilitated when classroom practices directly address them by providing instruction in the cognitive strategies and support systems for the motivational process of reading” (Wigfield, et al, 2008, pg. 443). Educators need to find ways to make every child in their
classroom highly engaged. A “deep desire for reading is not likely to be developed from one technique or one isolated teaching practice’ (Guthrie & Cox, 2001), therefore all activities and tasks need to be structured for engagement, while keeping in mind the choice, control, communication and collaboration available for students.

**Project**

The following project incorporates the ideas and strategies reviewed above in a professional development format (Appendix A). These presentations were created with the purpose of informing relevant staff and faculty of current practices that could be utilized in their own instructional environments. The delivery of the presentations is designed sequentially and has a somewhat progressive order in the information provided.

The first session of the professional development focuses initially on setting up and creating an environment that promotes literacy interaction. A portion of the session discusses the importance of classroom library organization and variety of materials available. This then leads into helping students utilize the classroom library appropriately by selecting books that will be at their independent reading level. The session provides several different strategies that can be taught to students on book selection. A critical idea discussed as a connection to these ideas is student autonomy and independence as a way for students to have a sense of control over an aspect of learning. This is viewed as just one component of increasing engagement. (Appendix B)

In the second session, research findings for increasing communication and collaboration amongst students are examined. Applicable strategies for implementation are also discussed and modeled, including literature circles and digital book talks. Time
is provided for the participants of the session to engage in several of the strategies through a modeling lesson. Accountability measures are briefly introduced, and will be expanded upon in the following session. (Appendix C)

The third, and final, session reviews the prior sessions’ key ideas and strategies, and introduces tools that could be used by teachers to monitor student accountability during independent reading. Samples are shown and time for sharing and planning is allotted. Before leaving, participants are asked to write down and turn in ideas that they plan to implement within their own classrooms, and why those ideas seemed important to them (Appendix D). Participants are also provided with various handouts and samples from the three sessions (Appendix E).
References


Appendix A – Overview

Overview of Increasing Engagement Presentations

Duration: 3 sessions
Time required: Approximately 1 hour per session

The following presentations were developed to help provide teachers with various strategies that could be used to help increase the engagement within their own classrooms. Studies show that with increased engagement comes increased student motivation. The three presentations included in this series offer immediately implementable ideas for teachers to try. Time will also be provided to share ideas and collaborate with other education professionals. Highlighted below are each day’s main features:

Materials needed by presenter: Visual projector and screen/wall for projection surface

Materials needed by attendees: Printed slides (received electronically), pen, and paper.

Day 1 – Choice and Control:
*Classroom Environment
  - Importance of classroom library and its organization, as well as need for variety in reading materials.

*Providing Choice and Strategies to Teach Independence
  - Giving students a chance to choose. This includes strategies on how to teach students good book selection techniques.

*Giving Control
  - Why students need autonomy.

Day 2 – Communication and Collaboration:
*Importance of Communication and Collaboration
  - What does the literature say?

*Tools for thoughtful response
  - Thoughtful Literacy Log – Can it work for your classroom?
  - How to get started: Modeling of connection making

*Collaboration with others
  - “Just Say Something” strategy model and practice
  - Digital Book talks: The advantages of going digital
*What can you do
  - Making plans to improve your independent reading block

Day 3 – Accountability
*Strategies for student accountability
  - Page turner log
  - Review of Thoughtful Literacy Log
  - Other ideas

*Future Plans for YOUR classroom
  - What now?
Appendix B – Session 1

Motivating through Engagement
The C’s to Active Learning

Choice and Control During Independent Reading
(Part 1)

Overview of Today’s Session:

Rationale
Classroom Environment
- Importance of classroom library
Providing Choice
- Giving students a chance to choose
Giving Control
- Why students need some autonomy
Strategies to teach independence
- Helping students make good book choices

Rationale:

As Kelley and Grace point out in *RS: The sustained silent reading makeover*

“"In our quest to find out more about metacognitive awareness, we also discovered how to engage our disengaged readers and purposefully accelerate our highest readers."

2006
Don’t all literacy educators want this for their own students, in their classrooms?

So, how do we get there?

First things first... Environment

Teachers should try to organize their library to be student-friendly. Book covers (or at least some showcase racks) should display books with their covers facing out. Books should also be arranged by genre or theme for easy locating.

Make books interesting and easy to find! Access is everything.

Make your classroom library a space that students want to explore. A classroom library should include:

- A Balanced Classroom Library Collection
- Narrative (fiction) materials
- Expository (nonfiction or informational trade books)
- Poetry anthologies
- Fiction or illustrated books (novels, sequels, poetry)
- Large print books
- Audiobooks
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Pamphlets
- Art and music
- Multicultural materials (picture books, poetry)
- Schaum/Davidson stories and information resources
- Books written and illustrated by children
- Multimedia hardware and software
- Adaptive hardware and software
- 10 years
Your turn to share your own great ideas!!

Slide 8

- Question 1: What great organizational ideas do you use in your own classroom?

- Question 2: Do you have enough materials in your classroom library? If not, how could you increase your library?

- Question 3: What materials do you find your students most wanting to read? Specific series? Topic?

Slide 9

Your library now looks great...

So, what's next?

Step Two...
"Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they have the opportunity to choose what they read."

(Allington, 2010, pg.10)

Step Two:
- Students often get a sense that their interests and opinions rarely matter to their learning.
- Many day-to-day activities allow for limited choice.
- Independent reading is one place to increase the choice students have over their own learning.

Choice

How do you currently provide choice within your classroom?

*Share with others the great things you are doing to support choice for your students*
That doesn’t mean that supporting a student’s own autonomy is an opportunity for bedlam to occur, it just means that students get at least a mini-choice in their own learning. They are automatically more invested due to the fact that it was a personal choice of their very own.”

(Guthrie, 2004)

Where to go from here?
Step Four: Teaching Independent Choice
Be proactive - Teach good book selection

Here are some great ways to teach children how to choose books that are at their independent reading level:

**Goldilocks Method**

This strategy compares choosing a book to the well-known Goldilocks character. It asks the reader to find a book that is "just right" for them. It asks students to look at the words in the book and ask themselves questions to decide if the book is too hard, too easy, or "just right."

Another strategy is...

**How to Choose "Just Right" Books**

1. Look at the cover.
2. Read the title and the author.
3. Read the blurb in the back.
4. Flip through the book.
5. Read the first page.
6. Use the 5 Finger Rule.

- 0-1 Fingers — Too Easy
- 2-3 Fingers — Just Right
- 4-5 Fingers — Too Hard

The Five Finger Rule

So how can you increase choice and control within your own classroom?
Exit Ticket

On one of the sticky notes at your table, please write down THREE things that you are taking away from today’s session.

Notes from Session 1:
OVERVIEW OF TODAY’S SESSION:

- Rationale
- Importance of Communication and Collaboration
  - What the literature says
- Tools for thoughtful response
  - Thoughtful Literacy Log
  - How to get started: Modeling of connection making
- Collaboration with others
  - “Just Say Something” strategy and practice
  - Digital Book talks
- What can you do
  - Plans to improve your independent reading block

RATIONALE:

“Children appear to have high motivation to read when they will be sharing some aspect of their reading with others.”

- Williams, Hodrick, & Tuschiński
  2008
THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION:

"Children have to actively construct their own linguistic representations of people's thinking, and the way we talk or arrange for talk can invite and facilitate these constructions. Conversations in which children disagree or are asked for clarification of what they say are helpful. Reflective conversations about such interactions expand their effectiveness by recognizing the fact of multiple perspectives..."

- Peter Johnston (2012)

It is our job to help our students make connections. We need to model how this is done. Show them how to communicate with each other. Give them the tools to work and communicate together.

How do students in your classroom currently interact with one another in regards to texts that they are reading, or have already read?

Two minutes to share out with tablemates. Use chart paper to record ideas...
A NEED FOR MOTIVATION: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT TO BOLSTER SUCCESS

Slide 7

TOOLS TO GET STUDENTS THINKING AND RESPONDING

On the next slide you will see a thoughtful literacy log to keep students on track during their independent reading times.

To be able to use this, the teacher will spend three days teaching connections. They will share one short reading each day, for three days.

After the reading, the teacher will then make a connection and record it on the log. She will demonstrate what a text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text. Teacher will emphasize the importance of daily reading and the need for student-to-teacher communication in regards to time on task.

Slide 8

For example:

Mr. Peabody’s Apples by Madonna

Overview from Barnes and Noble

Mr. Peabody’s Apples takes place in 1949 in Happville, USA. One Saturday, Mr. Peabody, the beloved elementary school teacher and baseball coach, finds himself all alone on the baseball field. He wonders where everybody is until he sees the bat boy, Billy Little, walking toward him with a sad look on his face. Billy tells him that another student, Tommy Titlebottom, spread a rumor that Mr. Peabody was a thief after Tommy saw Mr. Peabody taking apples twice from the local market.

Mr. Peabody then shows Tommy that what matters is the truth—not how things appear—and teaches him an unforgettable lesson about how we must choose our words carefully to avoid causing harm to others.

*Excerpt shared with you today is taken from this book*

Slide 9

AFTER THE STORY:
MODELING MY THINKING

Type of Connection:
- Text to Self

What did it remind me of?
- An experience at school when my friends were spreading an untrue rumor about me. And I wished they knew the truth.

Favorite part of the story:
- My favorite part of the story was when the boy had to rip open the pillow, only to realize what Mr. Peabody was trying to show him about gossip.

Steps for filling out the Thoughtful Response Log
A NEED FOR MOTIVATION: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT TO BOLSTER SUCCESS

Slide 10

NOW TO GET THEM TO **SHARE!**

Slide 12

"Motivation for using comprehension strategies and reading deeply is increased when students are afforded opportunities to share their questions, opinions, and newly gained information. Collaborative activity enables students to clarify their understanding of core concepts."

Guthrie, 2004
STRATEGY: “JUST SAY SOMETHING...”

Just Say Something is an instructional strategy that addresses these issues in any classroom by engaging students in the reading process through peer interaction.

Here’s how it works:
1. Students pair up and designate themselves Partner A or Partner B.
2. Together, they chunk up the reading by placing stop signs (stickies) along the way. Or, the teacher can decide ahead of time where students will stop.
3. Students read silently and stop at the stop signs. At the first stop, Partner A “says something” about the text:
   - What she thinks it said
   - What she thinks about it
   - What she might not have understood.
   - What she has questions about
   - What new thoughts she has
   - How it connects with something else.
4. Partner B responds. He may comment on something Partner A said or make a comment of his own.
5. Partners resume reading and stop at the next stickie/stop sign. This time Partner B gets to “say something” first and Partner A responds.
6. Partners continue until they finish.
7. The teacher roves around, listening to the conversations between the partners. He might step in to help students figure out a difficult passage.

So, let’s give it a try...

Read till the STOP sign.

GROWING GOOD CORN – Author Unknown

There once was a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon.

One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors.

“How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?” the reporter asked.
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PARTNERS RESUME READING AND STOP AT THE NEXT STOP SIGN.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

He is very much aware of the connectedness of life. His corn cannot improve unless his neighbor's corn also improves.

So it is with our lives. Those who choose to live in peace must help their neighbors to live in peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

The lesson for each of us is this: if we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn.

STOP

This time Partner B gets to "say something" first, and then Partner A responds.

MORE WAYS TO GET STUDENTS SHARING... DIGITAL BOOK TALKS!

Below is a digital book talk using PowerPoint

ANOTHER VERSION DONE VIA STORYBIRD.COM

Some of the pages included in the online version of the book talk.
"NO GROUP IS MORE ACUTELY AWARE THAN LITERACY EDUCATORS OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LESSONS THAT ENGAGE AND CHALLENGE THINKING AND THOSE THAT STULTIFY AND DEADEN THE MIND."

Applegate, 2010

OTHER IDEAS FOR INCREASING MOTIVATION AND EXCITEMENT TOWARDS LITERACY

- Be a Reading Role Model
- Give student choice
- Provide for hands-on
- Provide opportunities to connect
- Make reading FUN!

NO ONE WANTS TO BE THE TEACHER THAT DEADENS THE MIND OF THEIR STUDENTS!

THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS TO MAKE READING ENJOYABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS.

IT IS A TEACHER'S JOB TO FIND THOSE WAYS, AND MAKE READING ENJOYABLE FOR ALL.
Slide 22

Before you leave:

Record one idea you hope to implement in your classroom and a quick description of how you plan to do it.

Leave your response on the table!

Notes from Session 2:
A NEED FOR MOTIVATION: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT TO BOLSTER SUCCESS

Appendix D – Session 3

Slide 1

Motivation through Engagement
Accountability for Independent Reading (Part 3)

Presentation by Libbie Willert
University of Northern Iowa
MAE Literacy Cohort 2013

Slide 2

Overview of Today's Session

- Purpose
- Review of Literature
  - Avoidance vs. Engagement
- Previous session review
  - Choice
  - Control
  - Communication
  - Control
- Strategies for student accountability
  - Page turner log
  - Review of Thoughtful Literacy Log
  - Other ideas
- Future Plans
  - What now?

Slide 3

Purpose:

To review ideas learned in Parts 1 and 2.

As well as develop a plan for your own independent reading routines.
Independent Reading:

Voracious Readers or Avid Avoiders

Who do you have in your classroom?

Get out your cell phones or mobile devices 😊

We have a poll to take:

What percentage of your students do you feel are actually reading during independent reading time?

*Look at the choices and text that number as the directions show*

So, what does the literature say about this?

"Students with fewer reading skills than their peers read relatively less and avoid the task when possible...This avoidance clearly accounts for less exposure and in turn fewer learning-to-read opportunities. Due to the fact that engagement in reading and achievement in reading are mutually causal, they must both be cultivated within the school."

(Guthrie, J. T., 2004)
A NEED FOR MOTIVATION: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT TO BOLSTER SUCCESS

Slide 7

And what have we learned about engagement?

1. Provide Choice
2. Give Control
3. Open lines of Communication
4. Get students Collaborating

The four C's to Engagement!

Slide 8

How can you increase the effectiveness of your independent reading routines?

- Help teach independent book selection
- Provide opportunities for discussion and sharing about texts
- Monitor students' achievements and progress

Slide 9

SNOW BALL FIGHT!

On one of the sheets of paper at your table, write down what you currently do in your classroom to keep track of what your students are independent reading.
(Do not be afraid to say 'nothing')

After you've recorded your answer, wad the paper up and wait for my count. At the count of three, throw your 'snowball' at someone near you.
Slide 10

Share out!
Quickly whip around the room and share the response that is found on your ‘snowball.’

Slide 11

A Quick Idea:
Find 5 minutes before the start of guided reading to walk around the room to monitor the page number that each student is starting on in their book that day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libbie</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Now tomorrow when you check, they will know that you expect to see forward progress.*

Slide 12

Now, is this enough?
Of course not! 😊

I’m sure you are already thinking...

“Well, my students are quite clever, they know I expect forward progress. So, of course they are several pages further in the book.”
So, aside from a quick daily check-in system, what can we do to hold students accountable?

Pop Quiz!

What idea did you learn about in yesterday’s presentation that would help in this situation?

Turn to a neighbor and share!

That’s right: The Thoughtful Literacy Log!
Other strategies that could be used:

- Book talks
- Response logs
- Partner conferences
- Artistic representations
- Blogs
- Surveys

Where do we go from here?

"No group is more acutely aware than literacy educators of the difference between lessons that engage and challenge thinking and those that stultify and deaden the mind."

(Applegate, 2010)

Don’t deaden the mind!!

Just provide the 4 C’s to increasing motivation through engagement:

- Choice
- Control
- Communication
- Collaboration

Notes from Session 3:
Presentation Handouts for Motivating Through Engagement
Contents of Handout Packet

Session 1
Classroom Environment Examples
Guidelines for Classroom Library Resources
Book Selection Strategies
Notes

Session 2
Thoughtful Literacy Log
“Just Say Something” Strategy
Digital Book Talks
Notes

Session 3
Record Keeping Example
Other Strategies
Review of Presentations
Notes
Session 1: Classroom Environment: What it could look like:
Session 1: Classroom Environment:

Your classroom library should include a variety:

**A BALANCED CLASSROOM LIBRARY COLLECTION**

- Narrative (fiction) materials
- Expository (updated nonfiction or information) trade books—about one-fourth to one-half of the total collection
- Poetry anthologies
- Picture, or illustrated, books (narrative, expository, poetic)
- Large-print books
- Audiobooks
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Pamphlets
- Art and music
- Multicultural materials (narrative, expository, poetic)
- Bibliotherapeutic stories and information resources
- Books written and illustrated by children
- Multimedia hardware and software
- Adaptive hardware and software
- Etcetera

*Building a balanced classroom library takes time (sometimes years).*
Session 1: Book Selection Strategies (In my own classroom, I use these jointly):

Goldilocks: This strategy compares choosing a book to the well-known Goldilocks character.

It asks the reader to find a book that is 'just right' for them.

Are the words in the book too hard, too easy, or 'just right'?

How to Choose "Just Right" Books

1. Look at the cover.
2. Read the title and the author.
3. Read the blurb in the back.
4. Flip through the book.
5. Read the first page.
6. Use the 5 Finger Rule.

0-1 Fingers—Too Easy
2-3 Fingers—Just Right
4-5 Fingers—Too Hard

The Five Finger Rule
~Session 1~

Notes:
### Session 2: Thoughtful Literacy Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of the Week</th>
<th>Type of Connection</th>
<th>Description of Connection</th>
<th>Favorite part or fact that you read today and why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/Time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start/End page #:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/Time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start/End page #:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/Time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start/End page #:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/Time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start/End page #:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April/Time:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start/End page #:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 2: Just Say Something

*Just Say Something* is an instructional strategy that addresses these issues in any classroom by engaging students in the reading process through peer interaction.

Here's how it works:

1. Students pair up and designate themselves Partner A or Partner B.

2. Together, they chunk up the reading by placing stop signs (stickies) along the way. Or, the teacher can decide ahead of time where students will stop.

3. Students read silently and stop at the stop signs. At the first stop, Partner A "says something" about the text:

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   What she has questions about
   What she thinks about it
   What new thoughts she has
   What she might not have understood.
   How it connects with something else.

4. Partner B responds. He may comment on something Partner A said or make a comment of his own.

5. Partners resume reading and stop at the next stickie/stop sign. This time Partner B gets to "say something" first and Partner A responds.

6. Partners continue until they finish.

7. The teacher roves around, listening to the conversations between the partners. He might step in to help students figure out a difficult passage.
A NEED FOR MOTIVATION: INCREASING ENGAGEMENT TO BOLSTER SUCCESS

Session 2: Digital Booktalk Example – Storybird.com


This is a GREAT and suspenseful story, with a strong female protagonist. It is sure to keep your interest and excitement levels piqued.

If you enjoy Running out of Time, you may also enjoy these other books by M.P. Haddix: The Shadow Children Series and The House on the Gulf.
~Session 2~

Notes:
Day 3: Accountability –

Record Keeping Example for Page Number Monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bibbie</td>
<td>M 8</td>
<td>T 17</td>
<td>W 25</td>
<td>Th 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other strategies that could be used:
- Book talks
- Response logs
- Partner conferences
- Artistic representations
  - Blogs
  - Surveys

Take Away Message: What have we learned about engagement?

1. Provide Choice
2. Give Control
3. Open lines of Communication
4. Get students Collaborating
~Session 3~

Notes: