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LITERACY: ADOPTING MOTIVATIONAL LITERACY
PRACTICES MEANT TO LAST A LIFETIME

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by
Diana Kathryn Metz

June 1998

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to assist teachers in moving toward adopting a more holistic perspective of the teaching of reading and begin to explore approaches to literacy which are more motivational in nature and encourage an increase in the amount, width, and breadth of reading. A particular problem occurs when teachers are asked to adopt classroom practices which are contrary to the development of life long literacy learners, and what we know about how learning to read works. Under these circumstances, it is often difficult for teachers to motivate students to engage in prolonged interaction with literature at a level intense enough to increase overall skills and comprehension. Many teachers are just now beginning to come to terms with the problems of moving away from traditional approaches to reading which involve the development and direct teaching of discrete skills as the best approach to the teaching of reading toward adopting more motivational practices which encourage life time literacy learning and increased involvement with literacy processes.

Motivational research is beginning to explore the nature of motivation and how this impacts reading engagement with the intensity necessary to develop higher level literacy skills. Areas being explored include intrinsic motivation, aesthetic transaction with text, and taking on ownership of literacy. Also being investigated is the role of the competent and caring teacher in assisting in motivating students toward life long literacy practices.

The overarching goal of this project is to encourage teachers to begin to adopt

more motivational practices in their classroom reading programs that would lead to an increase in the amount, depth, and width of reading engagement for students.

The second major goal of this project is to explore the nature of motivation as it relates to reading. Through examples provided, it is hoped that teachers will begin to view reading not only in cognitive terms, but as an aesthetic experience which is meaning driven. Another major goal of this project is to investigate our roles as teachers as we begin to view ourselves as more of a powerful motive force in encouraging and supporting life long literacy practices for ourselves and our students.

This project will present opportunities for explorations and reflections into the motivational nature of reading from a life long literacy learning perspective. In the first section the nature of reading and the role of the teacher as a motivational force will be examined from a holistic viewpoint. The second section will provide examples of some motivational classroom practices used by many educators over the years in an attempt to increase the amount, depth, and width of reading for students and to promote life long literacy.

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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of problem

As a society, we have always been caught up in the idea that the main goal of American public schools is to teach all children to read. The purpose of the Old Deluder of Satan Act of 1647, enacted by the Puritans, was to establish public elementary schools so that all children learn to read the scriptures and thus tame the inherently evil spirit. It was also based on the idea that parents were failing in their job to properly educate their children, so schools had to take over. This idea persisted unabated until the 1930s with the emergence of progressive educators like Dewey (1897), who saw the main goal of American schools as developing citizens who could participate in democratic communities. In order to do this, teachers were required to rethink their roles as teachers and their basic attitudes toward the learner. From this viewpoint, the simplistic attitude of providing a rudimentary education of the three Rs changed to the idea of developing and promoting literacy in communities. There has always been resistance to this progressive movement even within educational circles. Goals 2000 asks us once again “to scrutinize learning environments outside traditional classrooms. The eighth national education goal affirms the importance of community-oriented teacher education, and challenges educators to promote partnerships increasing parental involvement and participation in the social, emotional, and academic growth of children” (Levesque & Proser, 1997, p.10). With Goals 2000 comes the realization that promoting literacy in communities requires adopting teaching philosophies and practices which consider the total student and the educational needs of a life long learner. This is not accomplished

through the programmed learning environments of the past, but in a more open classroom, which recognizes the value of parental involvement in promoting literacy, not only for students, but for the adult community at large.

The dilemma for education has always been the dichotomy between both schools of thought, and has been responsible for the pendulum swings in curriculum which have existed in American education since its inception. On the one hand, we say as a society that we want an education for everyone, but on the other hand, we adopt philosophies and educational practices which reflect a one size fits all approach. A good place to begin would be to explore and expand our own views as a society on what we want as a legacy of American education to pass on to future generations. Do we want to teach children to read, and then put the blame on the individual student for failure to take the ball and run with it? Or do we at long last become more supportive of the individual that might become a valuable, contributing member of society. Should education lead to the opening of doors for all, or the closing of doors for those who do not fit the mold? Reconstructionists see the purpose of public schools as maintenance of the status quo, but would like to see education become the instrument of change in our society (Covey & Mercer, 1980).

When viewing the history of American education, it is interesting to note the diversity of educational philosophies that drive the public educational system. Within the school where I have taught since 1978, teachers fall into a variety of educational camps. Everything from skills based, programmed learning advocates to whole language purists can be seen in teaching styles, which are as diverse as the student population they serve.

The realization that students will have to persist through the maze of variant teaching styles and curriculums requires the development of learning strategies, if we are to be success oriented for all students. Unfortunately, many well meaning educators tend to fall back on skills based instruction, when whole language techniques do not produce immediate results on competency exams. Emerging recently are those educators who see the value of seeking a more balanced approach that recognizes the value of a curriculum which develops skills while at the same time promoting strategies for life long learning.

Progressive education is still with us; especially in strictly educational circles. If Dewey were alive and well, and living in California today, he would need to rethink his philosophy of education as acting as a bridge between the individual and the community at large to include the global community. Minority education has attempted to change the old democratic ideal of America seen as a melting pot, to a kinder, more gentle idea of viewing our democratic society as a salad bowl. Salad is seen as a mixture of different textures, colors, and tastes, all of which blend together to make a more flavorful, interesting mix. Cultural diversity in this light is seen as an enhancement to democracy, rather than a problem to be solved. Unless American educators to adopt a more global perspective, and value diversity, they will continue to fail students at an ever increasing rate.

Theoretical foundations

It is time for progressive educators to stand up and speak out for the student who does not fit the mold. In order to do this, educators can begin by adopting more

inclusive philosophies and practices within the educational community. When progressive educators have attempted to promote their views in the past, they could only speak in holistic and qualitative terms regarding the development of literacy for students. They understood that a whole language approach worked better for all students, but lacked the quantitative research to back up their suppositions. Whole language advocates now realize that many educators who embraced whole language failed to provide appropriate support for students adrift in whole language classrooms, where students were left to make learning connections on their own through immersion in literature. The results were what has been referred to as miseducation. Many educators believe that “miseducation may lead to new knowledge, but restricts potential future expectations” (Burke & Short, 1991, p. 16). Students in some classrooms oftentimes come to see reading as memorizing, and writing as copying. The results can be disastrous.

Progressive educators understood where they wanted to go and why, but lacked the key to getting on the right road. The missing link was the lack of knowledge and proper training of the classroom teacher. The lesson we have learned in whole language is that it is not enough to go through the motions. Whole language as a philosophical basis for curriculum takes a lifetime of observation of students over time; constant reflection, and continuous updating of teaching practices to meet the needs of the group.

If our use of language reflects our attitudes on how we view the world, then we might begin to finally break free of puritanical roots, and expand our thought to include the present, and, at long last, the future. Redefining and expanding our definition of reading, and reading process is the first step. It takes very little thought to recognize that

reading is a complex process of making meaning from text. Most educators, as well as adults, would define reading in this light from an adult perspective, especially if they have been successful readers themselves. Why then when they begin to define the teaching of reading, do they immediately narrow the definition of reading to the Dick and Jane, or the sound it out approach? Is it because it is much easier to fit the phonetic approach into the existing system and much easier to get quantitative results on a national exam?

What about those who failed using this limited approach? Do we put the blame on the student? Do we put the blame on the educator who failed to properly implement whole language practices in the classroom? Do we put the blame on the parent? Joining a community of literacy advocates which would be composed of students, parents, and educators would be a beginning, and put control where it belongs, back in the local community. As progressive educators, we can lead the way through classroom practices that promote literacy, and attempt to assist the learner to make the connection between skills learned in the classroom, and potential value to their own personal life. I believe that this is my role and challenge as a teacher. I believe that it is the responsibility of the teacher to help the student make a personal connection with the curriculum. Literature is a very powerful aesthetic way to do this. Curriculum justified in holistic terms becomes more authentic for the learner. For me the real question is whether the educational system has real meaning and purpose for students or is concerned only with scores on a test.

One way to assist students in finding meaning and purpose in academic achievement is in the way classrooms are conducted. It involves how the learner is

viewed, the role of the teacher, the role of the parent, and much more. We can begin to define the need for change in more quantitative and qualitative terms. One way to effect change within the educational community is to become more involved with developing and promoting literacy within the local community. Adopting a literacy approach would help us to seek new ways to develop literacy, not only within the schools, but within the community at large.

Where do I begin? First, I look at how I view myself as a learner, and then what I can bring from experience and knowledge to my teaching. I always tried to view the learner from an empathetic viewpoint. That is not enough, however, when facing the learning task at hand. Empathy begins with role modeling efficacy. I have to be willing to be a risk taker and put myself in a position of student for the moment. Teachers then are encouraged to transfer their own sense of efficacy as subject matter to be taught to students, but allow students to develop their own strategies (Burlison, McCarthy, Stanfill & Stevenson, 1996, pp. 118-124). Within the socio-cognitive literacy learning model, the teacher's role is seen as one of "opening the way and not conducting to the end." (Confucius (1885), as quoted in Muller). Socrates advocated that a teacher does not "teach but rather serves as a mediator to assist the student in becoming consciously aware of knowledge already possessed. The goal of the teacher is to model thought in action." (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, pp. 1022-1023). In order to accomplish this, teachers must be willing to commit to becoming lifelong learners themselves.

Expanding the definition of reading to one of developing and supporting literacy has been the most important change in my philosophical viewpoint since returning to

graduate school after many years in the elementary classroom. Adopting literacy as a personal goal helps me to expand my experiences, and I know will impact my teaching philosophy and practicum. If I want my students to become more literate; then I must begin by first developing my own literacy.

Before we begin to adopt literacy practices in classroom communities, in my opinion, we have to begin by expanding our basic idea of reading and reading process. Some of the foremost educators in this field are Marie Clay (1991), Kenneth Goodman (1996), and Frank Smith (1997). By observing students engaged in reading process overtime, these educators have been pioneers. Based on the philosophy of viewing reading as a socio-psycholinguistic process, they propose that learning to read involves a complex process of developing strategies through the use of cuing systems of not only phonics, but syntax (language structure), and meaning. Clay (1991) asks us to look at successful young readers as having a variety of flexible reading strategies which are basically meaning driven. She asks us to entertain the idea that the emergent reader comes to school with a basic knowledge of how print works, and reading strategies already in place. What separates the successful learner from readers experiencing difficulties are faulty strategies which do not produce meaning. Smith (1997) would say that fluency is achieved when reading without nonsense occurs. According to Smith (1997), reading for meaning breaks down, and functional blindness occurs, when the learner is encouraged to become overly dependent on the phonetic approach to reading and cognitive overload occurs. The urgency that fluency needs to occur at even beginning stages of reading, before faulty or inflexible strategies limit learning, is an

important contribution to the field of reading process. Kenneth Goodman (1996) has lead the field in dealing with the older student who has not arrived at fluency yet, but is still attempting to make meaning from print. His research in miscue analysis helps teachers to break through old ideas of reading for exact decoding of print, and frees the learner and teacher to concentrate on the real task at hand, developing multiple strategies for problem solving unfamiliar text. In order to do this, Goodman encourages teachers to get over our old ideas that miscues are mistakes. "Error was thus defined as bad reading to be eradicated, and good reading was defined as accurate" (Brown, Goodman & Marek, 1996, v.). He made the observation that the errors of his first subjects in miscue analysis showed that they were using their knowledge of language to make sense of the printed text. He asks us to concentrate on developing alternative strategies for students, when phonics alone does not produce results. In order to be more supportive of students in their quest to make meaning from print, educators can gain insight by understanding how the reading process works, being able to identify potential problems early on, and analyze observations of language processing; looking for clues about what strategies are in place, and where the student is in the reading process.

According to Vygotsky (1978), this is the only way teachers can ascertain a student's "proximal zone of development". Two important themes in Vygotsky's writings are the social foundations of cognition, and the importance of instruction in development. It implies that social interaction leads to problem solving, and the speech used in social interactions are taken over and internalized by the individual, thus enhancing cognition and intellectual development. Teaching is seen in the Vygotskian

perspective as moving away from Piaget and waiting upon stages of development, and moving toward teaching as a “decisive motive force” (Au, Carrol & Scheu, 1997).

My Reading Recovery training has brought me this far. I would now like to study Goodman further and see if I could apply some of the knowledge I have gained about reading process and whole language together to make my teaching more powerful and purposeful in the arena of adolescent and adult literacy. Where I part company with Reading Recovery is the idea that reading recovery techniques are only for the select few students and these techniques are not necessary for use in the classroom, or for the older student experiencing problems. Whole language advocates would have difficulty, as I have, with the idea of pressuring students and teachers to perform within a certain amount of time, and then leave them once again to their own devices in the classroom. Whole language advocates realize that effective literacy learning involves large chunks of time, and may take even longer to show quantifiable results. Looking for signs of language processing along the way, Goodman would say, would give us a clearer picture of where the individual student is in the process rather than giving up on the student and making them feel like a failure.

The term literacy learning is a more holistic approach to the process of reading. It recognizes the Vygotskian principle of the power of peer tutoring or purposeful interaction with peers in the development of reading process. It more clearly defines the purpose of reading and expands the context in which reading can take place. It encompasses the language arts, and helps to develop and strengthen the “linguistic pool” of the learner (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). In addition to this, literacy learning

provides a framework for developing skills in context rather than limiting the learner. It can help the learner increase efficacy through self-evaluation, while at the same time receiving support from a group. It can be used to connect an otherwise isolated learner with the classroom community. Promoting literacy learning can lead to the recognition and development of multiple literacies or perspectives. It provides ever expanding opportunities for students to develop flexible and multiple strategies within the context and framework of an Author's Cycle (Burke & Short, 1991, p. 35). This "Author's Cycle" seeks to connect the natural learner with a community of learners through questioning, risk taking, reflection, and collaboration.

Developing literacy learning leads to putting more control and responsibility in the hands of the learner. If indeed an individual learns to read and is not taught to read as Smith (1997) would suggest, the learner needs an interactive environment, and the support of the group as well as the teacher. Literacy learning recognizes, encourages, and supports different learning styles. It encourages the individual learner to be more flexible in adopting and utilizing different learning strategies. Ultimately, adopting a literacy learning approach has, at its core, making meaning for the individual, with the group acting as a support. For the minority student or the second language learner this literacy framework affords the learner many more opportunities to make personal meaning from text. Because it is linguistically based, supportive of language, and authentic in context learning, it compliments Krashen's (1996) theory of language acquisition literacy learning and is the ultimate sheltered English program, if seen in it's proper perspective.

Adopting a literacy learning model as a curricular model, and an overall

educational goal, fits in with my own experience as a learner and teacher, and affords me the opportunity to successfully traverse any curriculum with some modicum of success for my students, and myself as a teacher. Literacy learning is by nature up close and personal. It is based upon communication, group interaction, and support for each other as we all face the larger educational system. It values the individual, and at the same time can act as a forum for efficacy and change within.

Personalizing curriculum is seen as a necessary motivational element for the learner no matter what the age level. We are beginning to realize that intrinsic motivation is important to reading engagement. If reading engagement is to continue into the private life of the individual, intrinsic motivation is the missing key to developing life long literacy learners. We cannot get away from the fact that in order for reading engagement to continue into adult life, readers must first take a stance to actively engage in reading. This fits in with the tri-component approach to attitude put forth by the philosopher Kant, who believed there are three irreducible components of the mind; the faculty of knowledge, feeling of pleasure and pain, and the faculty of desire or action readiness. This is seen as stance toward learning, intention, and motivation. These are all an important part of the literacy process. The exciting thing to me is that, after years of not being able to scientifically explain topics such as the effect of intuition, motivation, attitude, and cultural background on the learning process, we might be able to at long last get some quantifiable results as we begin to delve into connectionism and brain research, as it impacts knowledge of cognition (Ruddell & Unruh, 1994, pp. 1033-1159).

Probably the most recognized important influence upon motivation and cognition

is that of cultural background. My experience as an educator has taught me that you can have what you honestly think is the greatest curriculum in the world, but if you can not get students to buy in, you are doomed to failure. Unlike Pavlov's dogs, human beings are inherently resistive to extrinsic motivation, and come to school even as young children with fully developed schemas, as well as agendas of their own. Part of getting students to buy in involves including and recognizing the importance of culture and language to the educational process. In order to do this, we must include multicultural literature as part of the curriculum. This can not be done in an artificial way as it was done in the 60s and 70s when we simply superimposed a variety of groups on the page or took English based books and attempted to translate them, and in the process watered down and misconstrued the purpose and power of the language process. Multicultural literature broadens perspectives, and helps to include and celebrate each individual, and their diverse background. It is a necessary element to any success oriented literacy learning program. More recent updates in thought even relate to the problem of reading comprehension for minority students, and discusses the influences of cultural background upon literacy learning. It deals with the subject of perspective taking, and the influence of cultural background as either distorting or supporting comprehension.

The influence of cultural background knowledge on reading comprehension is seen as problematic for students whose home language or language variety differ markedly from the mainstream standard dialect that is taught in most schools in the United States, and that is reflected in the canon of literary texts taught in most secondary schools Lee, 1995, p.611.

Reading engagement can be further defined as the motivated use of strategies in reading for specific and authentic purposes. The development of comprehension

strategies will hopefully lead to increased metacognitive skills which are necessary due to the complex nature of reading at the literacy level. These skills would include the development of observations, concepts which lead to self-extending systems, further flexibility and refinement of strategies necessary for different types of reading and writing; with comprehension seen as the main goal. The classroom environment would include self-directed activities. Collaborative and self-expression skills would be valued (Aloa, Guthrie & Rinehart, 1997). Personalizing curriculum will be helpful in encouraging students that literacy learning is not just “pie in the sky”, but can be helpful to them in other curricular endeavors, as well as providing them with valuable life skills. I would like to think that developing literacy skills would make school more purposeful and meaningful for students and help to improve the dropout rate.

As students and teachers we are faced with the perplexing problem of meeting ever increasing performance demands of higher education, while at the same time having personal goals in mind for our own literacy education. Concerned and supportive teachers are faced with the fact that standardized testing is a harsh reality for minority students from kindergarten through university level. If we are going to effectively support minority students, and problem learners, then we must recognize this reality and deal with it. If we are going to be success oriented for students, then we must recognize that students need a combination of discrete skills which include the ability to be literal (factual) as well as critical (evaluative). Fact finding, opinion rendering, inference getting, and the ability to literal as well as critical, are all necessary to success. Part of this would include recognizing that students first need a critical vocabulary for analyzing

and discussing a text (Burlison, Cyrus, McCarthy, Stanfill & Stevenson, 1996).

Developing vocabulary within context is critical for the student who is a second language learner, but is critical to other minority students as well. It is my opinion that the back to the basics movement has never effectively dealt with this issue. If reading and literacy are to be defined as complex processes, which are meaning driven, then failure to develop meaning through the language arts process denies minority students access to education. This cannot be accomplished in a closed and limited educational environment. Literacy learning teaching involves dynamic interaction and should be informed by theory and structured in practice. This process begins with oral interaction in the group over text, and continues through writing process which is inquiry based and evaluative in nature. The idea of multiple perspectives included in the curriculum will hopefully lead to more authentic learning for all. Without the development of communication skills in both students and teachers in the form of reading, writing, and sharing of ideas in an open classroom, the idea of literacy falls short of expected outcomes.

As a continuing life long learner myself, I can add an older student's perspective to the pursuit of higher education. First of all, when I came back to the college campus after an almost thirty year absence, I was amazed at how little has changed. Still present is the idea that quantity is a necessary element to education, rather than quality education. It is assumed that the literacy learner comes equipped with the literary skills necessary to make meaning out of the shotgun approach to education, and produce quality results. My life experiences have taught me to stem the tide, and persist in striving to make personal meaning out of the chaos of boring textbooks, lectures, and the endless activity of

jumping through hoops, just because the educational system says it is good for me. This experience has helped me to have real empathy for all students as they are faced with survival within the educational system at large. It has led me to the realization that students can begin to provide support for each other within a collaborative group, with a common goal in mind, surviving the system while at the same time maintaining personal integrity and identity.

Why would an early childhood literacy advocate such as myself dare to consider a shift to life long literacy? It is done with the thought in mind that if we expect students to become more literate, then we must, as adults, become more literate ourselves. I certainly am including teachers in this arena. This involves the idea that multiple literacies are possible, and the true purpose of education is to promote literacy within the community at large; not just within the isolated walls of the classroom. Many teachers are attempting to become more responsive to the concerns and needs of students. This has led me to the path of adult literacy in the community, and the role all adults play in passing along a heritage of literacy to our young. Teachers and significant adults alike, are attempting to set a role model of efficacy within the literacy process and at the same time help to promote their own need for success and success for their students.

CHAPTER TWO

Research

When approaching theoretical research regarding motivation there are many things to be considered. This section first deals with investigations and questions regarding the nature of motivation and how this interacts with and enhances cognition. Other important areas of motivational research to be dealt with will include the areas of motivation and reading engagement, the teacher's role in promoting lifelong literacy learning, teaching and learning from an aesthetic stance, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, assisting students in taking on ownership of literacy learning, the value of developing a voice through peer talk, assessment, and further questions for motivational research.

Recent research indicates that student motivation is the key to successful engagement in literacy learning. A vast majority of middle school and secondary teachers and principals place motivation of students at the top of their priority list. This is with the knowledge that without committing time to reading, students cannot gain the reading skills or knowledge they need to succeed in school. Alao, Guthrie & Rinehart, 1997, p. 439.

Educators, as well as the general public, have noticed the disturbing trend that as children move toward becoming young adults the strength of their motivation to engage in voluntary reading either for school purposes or during free time outside of school declines. This appears to be happening at a younger age than ever before. Motivation, for whatever reason, is a necessary precursor to extended reading engagement and adds

to the intensity of reading engagement necessary to the development and use of strategies. This in turn enhances comprehension and the development of metacognitive skills.

The explanations for this decline in motivation are not always clear. As competency beliefs and expectancy for success decline across elementary school years into middle school, so reading engagement declines proportionately. Logic would tell us that competency beliefs are based on previous performance with both negative and positive consequences resulting. Following success, student's competency beliefs and expectancies increase. Following failure at a task, student competency beliefs decrease. Overtime, these beliefs tend to become more accurate reflections of performance (Wigfield, 1997). Apparently, less successful students lose their intrinsic motivations for reading due to their lack of a sense of competence and this contributes to avoidance of further engagements in reading tasks.

Educators and researchers are beginning to come to terms with the problem of student motivation and how this impacts willingness to engage in literacy learning activities within the context of the classroom as well as personal motivation to read at home for self interest and individual purpose.

Questions for motivational research

Without motivation, the difficult work of cognitive learning does not occur rapidly enough to intensify and sustain reading engagement, if it occurs at all. Questions for research begin to emerge.

Because motivations are so valuable, we have a need to understand them more fully. Where do motivations come from? How can teachers initiate and sustain the development of motivations in classrooms? How can long-term curiosity and desire to read be

cultivated and nourished? Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997, pp, 2-3.

Four lines of inquiry in the 1990s have led to the need to understand motivation for reading more fully. The development of cognitive strategies during the reading process has been an important breakthrough. The use of cognitive strategies during reading, however, requires much effort, persistence, and desire on the part of the learner. The issue of why students choose or do not choose to use strategies they have learned for reading is a motivational question. Intrinsic motivations including interest in content, wanting to learn for its own sake, and feeling immersed in literacy tasks, are associated with more frequent use of strategies (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992). A second line of research emphasizes the positive contributions of the amount of reading to reading achievement. Research in this area points to the amount and breadth of reading as being the single largest factor contributing to reading achievement. Studies conclude that high frequency, amount, and diversity of reading activity increases reading achievement. Without motivation to engage in reading this is a mute point. The third line of research explores how motivation and cognition intersect to enhance achievement. These studies show that motivation to read is increasingly linked to academic achievement. Few of these researchers have explicitly addressed motivation for reading. There is a need to begin to explore ways of connecting student motivation to goals for academic achievement. In the fourth line of research, social constructionists address motivational goals through social mediation (Guthrie & Wigfield 1997 pp. 5-7).

Motivations for literacy learning are as multifaceted and complex as the individuals that hold them. They are based upon values, ability beliefs, expectancies for

success, ownership, and cultural perspectives. Motivation can be described as affect, involvement, and interest to engage in an activity. Self-efficacy is seen as a major contributor to the development of literacy competence and involves volitional strategies such as persistence and collaboration. All of these factors hinge upon past life experiences inside and outside of the classroom. If teachers can gain some understanding of motivational constructs it is hoped that this will help effect their own stance toward the learner and impact teaching practicum and lead to classroom environments which value the inclusion of all students in meaningful, thought provoking literacy processes (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997, p. 7).

Motivation and reading engagement

Specifically in the area of motivation to read and reading engagement the work of L. M. Rosenblatt is used as a theoretical basis for research. Since 1930, Rosenblatt has been developing and refining a transactional theory of reading engagement. Rosenblatt (1985) proposes the idea that people read from one of two stances, aesthetic or efferent:

In the aesthetic transaction, the reader's attention is focused on what he is living through during the reading-event. He is attending both to what the verbal signs designate and to the qualitative overtones of the ideas, images, situations, and characters that he is evoking under the guidance of the text. The literary work of art comes into being through the reader's attention to what the text activates in him.

In efferent (non-aesthetic) reading, the reader's attention is centered on what should be retained as a residue after the actual reading event--- the information to be acquired, for example, from the label on a medicine bottle; or the operations to be carried out, as in a science experiment; the conclusion to be reached, as in a legal brief; or the actions to be performed, as in a recipe. p. 37

According to Rosenblatt (1991), the aesthetic and efferent stances are not mutually exclusive. Good readers read in a flexible manner, often shifting back and forth

between the two stances. When reading literature, however, Rosenblatt argues the predominant stance should be the aesthetic. That is, literature should be read primarily for the enjoyment of the experience of reading. She expresses the fear that, in the classroom, teachers may tend to approach literature from an efferent rather than an aesthetic stance. She urges teachers not to rush students away from the lived-through experience of reading, but to prolong the aesthetic experience through such activities as drawing, writing, drama, dance, and discussion (Au, Carroll & Scheu, 1997, p. 38). When referring to Rosenblatt's transactional literacy learning theory, it is easy to see the influence this theory has as it relates to and impacts motivational research and teaching practices. It points to the complexities and influence of motivation upon the stance a learner takes when involved in the processes of reading and writing, and the influence this has upon cognition.

Promoting life long literacy

Recent trends in the field of adult education envision new directions for community based programs. Increasingly recognized is the need for listening more to adults regarding their needs for academic success. As the field of family literacy develops educators are concerned that many family literacy programs are still based on deficit views that blame the non- mainstream parent for not providing the proper home literary environment. Yet research has found that most families use literacy for meaningful purposes which include taking care of business in their personal lives. It is urged that adult literacy programs begin to operate from more of a social contextual perspective and begin meeting the needs of adult participants rather than clinging to the

more traditional school like learning activities of isolated skill and drill approaches (Elish-Piper 1997). Seen as problematic is the dilemma of developing literacy skills in adults whose reading level is around the third grade. Whole language proponents argue that students with minimal literacy skills should be reading whole selections of well written literature, not “bits and pieces” (Goodman, 1996). Rosenblatt’s idea of approaching literature from an aesthetic stance is at long last being considered. Rather than offering watered down versions of text, some classrooms are providing chapter read-a-louds where a piece of literature is experienced first hand and then discussed. Related writing activities are centered around assisting the student in bringing his own experience background to the text in some way. This recognizes the rich experience backgrounds adults bring to the text. More importantly, reading fiction can be just plain fun, especially when the experience is shared with others. This is not a minor point. If reading is not enjoyable, students do not read. And if they do not read frequently they do not become fluent, skillful readers (Schierloh, 1992). Adults interviewed from these programs experienced a change in self esteem as it relates to academic success as well as an increased appreciation for the importance of literacy pursuits in their home environments. Many adults have become frozen in time due to the programmed learning environments of the past and possibly can be retrieved by using some of the whole language practices initiated in the past decade. Educators have a rare opportunity to interview these adult participants and find out more about what is being done right or wrong from their adult perspective. An added benefit to all would hopefully be an increase in family literacy practices within the community (Elish-Piper, 1996).

Many researchers entreat teachers not to become so caught up in reading levels, and perceived competencies of students and become watchers of students actively engaged in literacy processes. The same can apply to adult literacy learners. It has been noted that when students are highly motivated to read for personal interest and meaning, many are capable of handling reading material which is challenging and causes them to reach beyond current ability levels (Hunt 1997). It can only be noted at this point that motivation and the development of cognitive skills are somehow intertwined within context.

Teaching and learning from an aesthetic stance

Rosenblatt (1985) and other researchers are also concerned with the impact of the stance a teacher takes toward a literacy learner inside classrooms where students are asked to interact with text in a variety of ways. They are asking teachers to reconsider the aesthetic power of a quality piece of literature to motivate, sustain, and enhance reading engagement as well as strengthen cognitive skills.

Motivation and the use of strategies interact somehow more effectively when reading for personal meaning is involved. They involve choice, self-efficacy, goal setting, and strategy as powerful and useful tools for the literacy learner in their quest to make meaning from text. “Motivation can lead an individual to perform an activity and volitional and cognitive strategies can sustain involvement in the activity” (Schunk & Zimmerman p.8). Persistence as a learner is another important element.

In the past teachers have been encouraged to emphasize the excellence of high-achieving students, rather than emphasizing the performance of all students on reading

tasks. If motivation is the key, then it is clear to most teachers that high-achieving students are motivated and low achieving students lack motivation. Now what? Reading motivations vary across different classroom contexts. Motivation should not be thought of as just a characteristic of the learner; rather, it is influenced by the learner's setting. Researchers are beginning to investigate classroom contexts that promote literacy engagement (Guthrie & Wigfield 1997).

The most effective literacy learning classroom environments seem to have certain characteristics in common. Approaches to the curriculum by the learner are seen as inquiries into issues of personal significance. Newly developed contextual models aim toward teaching for engagement through relying upon questioning, innovating, and reflecting as vehicles for growth. An updated version of Authoring Cycle is provided by National Reading Research Center (NRRC) in the form of Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), an approach engaging students in literacy events. This is an instructional framework developed to increase motivation, increase strategy use, and foster engagement in reading. It is based upon the idea that real-world or authentic experiences lead to involvement and curiosity (motivation). These curiosities can be developed into personalized questions. Students are then motivated to read in order to find the answers to their own set of questions. It is suggested that schools should embrace integrated or thematic curriculums because students favor it (Aloa, Solomon, Guthrie, & Rinehart 1997). Learner centered instruction in an open classroom becomes the context for literacy learning. Social interaction and social processes are seen as the foundation of motivational development and reading engagement. Creating a climate of

shared learning is seen as vital to the investigative classroom.

The role of the teacher is seen as being responsive in focusing reader intention and developing reader motivation. Teachers within this classroom environment also exhibit certain characteristics. They show that they care about their students. They help students to understand and solve personal and academic problems. They manifest excitement and enthusiasm about what they teach and adapt instruction to the needs, motives, interests, and aptitudes of students. They provide a curriculum which is motivating and challenging, but not overwhelming. Teachers are responsible for helping students make connections with instructional purposes and individual student's reading purposes. These areas when combined, are supposed to yield an interactive system of affective and cognitive factors that show how responsive teachers can help readers develop their focus of intention and motivation (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994).

Considering extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation

Motivation is typically thought of in strictly psychological or intrinsic terms. However, extrinsic motivation in behavioristic, controlled learning environments has been an important consideration. Everyone recognizes that some kind of a payoff as an incentive to hard work or risk taking can be a strong motivational influence upon learning. In education, this traditionally comes in terms of grades, social approval, competition, and achievement on competency tests. An extensive meta-analysis conducted by Cameron and Pierce (1994) provides definitive evidence that carefully chosen incentives can enhance intrinsic motivation. They suggest that rather than simply hand out rewards or awards randomly that a much more positive use of extrinsic

motivation can serve individual purposes. This would rest upon verbal praise and positive feedback that would inform the learner where they were in the learning process (Gambrel & Marinek, 1997). This would come in the form of teacher praise that is specific enough to give the learner input as to the things that he is doing correctly, thus working from a more positive stance rather than a deficit learner model used many times in classrooms. For example, a teacher might say “I really liked the way you read that story with feeling”, rather than saying, “You made five mistakes on your spelling test today, you need to study more”. This more positive form of extrinsic motivation in the form of praise which informs the learner can be a highly motivational element in terms of further engagement in literacy learning activities. Incentives in the form of M and Ms or bucks for books might work in the short term, but fail to encourage further engagement once the bucks stop. It also does little to encourage the learner who didn’t get the bucks in the first place. In fact, it not only discourages the left out learner, but sometimes makes them down right angry. Verbal praise well spent at a time when the learner needs affirmation for a job well done can be much more satisfying for all involved than a package of M & Ms.

Another tangible incentive that can be linked to meeting challenging learning goals attests to the motivating quality of choice in literacy learning. “Students do not passively respond to their environment; rather they actively make choices and attend to salient factors in their environment” (Gambrel & Marinek, 1997, p. 214). It may be easy to overlook the simple idea that providing opportunities for choice can be viewed as providing incentives to learn. Is this idea really that simple? What about students who

make bad or limited choices ? This suggests that incentives reflect the value of the desired behavior. When incentives are linked to the desired behavior and promote engagement in the desired behavior, motivation can become self-determined. What happens when students do not clearly see the value of the desired behavior and still are not motivated toward engagement?

Assisting students in taking ownership

Educators like Susan Hynds (1997) and Dorothy Strickland (1995) discuss the dilemma created for teachers when the extrinsic demands of the curriculum collide with the values and intrinsic motivations of students. Strickland (1995) considers the tension between the set curriculum and student needs and interests. Upon reflection, many whole language educators, including Graves (1994), are now advocating that teachers need to feel free to exercise some common sense and intervene in these cases. This does not mean going back to dictatorial ways, but involves assisting students in making choices that will lead to autonomy of the learner by offering more alternatives and positive choices for personal growth. This viewpoint would have us put self-determination and developing autonomy of the learner at the top of the list when considering desired behavior and intrinsic motivation .

If reading and other related language processes are an inherently social act as Vygotskian theory would suggest, then the development of motivation to read and engage in literacy activities could be viewed as a social act with significant others and a group of peers. Now coming into play would be Maslow's meta-needs and the motivation of the individual to seek group acceptance, approval, and recognition. "One of the major

themes in Vygotsky's work is the idea that complex types of human activity, such as language and literacy, begin in the social world" (Au, Carrol & Scheu, 1997, p. 15). Positive social interaction can become a powerful motivational tool when effective communication of ideas is seen as the focus and foundation for literacy programs. Favorable interaction and communication with peers is seen as the focus of any worthwhile literacy activity. Short and Burke (1997) discuss the need for further knowledge on the part of teachers regarding group dynamics. The topics relating to group interaction need to include participation, cooperation, fostering open-mindedness, power struggles, conflict resolution, heterogeneous grouping, and risk taking to name a few. Without consideration of these factors by teachers in the form of planning and organization, collaborative grouping will not only fall short of expectations, but could prove to be a negative rather than a positive experience.

The most unifying theme present in recent research findings seems to be one of ownership. Taking ownership of literacy pursuits seems to be the key to enhancing motivation, efficacy, and academic success. It is still not clear which one comes first. But it is understood that all of these elements are necessary to the development of the life-long learner and needs to include all students, not a select few.

For minority students, the language based literacy classroom is more than just a viable theoretical construct it is a lifeline to literacy learning. Within a language based context, minority students have many more opportunities to practice newly emerging skills in an environment which supports their need for ownership; assisting them in their quest to make meaning from text. Through authentically based learning experiences and

group interaction, all students have increased opportunities to become meaningfully engaged in text with the group acting as a support. Without group interaction, minority students are often provided limited opportunities to learn and are isolated and segregated from the community of learners that can provide them with support and the recognition that they deserve.

Kathryn Au (1997) suggests that

students of diverse backgrounds may lack the motivation to do well in school because in their family histories, success in school has not led to better life opportunities. Further, students may decide not to be successful in school if they have to give up their cultural identities pp. 180-181.

In order to motivate students of diverse backgrounds, teachers must seek alternatives to traditional educational practices and explore ways to include students in success oriented educational pursuits while at the same time maintaining their cultural identities. According to Au, this would include culturally responsive teaching, and instruction centered on authentic literacy activities. She believes that “making ownership of literacy the over-arching goal of the curriculum can be the first step toward improving the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds” (pp. 180- 181). Taking ownership involves developing and adopting an “I can make it” agenda and needs to be supported by the school as well by parents in the home. Au warns ,however, that high levels of motivation will not automatically lead to increased achievement unless they are combined with instruction that accentuates higher level thinking processes that are required in the writing process and reading comprehension.

The value of developing voice

When adults and children begin to tie their real questions about the world to their academic learning experiences they begin to develop a voice. Reflections into what students say and how they say it reveal that “the content of the questions students ask is of instructional value ... and are driven by a heartfelt quest for knowledge and understanding” (Whitmore, 1997 p.119). In fact, it was found that in classrooms that are learning communities; where talk is supported through shared power and trust between teachers and learners, the content of questions is often of high academic quality. When this happens, the form of discussion is changed and teachers find that students can be trusted to learn and participate meaningfully. Teachers are seen as mediators who honor the content of student talk by altering their own participation and becoming active listeners.

Over the past decade there has been a change in the importance placed on classroom talk. It has been found that students with diverse backgrounds can contribute and even add to the quality of peer talk in mainstream classrooms when given the opportunity. In the past, literacy educators were hopeful that immersing students in high-quality literature and giving students opportunities to share would automatically lead to language rich classroom environments.

It was hoped that through classroom talk teachers and students would be motivated to share their thinking and learning and mutually influence each others interactions with text. However, this can only be accomplished when teachers first understand their own literary experiences as ones that are cultural in nature and begin to

value the diverse literary experiences of their students from a cultural perspective (Brock, Raphael & Wallace, 1997).

Once again, it is the classroom teacher who takes the responsibility for opening the way for classroom talk or narrowing the field by imposing their own ideas and constraints upon this process. Often this can be accomplished by asking teachers to become active listeners and asking the group to take over the responsibility of making the rules for meaningful classroom discourse. Being allowed an equal voice within a group motivates students toward participation. Having to back up your voice with references that support viewpoint with use of logic helps to promote reflection and self evaluation, and enhances the academic growth of each individual. The added benefit of a positive group experience is the highly motivational element in persisting further to have personal as well as group questions addressed (Burke, Harste & Short, 1996).

Conventional wisdom argues that students who struggle with literacy are unlikely to be able to participate fully in their regular education classrooms. Instead they are said to benefit from learning skills for decoding print and paper and pencil activities, and by examining students' nonverbal behaviors. Yet teachers have multiple ways to assess diverse students developing understandings during lessons. Small peer led discussion groups that are heterogeneously based can be effective contexts for facilitating and nurturing diversity and cultural understanding (Brock, Raphael & Wallace, 1997).

Providing for peer talk in the curriculum is based on the belief that cultural diversity is a strength for building strong learning contexts, not a problem to be solved. Differences, not sameness, makes a classroom society strong. Becoming literate in this

context involves social interactions with other readers and writers, as well as individual cognitive achievement. In this way, the superficial focus on ethnicity in multicultural education which implies that ethnicity is static and uniform, gives way to the dynamic feature ethnicity plays out in the way of multiple perspectives or viewpoints during classroom discussions (Kaser & Short, 1997).

Kaser and Short (1997) discuss the fact that although today's students are bombarded with issues of ethnicity, the story of growing up that each student creates is also an important focus in their life. They point out that the struggle to determine who they are as individuals is a struggle all children (and adults) share, irrespective of differences in their cultural characteristics (p. 59). They ask us not to discount the value of peer talk to the development and motivation of literacy learning and encourage teachers to think of "kid culture" as the missing culture in classroom curriculums.

Some questions of my own

It is interesting to note that most research deals very little with the subject of creativity as it relates to motivation and developing and enhancing language arts activities. And yet, as Rosenblatt points out, literature should be viewed as an aesthetic experience. Most thematic, integrated curricular formats hint at the development of creativity but often fall back on dittos, cut and paste activities, and fill in the blanks. Many teachers ask for these neatly packaged units and often come away from the experience feeling frustrated at the seemingly apparent lack of creativity and motivation of their students. A developmental perspective on literacy and the arts would have us view intelligence from multiple perspectives.

The redefinition of intelligence and the opportunity for children to develop their potentials through experiences in an expanded view of literacy and the arts could redefine not only intelligence but also the function and the relevance of school in the lives of children from a variety of backgrounds and cultures (Cecil & Lauritzen, 1994, p. 5). Howard Gardner in his book Frames of Mind (1983) has developed a new theory of intelligence. Rather than considering intelligence in singular terms he hypothesizes seven intelligences. These include developing abilities in music, art, dance, interpersonal and intra personal social skills, logic, and linguistics. It is proposed that development of skills in these areas provide alternative ways of knowing for students, expands ideas and creativity, and improves attitudes toward multiple intelligences in the individual. Recognizing and encouraging different ways of knowing can be highly motivational as it recognizes a broader range of talents in individuals irrespective of their cultural or socio-economic backgrounds (Gardner, 1988).

Assessment of motivational research

As Susan Hynds (1997) points out in her book On The Brink, literacy learning advocates must begin to conduct more qualitative analysis regarding the success of literacy learning pursuits at the secondary level. If long term results regarding motivation, continued reading engagement, and long range academic growth are to have any validity, more longitudinal studies are needed. The real dilemma seems to be that comparing apples and oranges is not fair to the assessment of life long literacy learning pursuits. If literacy learning advocates are to stem the tide of recurring back to the basic movements in education then quantifiable results must support theory and practicum.

Motivation, self actualization, and academic success must be tied together. Literacy learning seen in these terms can only be evaluated properly on a longitudinal basis and not simply in terms of standardized tests. Hynds (1997) demonstrates in her book the value of interviewing students before, during, and after a program to determine and evaluate the long range impact of literacy learning. In this way it is felt that teachers can gather valuable data which will further the development of quality literacy programs.

APPENDIX A

Goals, Objectives, and Limitations

Goals

Teachers will begin to examine the nature of motivational reading practices.

Teachers will begin to explore the implementation of motivational elements in their own reading programs in order to increase the amount, depth, and width of reading for their students.

Teachers will be inspired to see themselves as a powerful motivational force in effecting change as they move toward adopting more motivational elements in their own reading programs.

Objectives

Teachers will begin to see reading not just from a cognitive standpoint, but from an aesthetic stance.

Teachers will explore their perceptions of how they learned to read from a personal perspective.

Teachers will be motivated to personally invest in their own reading programs.

Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate more motivational elements in their classroom reading programs.

Teachers will begin to see reading from a more holistic viewpoint and begin to value motivational reading practices as necessary to the overall success of literacy learners.

Teachers will be motivated to begin collaborating with other teachers who view

reading from a life long literacy perspective.

Teachers will begin to feel less intimidated by standardized reading test scores and will begin to seek other ways of evaluating students growth in reading overtime.

Limitations

The overriding limitation of adopting a literacy learning philosophy is the conflict in evaluating reading performance in terms of short range results on standardized reading scores. Many new teachers will have mixed feelings about adopting motivational practices aimed at increasing the amount, depth , and width of reading overtime for lifelong literacy learners. In order to accomplish these goals unfortunately takes time, and the adoption of a more holistic or conceptual approach to reading process. Successful whole language teachers have found that in order to get results with these motivational practices a teacher must have the ability to fit all the pieces of the puzzle together. This takes a lot of time, effort, and reflection on the part of the teacher in order to be successful in implementing these practices.

APPENDIX B

The Motivational Nature of Reading and the Role of the Teacher

Children first learn to read, and then read to learn (Smith, 1997). If this well known adage were entirely true then we would have a country of readers. Reading approached from an aesthetic perspective is meant to last a lifetime. Yet everyone recognizes the fact that outside of schools and many times even inside classrooms, taking the time for literary experiences often takes a back seat to other pressures of daily life. We might begin by asking ourselves why is it that people who know how to read choose not to make reading part of their daily lives as adults. I believe that it has something to do with the fact that reading is often seen as something you have to do in school to pass, get a grade, and get over with as soon as possible. To me reading is something that takes place inside as well as outside of school. From my viewpoint, reading books is something to get into as soon as possible, and experience for as long as possible. What is missing many times in schools are literacy experiences which foster the love of reading, and involvement with literature at an aesthetic level.

Reading is often seen as a solitary pass time which is done on your own. I have worked with beginning readers for close to thirty years and have made the observation that reading is meant to be a shared, interactive experience. Reading time in my room is a noisy and energizing experience. I see no reason why this does not apply for any group of readers no matter what the age level. Why then, early on, do we ask students to sit down, be quiet, and engage in silent, sustained, reading?

Frank Smith (1997) would say children come to school believing they can read

until someone tells them they cannot. After all, we have to teach them to read don't we? And how best do we teach them to read? Phonics? Integrated instruction? Whole language? Brain surgery? Believe me, in my years of teaching I have considered them all and the biggest breakthrough I can come up with is that children learn to read on their mother's lap. How did I come to this startling revelation? Much to my surprise and delight my daughter began reading at age three and by the time she entered school was reading at a seventh grade level. Upon reflection, I observed that the only thing I had done was to read daily as a family, discuss books, and provide materials that were asked for that catered to ever expanding interests and questions.

Once this breakthrough in my thinking had occurred, I took this experience back into the classroom and began to view the teaching of reading from a totally different perspective. My class and I began to read daily as a family, discuss books, and I began to seek materials that were asked for or that catered to ever expanding interests, needs, and questions.

Right now you are probably asking yourself, "But what about my minority students who do not come to school reading?" They therefore need to be taught to read. A good dose of phonics will do the trick. According to Hallie Yopp (1995), a child's ability to phonemically segment a word is the best predictor of future success in reading. I believe that future success in reading should be defined as continued reading throughout a lifetime. In order to accomplish this, I began to view reading in more holistic and motivational terms.

It has been my experience over the years that successful readers are often unable to isolate and apply phonics rules. Why? Because successful readers are basically meaning driven. Phonics more often than not does not supply meaning when taught alone and in isolation. And what about the fact that most phonics rules apply less than fifty percent of the time? So why then do we view phonics as a rite of passage before allowing students the literary experiences they lack?

I believe that children learn to read by reading (Smith, 1997). Many teachers have wondered as I have over the years why isolated phonics and spelling practice seldom seem to transfer when students read and write. Maybe it is because we don't give students enough opportunities to experience reading first hand as they use these and other newly emerging skills to transact with text. Learning to read is like learning to do anything else. When you learn to ride a bike or learn to swim you learned by practicing first with some support. Your parents did not hand you the bike and say go and learn to ride this yourself. They told you a few simple instructions and then held the back of the bike for support as you gradually took control, and then one magic day they let go, and you were able to ride. When you learned to swim your parents didn't throw you in the deep end of the pool, they allowed you to be in the shallow end first. Maybe sometimes they rode you on their backs so you could see what it was like. Reading also needs lots of practice and support. This is where learning to read on mother's lap comes in. Anything we can do as teachers to create this feeling of support goes a long way in motivating readers to adopt reading as a life long pass time.

Before you think that I am one of those whole language fanatics who never teaches skills, I will tell you plainly that most successful whole language educators teach skills, but our definition of skills comes from a more holistic perspective. The teaching and practicing of skills in context is a much more meaningful tool for the learner when problem solving text. It puts phonics in conjunction with other strategies, the most important one being meaning. The transference of skills taught in context helps to build the self-extending systems necessary for sustaining engagement in reading.

Getting in touch with what makes sense to you

From the viewpoint of a teacher, it is imperative to explore what you feel about the teaching of reading from its many vantage points. The ultimate choice and decisions that are made daily in classrooms are very much under the teacher's control as far as presentation of the curriculum, the format of the class, discipline, and atmosphere. There are no easy answers. The school district dictates what the curriculum will be from year to year based upon the overall needs of the community. Lately, the state has taken on the task of deciding how and what is to be taught. However, it is the classroom teacher who ultimately decides how the curriculum is to be taught, if at all. The real power struggle begins when educators get down to the business of deciding what best meets the needs of students and ultimately becomes one of performance.

Using portfolios as a motivational tool to promote reading

Performance on standard achievement tests is in reality the driving force of the American public school system. We all have to face this reality and deal with it in as

sensible a manner as possible. Having to give the STAT 9 to my bilingual first graders was a very traumatic experience. I have just spent all year trying to make every student feel successful as a reader and to view reading as a comprehensible activity.

Just the immense length of the exam was enough to kill off even the most conscientious student. It also amazed me how the exam passed up no opportunity to trick even the most thoughtful and motivated child. From my perspective, such exams are reflections of what students don't know, not what they do know. In my opinion, such tests are based upon deficit models of learning. Once again, California teachers will be faced with having to hear what failures we are as educators; therefore, back to the basics. What we fail to do, is tell new teachers that back to the basics did not ever work in the first place for minority students. If it did, reading scores would have come up long ago. In reality, well meaning as these educators are, they have not fully explored the fact that phonics was only a very little part of how most people learn to read, for most of us entered school already a member of the reading community and the English language club.

As educators, we have continued to explore ways to show literacy results over time. This can only be done, I believe, through the use of portfolios, not standardized achievement tests. Portfolios can be presented as an alternative way to evaluate reading performance. According to Robert Tierney (1998), "assessments should emerge from the classroom rather than be imposed upon it (p. 375)". And yet portfolios are like any other tool. They are only a reflection of the people who use them. Portfolios can be used as a self-evaluative tool to show growth overtime. In my opinion, if we fail to involve

students in this process, we have missed the point. I look at portfolios as one way to be success oriented for students. As such, they can be used to promote literacy learning over time and afford students the opportunity to show what they know, and demonstrate where they are along the way. If we begin to view portfolios as a showcase for students talent, struggles, and achievements as a life long literacy learner, we have begun to use portfolios as a valuable teaching and learning tool. If students are allowed to be involved in this process, portfolios have the capability of becoming a highly motivational learning tool. Therefore, I am an advocate of placing reading logs, reflective journals, published works of writing, and self-evaluative tools which reflect personal choice, growth, and attitude toward themselves as a reader. One example of a self-evaluative tool that could be used is the Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS). This scale is based on Bandura's (1977, 1982) theory of perceived self-efficacy. "Self -efficacy judgements are thought to affect achievement by influencing an individual's choice of activities, task avoidance, effort expenditure, and motivation" (Henk & Melnick, 1995). This survey can be given to all age levels, even first graders. It is intended to empower students to recognize and appreciate their growth as readers, and their reading accomplishments over an extended period of time. It will also encourage the reader to begin to use short term goals for themselves and reflect upon growth.

I set a certain amount of time each grading period to sit down with each student and review their accomplishments and assist them in setting new, short term goals. This is a time for students to show me what they know. Student conferences last around twenty to thirty minutes. We look over their reading logs, and do a few selected readings

together. We discuss what we did great, and I offer some motherly advice about what they could change to do better. I have found positive comments which inform the reader to be the most highly motivational tool that a teacher has within their grasp. My students and I would not trade this time for all the chocolate bars and stickers on the face of the earth. It has been my experience that under these circumstances, students are usually motivated to try just a little harder. In the meantime, even my lowest students are allowed to feel good about themselves, and persist in reading just a little longer. It is not long before some success is experienced. If you think I am going to let whatever the scores say on the STAT 9 test keep me from these conferences, guess again. These conferences not only make my students feel better, but they make me feel better about that way I'm teaching too. Portfolios give me a clearer picture of what things are working, and what things I need to fix, than any standardized achievement test. If my test scores are questioned, I have often brought my portfolios out with additional evidence to show what the student is doing in more comprehensive terms. When the authorities question what you are doing regarding increased performance scores, portfolio evidence will go a long way in proving your point.

Examining the great divide

Teachers have always been exposed to the divide and conquer mentality when exploring ways of how best to teach reading. Many sources come in from the outside and try to define the "magic curriculum" which will produce the desired results of increased reading performance. Many teachers feel overwhelmed with the never ending cycle of latest bandwagon approaches touted as cures for what ails the teacher and

students. Oftentimes, teachers react in one of two ways. Either they persist in teaching in the way they perceive they were taught, right or wrong. Or, as progressive educators, they get caught up in the next latest and greatest program and spread themselves too thin, and begin to lose purpose and goals. They wind up doing what they are told to do, even when it goes against their sensibilities and reason.

I believe it is time for reading educators to stand up for what they believe in, and have experienced success with, and be counted when important decisions regarding reading curriculum are being debated. Collaboration among peers goes a long way in motivating and sustaining teachers attempting to move away from traditional approaches to the teaching of reading. When I began to implement more motivational practices in my classroom almost twenty years ago it was pretty lonely out there. As I began to seek advice from other teachers I admired, I was encouraged to continue to develop and grow in my convictions.

The teacher is the key

There seems to be a new trend in education of recognizing that it is not the curriculum, but the teacher that makes the difference. This new perspective asks teachers to become more reflective of their roles as teachers, exploring overtime what works and what doesn't. Questioning what best meets the learning needs of your students, and developing a teaching philosophy which guides your approach to curriculum, this will empower you as a teacher to begin to develop your skills, and make your teaching more

powerful and supportive for your students. Working and collaborating with peers is also another element of the new trend. Take heart. We are all in the same boat trying to row with one oar.

Teaching seen as a motivational force

Vygotsky (1978) has said that teaching should be a “motive force”. Some would translate this to mean an accent on force. In my opinion, this hard line approach may get short term results, but fails to promote life long readers. I believe Vygotsky (1978) was talking about the power created when teachers begin to realize that making personal connections with students, and adopting an up close and personal approach to teaching is what makes teaching and learning a powerful motivating experience for all involved. Good teaching seen in this light can create and instigate a powerful motivating force for all involved. I choose to interpret motive force as meaning motivational force.

Making the aesthetic connection

We often view aesthetic literacy experiences as something that is acceptable only with young children, if we allow them at all. However, the phenomenon of the dramatic increase of dropouts at even the middle schools and high schools has really taken the wind out of many grammar advocates sails. Many secondary educators are beginning to ask why students lack the motivation to pick up a book, let alone read it, even in school. When students are asked why they don't read, the common response is “BORING!!!” In response to this, many teachers are beginning to explore ways to make reading more interesting and motivating. By this stage even the most skilled grammar advocates are realizing that skills alone do not ensure reading engagement, and reading engagement is

necessary for the development, practice, and growth of literacy skills overtime.

Many people believe that computers will one day take over the job of teaching. At the recent Claremont Reading Conference (1998), Frank Smith pointed out that unless teachers become more interesting, motivating, and comprehensible, we will soon be out of a job. I was encouraged by my recent readings that many secondary educators are at long last attempting to make personal connections with students; meeting student needs rather than clinging to more traditional curriculum.

We still need a little food for thought, don't we? That is where teachers, in my opinion, fit into the picture. To computer enthusiasts I would simple say, beware of technolust, and keep your thinking caps firmly attached to the top of your heads. If reading is thought of as an aesthetic experience, not exclusively a cognitive experience, we will come to realize that books are to be shared with other human beings, and not another faceless screen. In the opinion of many reading educators interactive figures combined with text on the computer screen might get the readers attention at the expense of focusing on the real star, the text of the book (Kraft, 1998).

If the teacher is seen as the motive force behind reading curriculum, then teachers must first and foremost role model efficacy through active participation in the literary process along with students. In order to be willing to do this, teachers have to begin to become risk takers.

Beginning to make a personal connection

You can begin by getting in touch with how you learned to read. Burke's Reading Interview (1981), is a good tool to use in going through this process. Interview students,

other peers, and even people in your private life. Be prepared for some surprises. During my own interviews, I found students to be much more honest than adults. The adults most uncomfortable with this interview were the teachers I interviewed. In particular, was one teacher whose mother was a first grade teacher. At first he gave answers such as use of phonics and you learn to read by sounding it out. Later he began to wonder if reading at home with his parents was how he personally learned to read. My daughter once challenged me when she said that teachers own children usually wind up in gifted classes and do well in school because teachers know what to do. Here is an example of a teacher who had, in my opinion, a different set of rules for literacy learning in the home and another set of rules for learning to read in the classroom.

Up close and personal

When I first began to teach, I was lucky enough to have a principal who was very perceptive. He explained to me that he saw two Kathys. The Kathy inside the classroom was unsmiling, nervous, and trying to be what I thought teachers were supposed to be. The Kathy outside the classroom was very interactive and dramatic. The message was clear. Relax and be yourself. Be interesting and comprehensible. I have come to see over time that this also means sharing your talents with your students. I have a drama and musical theater background and have used these talents over the years to motivate myself and my students. I have seen many successful teachers use their individual talents as a strong motivational tool for instruction. Just the other day on T.V. I saw an example of a teacher who loved geography use this love to develop a wonderful motivational reading program. She put up a large map of the world in the room and invited students to pick an

author from a country they wanted to know about. From the literature selected they learned geography, culture, and took a trip around the world while still inside the classroom. Just listening about this program made me want to go back in time and be a student in this classroom. Take an inventory of your talents, whatever they may be and make a personal commitment to invest them in your teaching.

I can hear my best teacher friend calling out to me and saying, “But Kathy, I can’t sing and dance and I have no talents.” Try something new anyway. I taught with a lady who sang off key so badly she made me wince every time I heard her singing with her class. She sang all the time anyway and enjoyed herself so much that her students sang gleefully off tune right along with her. We all have talents we lack, but that shouldn’t stop us from giving it a go. Don’t worry that your students might criticize, they will love you for it. One of the many talents that I lack is the ability to draw. Quite by accident I asked a student who was talented in this area to draw something for me because I didn’t feel up to the task. This student was so excited he went around the room for days repeating to himself, “I can draw better than teacher”. Ask students to invest their own personal talents in literacy. It is called sharing. I will show you what I know, and you show me what you know. This simple idea of sharing talents will go a long way in developing reciprocity between teacher and student. An extension of this idea is to let no talent go to waste. Very cost effective.

Promoting increased transaction with text

The overarching goal of any motivational reading program would be to increase the amount, breadth, and width of reading engagement. There are many approaches that

have been tried over the years in the attempt to make this happen. It is with the knowledge that without sustained reading practice, students fail to develop the necessary skills for continued success in reading, and at some point disengage. Following are some motivational practices which many teachers have tried over the years in the attempt to motivate students to continue to read for fun, profit, and pleasure.

Aesthetic transaction with text

L.M. Rosenblatt (1980), a leader in the field of the teaching of literature, is concerned with the problem of approaching literature from an efferent rather than an aesthetic stance. I think what she meant by this was that a piece of literature is in essence a work of art. In order to experience literature, the reader must be given the opportunity to first enjoy literature from an aesthetic or affective stance. During later rereadings the reader will be asked to bring in cognitive elements as they are motivated to derive meaning from text. This is a journey that must be guided by a need for meaning, not dictated by reading curriculum.

Recently in class while I was trying to teach my students what they were going to learn from the book still unopened in my hand, one of my students pleaded softly, "Teacher, please just read the book". A powerful message rests in these words. Read the book, so students can find out for themselves what is inside, and quit trying to teach all the time. This means using a piece of literature as a motivational tool to extend transaction and learning, with the book doing the teaching. As Sam Sebasta (1997) puts it, extra curricular activities having to do with text should not be thought of as the caboose of learning, but rather extensions allowing students to further transact with text

in a meaningful and personal way. Writing activities are usually seen as the most logical pathway to extend transaction with text. But what about the learner who for one reason or another has a reading difficulty which prevents them from sharing that book completely? There are other ways to interact with text that are usually built into the format of the books. Books are about the stuff of life, and are meant to be experienced first hand by the reader.

For example, the story *Julieta and Her Paintbox* by Carlos Pellicer Lopez (1997). First of all, the fact that Julieta is Hispanic, got my bilingual students attention immediately. Children of all backgrounds need to see themselves somewhere on the page. In the story Julieta uses her paint box with it's many colors to express how she feels from day to day. As a class, we spent over a week talking about how colors can express feelings, and how Julieta expressed different emotions through the use of art. What was the most logical extension of this text? On Friday afternoon we took the time to use a paintbox to express our feelings on that day. Then we sat down and shared our individual interpretations of what was learned from this book through our pictures we painted. Many students wanted to take this book home to share with their family. As a result of this book, some students took it upon themselves to ask their mother to buy them a paintbox of their own. Only then, did I ask students to reflect upon what they had learned in the form of a writing activity. Now they had something to say, and say it they did. Books are about feeling, sharing of ideas, and common experiences. The stuff of life.

Accessibility of literature

Research and common sense would rate accessibility of books as a necessary element to any motivational reading program. If students are to increase the amount, depth, and width of their reading at a motivational level; choice, and ownership must also be at the top of the list. This can be accomplished by providing a wide variety of books at different reading levels, and different genres, which afford students an opportunity and choice to develop as literacy learners. Many teachers recognize the problem of accessibility of books as being one of the major drawbacks to providing an adequate reading program for students.

One of the new teachers at my school wrote an article expressing this concern in a local newspaper, and the story was picked up nationally in syndication. Books began pouring in from all over the country, and continued to pour into the school at a rate of over one hundred books a week for a six month period. As a result of this concerned teacher, every child in the school was able to take home an average of three books per student a (Based on 1998 interview of Lisa Wade). Hang in there new teachers. Even you can make a big difference if you care to take a little time to get the message out regarding your concerns to the public. The public, I believe, really does care about doing something for schools. They listen to teachers more than we think they do sometimes.

APPENDIX C

Searching for Curricular Practices

Incorporating motivational elements in your curriculum is probably the most difficult, and yet the most important and powerful tool to obtaining any curricular or learning goal ever imagined. You can have the “magic reading curriculum” in the palm of your hand and if you fail to make the personal connection, I believe you are doomed to failure. Following are some motivational tools that many teachers have used over the years. I have already mentioned a few. These are meant to be used as guidelines and ideas to get started, not as neatly packaged thematic units. Maybe your students are different from mine, and as such will have different interests and motivations. But as human beings we all have certain common needs. I believe we have a need for success, meaning, recognition, acceptance, sharing of ideas, and choice. When a child asks the question “Where do I fit in?”. I want to be prepared to say come on in and join the family. And be prepared to make it happen any which way I can. I invite you to try some of the following motivational approaches to reading curriculum. These are just a few of the motivational practices used over the years by myself and other literacy learning educators. If you do not experience motivation and some success pretty quickly, don’t demand a money back guarantee. Just try something else or try it another way. Recently I saw an interview with Rubinstein. He described how he composed music as hitting a bunch of different notes until he found the note that sounded right. This is the way I believe motivation works as it relates to successful reading engagement.

Reader's theater

Many books lend themselves to reader's theater as a natural extension of transacting with text. I am talking about books or stories where the plot is simple, repetitive in nature, and affords all students the opportunity to participate in some way. Whatever book you choose, it should be a book where the students are able to write their own version of a well known story. When considering using reader's theater for the first time you might want to experiment with writing your own reader's theater with your class as a whole. I have progressed to the point where I assign small groups the task of working on creating reader's theater.

Even first graders are capable of this, if you are careful to closely supervise and provide some structure for arriving at a successful finished product. When approaching the writing of reader's theater it is important to provide some kind of a scaffolding instrument. Make sure you include everyone in the group in the process. For reader's theater, I prefer to use story mapping. This is like a story board that many authors use when first writing. First ideas, sequence, use of story vocabulary, visualization through pictures; then actual writing.

Don't forget to include powerful language present in the piece of literature. A good example of a piece of language rich literature is the book, Where The Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendack. When my class wrote a reader's theater for this piece, we made sure to include, "and they roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth", complete with sound effects. Since the characters were so powerful in this book,

we decided to make puppets. We talked a great deal about the hair, eyes, and teeth, and what made the Wild Things so terrible looking. When we actually made our puppets, I simply supplied the raw materials (tissue paper hair cut in long strips is great), a few basic construction suggestions, and was there for students when they had a problem getting the desired effect. I am a big fan of student generated art, and use dittos only sparingly in this art form or any other for that matter. The use of props or backdrops can be as complicated or as simple as the group dictates. I saw a video once of a teacher who made a floor map of the world, and actually had Max getting in his boat and traveling to where the Wild Things were.

Make sure you make time for rehearsing so that anxiety level can be properly dealt with. Give second language learners the opportunity to produce the play in their home language, but leave the choice up to them. Be sensitive to their comfort zone. If particular students balk at performing, seek other ways of participation and appreciation at first. Readers, artists, performers, prop man or scribe, are all important elements of the reader's theater process.

To get an idea of what I am talking about, I would suggest getting a hold of published works of reader's theater. After having read a few to get the format, I would still encourage you to write your own with your class. In this way students will have increased chances to take on ownership of text, rather than reading a watered down version that someone else wrote.

Dramatic readings

A precursor to reader's theater can be a dramatic reading of a text. When I read the story Mrs. Washy from the Wright Group, I take on the character of Mrs. Wishy Washy completely. I usually come in the morning to class dressed up like Mrs. Wishy Washy from head to toe, complete with a scrub board, bandana on my head, apron, and tennis shoes. I go through business as usual not saying a word. Well, maybe I go around the room polishing and washing a few things like students hands. After attendance is taken, I launch into my dramatic reading of the story of those naughty farm animals that I have to wash all the time because they can't stay away from the mud. Usually about half way through the book, somebody yells out from the back, "Hey look, Miss Metz is Mrs. Wishy Washy!!!". During later readings of this story, students all take a turn being one of the characters from the book. The characters in this book are very humorous, and a little drama helps to increase the enjoyment of the book.

I have seen a fourth grade teacher take on the story character of Viola Swamp from the book, Miss Nelson is Missing. This is a story about a nice teacher who decides to play a trick on her misbehaving class. When this teacher came to school that morning, even the other teachers didn't recognize her. She announced to the class that she was the substitute for the day, and was completely in character. She yelled at her class, told them to sit down and be quiet, and assigned them tons of homework. Finally after about an hour of carrying on, she read the book, and at the end took off her wig. Her class nearly came unglued, but got the point.

Before you think that this activity can only be done at the elementary level, I would refer you to the movie *Teachers* with Nick Nolte. It is my favorite movie about teachers. In this movie, a man escapes from a mental institution and comes to work as a substitute at the local high school. While there, he is put in charge of an historical literature class, and comes to school everyday dressed up like Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, you name it. He even brings in a boat and reenacts George Washington crossing the Delaware. When the men in the white coats come to take him back to the mental institution, the class laments, and is genuinely sorry to see him go. The class liked him better than the regular teacher. Why? Because he was just goofing around? Others might say he was making literature and history come to life. I identified very strongly with this character. I keep wondering when the men in the white coats are coming to take me away and so are my friends. There are many other caricatures of teachers in this movie, including a teacher affectionately known as "ditto". Everyday his students came in, worked on dittos, and handed them in without saying a word while "ditto" sits in the front of the room behind his paper. One day "ditto" has a coronary and no one notices until the janitor comes in to clean up at the end of the day. Granted this is an exaggeration, but behind the humor lies an element of truth. This film provides teachers a time to stand back, and take a good look at themselves from a humorous perspective.

Theme days

Other times, setting the mood before a dramatic reading adds to the impact of a book. For example the book *Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Waber. This story is about a little boy who sleeps over at his friend's house and will be away from home for the very

first time. He wants to take his teddy along with him, but is afraid the other boy will make fun of him. In preparation for this book, a theme day was planned. We all brought our teddies, pajamas, sleeping bags, and flashlights. Our big buddies from the sixth grade were also invited, and we read this book together with the lights turned off. Ah! What a good book read under the covers will do to instill the love of reading.

One of the new teachers at my school took an award winning story entitled The Best Friend's Club (1991) by Elizabeth Winthrop and brought it into the classroom in a meaningful way for students. Students made a cardboard clubhouse which was set up in the room, and formed a friendship club of their own. To introduce this book, a friendship day was planned. Taking advantage of the motivating concept of friendship which is personally experienced by us all, really helped to capture the essence of this delightful book, and thus impacted learning in a highly personal way.

The other day I ran across a book in the local teacher's store about theme days. Perusing the book, I found the standard offerings of dittos, eating activities, writing prompts, comprehension questions, and many other extraneous activities that Sebasta (1997) refers to as the caboose of learning. These resource books are very popular with busy teachers. I must admit that I have used a few over the years myself when time gets short. However, when time permits, I prefer creating theme days with my own class in mind, and what kind of activities will add to the impact and depth of experiencing a book further.

Discovery reading

This year I decided to be a risk taker and try this new approach to reading for the first time. What is involved is experiencing a book for the first time with your class and role modeling efficacy as questions or inquiries about the book arise.

One of the stories I choose was Seven Sillies by Joyce Dunbar (1997). This is a book about animals who watch their own reflections in a pond thinking there are other animals around trying to take over, while a frog looks on, making fun of them. About half way through the book, one of my students started pounding on my knee trying to get my attention. I don't like to be interrupted when I am reading, so I just kept on reading. Finally he blurted out, "But there are only six animals on the page!!!!!! The reading of the book came to a grinding halt, and we all stopped to count. He was right, there were only six sillies. The question we wanted an answer to was, "then who was the seventh silly?". The first reading of the book did not produce an anser to this question. We finally went back to our seats and worked in small groups to find the answer. One group finally came up with the idea that the seventh silly must have been the frog. But some of us are still not sure. Becoming story detectives was very exciting, even for teacher. I honestly did not know the answer, having just experienced the story for the first time myself. I was a little embarrassed, but my students were thrilled that they might know something that teacher did not know. Everyone had an opinion, everyone was involved. There was no one right answer. This was the best experience with inquiry reading that I have ever experienced as a teacher. I wouldn't suggest that you approach every story

with your class like this, but you might want to give it a try with a new book. Every new book holds an element of surprise for the reader. Let's not take this away from the reader through too many teacher generated questions dictated by the reading curriculum.

Read-alouds

My first experience with read-alouds in the classroom was as a student myself. My fifth grade teacher used to read to us after lunch every day. That was close to forty years ago, and to this day I can remember the name of every book she read to us. In particular, I remember the books she read by Mark Twain. Being unable to read those books at that time did not prevent me from experiencing them first hand. As a result of those earlier readings, I was motivated to return to Mark Twain again and again through college, until I had read most of Mark Twain's writings, including his biography. Reflect back for a moment to the teachers in your own lifetime who had the most impact upon motivating you to develop your literacy skills further. I am willing to bet they read aloud to the class somewhere along the way.

Reading aloud to students has not always been seen in educational circles as a worthwhile classroom activity; especially at the secondary level. With an increasing number of adult readers frozen at a third grade reading level, we have begun to change our minds. Chapter read-alouds of an entire piece of literature are becoming a preferable alternative to offering students only watered down versions of text. Many times this will motivate the reader to reread the story or to read further to find out what happens next. If transaction with text is what we are after, then reading aloud at a slightly higher

reading level can be used as an highly effective motivational tool for the older reader who is bored with reading Dick and Jane books for the rest of their life.

At the elementary school early literacy learning advocates are promoting the use of read-alouds as a necessary element to any successful reading program. In addition to the motivational aspects of reading aloud to student, other benefits would include providing a role model for approaching an unfamiliar book, as well as developing concepts about print, reading for meaning, using phonics within context, the development of a sense of story, and the development of multiple strategies when approaching unfamiliar text to name a few. Remember, however, what my first grade student said, first just read the book teacher. This does not mean the quick cover to cover reading of a book, but involves a more interactive approach to read-alouds, allowing for short stops along the way for predicting what will happen next, an inquiry or question brought up in the text, or a dramatic pause at an exciting part of the story. Shelby Barrentine (1996) believes that interactive read-alouds encourage students to interact with “the text, peers, and teacher,” and help children to construct meaning from the story (p. 36).

Using film to promote, compare and contrast with literature

Right now I am sure there is a creative high school teacher who uses film in some way to motivate students to transact with literature. For example, I wonder if high school reading teachers have thought of using the recent phenomenon created by the interest sparked in the film Titanic. There have been many books published about the Titanic controversy. I could see this as an opportunity to challenge students to go to the

source, and read some of these books and then compare and contrast them with the film. The possibilities of using movies based on literature as a springboard for reading seem endless to me and very powerful. I have usually found that I prefer the book to the movie experience, but not always. What I have found is that comparing film with literature adds to my enjoyment of both.

I believe that this is especially true of the classics. Personally, I preferred the film *Moby Dick* (1956) to wading through the immense size of this well used piece of classic literature. As a top student, even I was intimidated by the length and boredom of some of the parts of this book. I can not believe that in good conscientious this book is still being used in some classrooms even today. No wonder many student do not view reading as a pleasurable activity. Recently, a middle school teacher friend of mine told me about a limited English student of hers that was required to read *Moby Dick* for her seventh grade literature class. Faced with this absurdity, I think I would have rented the video of *Moby Dick* (1956) for the student and handed it them in a brown paper bag to be viewed in secret. Some would say I was cheating, others might call that being supportive.

At my grade level there are many things to consider when picking film based on literature. The videos based upon the books *Corduroy* and *The Snowman* are particular favorites of mine because they are examples of how film can add to the meaning and enjoyment of a book. The video *Corduroy* added an extra element of fantasy through the use of a giant size puppet. The film based on *The Snowman*, a wordless picture book, capitalized upon the use of music without taking away from the book's original wordless format. Such videos are especially powerful for the second language learners, allowing

them another way to derive meaning.

Films are not always a meaningful extension of text. Videos that simply photograph text and provide a simple reading often separate the reader from an interactive experience. My advice is to use videos sparingly, and only when they give your class something they would not otherwise get from a first hand reading.

Using poetry when length is an issue

There is something about the length of a book that can be very unmotivating to us all. Yet there is something about using magazines and comic books as substitutions for literature that is offensive to me as a reading teacher. It is not that I have anything against students reading magazines and comic books in their spare time, but I still can not bring myself to view such readings as rewarding and fulfilling as a good piece of literature.

In place of Moby Dick for readers experiencing difficulties, I would place poetry and short stories as a much more viable alternative when sheer length of a books turns the potential reader off. Both genres offer quality, not quantity built into the format.

Poetry at my grade level is very often interpreted as rhyming books. Yet authentic age level appropriate poetry can afford the reader more thoughtful and enriching language experiences. There is some good poetry out there for elementary students, but I believe that this is an area that has unexplored potential for the elementary classroom.

According to Zena Sutherland (1997), poetry should be read aloud and chorally read, but not memorized. Poetry should not be used as a reading exercise. Good poetry has a musical or lyrical quality, and is oftentimes humorous or childlike in it's perspective. Suggestions for a beginning anthology for use in the classroom are Robert

Louis Stevenson's A Child's Garden of Verses, and Judith Viorst's, If I Were in Charge of the World and Other Worries: Poems for Children and Their Parents. Poems chosen should be comprehensible and about the child's everyday world.

At the secondary level I can see real potential for poetry use in not only regular literature classes, but poetry could be put to good use to motivate unsuccessful readers. This could be true especially for the college level student who has not come to view themselves as a literacy learner, but as a problem reader. For this group, contemporary poetry as well as traditional poetry offers a language rich and meaningful experience to be shared and appreciated by the group without the after taste of the sheer length of the text getting in the way.

Authentic literature

Most educators recognize that providing authentic literature for second language learners as well as for other minority students can be a powerful and motivational tool in promoting ownership of literacy. It afford us the opportunity to provide equal access to literacy learning for minority students. Accessibility to authentic literature within the school context, however, continues to be a problem. I have been involved with minority education for over twenty years and have seen the presentation of multicultural literature go through many changes. The first phase involved finally addressing the problem of allowing for the minority child to see themselves somewhere on the page, and I mean that literally. We experimented with superimposing a variety of minority children's faces within the pictures offered in standard reading texts. Other times we offered translations of English literature, some of which are still being used today in many schools in an

attempt to be inclusive. Oftentimes such attempts are translated effectively, but many times they water down vocabulary or skew meaning for the reader, taking away from the literary experience.

The good news is that authentic literature by authors whose culture and language match the reading audience are finally at our doorstep waiting to come into the classroom and assist us. They are easy to recognize as a quality piece of literature which avoid the stereotyping of the past, and helps to develop multiple perspectives of how people from diverse cultural backgrounds view the world. They help us to explore feelings and values from a cultural perspective and expand our horizons of thought.

Many of the literature based reading series are beginning to recognize the value of incorporating authentic literature in reading programs in an attempt to address the increased diversity of our student population. The new reading series recently adopted by my district includes a smattering of authentic literature which has been very popular with my students. Even though these are good beginnings, still more authentic literature needs to be included, in my opinion. In the meantime, teachers who believe in providing authentic literature for students will, I'm afraid, have to continue to take up the slack.

Two pieces of authentic contemporary literature that I have recently included in my classroom reading program are Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message by Chief Jake Swamp (1995), and Imani in the Belli by Deborah Newton Chocolate (1994). Both books are fine examples of the contribution that authentic literature can make to the field of literature.

For young children I long ago gave up the Hollywood idea of Indians, and simply

avoided the subject, particularly at Thanksgiving. My students over the years, however, were much more interested in finding out about Indians than Pilgrims. A few years ago I found a book entitled Giving Thanks: A Native Good Morning Message by Chief Jake Swamp (1995). This book is beautifully illustrated and well written. Within the pages of this book is much culture and the way Native Americans view themselves and their close personal relationship with nature. I have now replaced the more traditional classroom presentations of I am thankful for..... with this poetic and thoughtful piece of truly authentic literature.

Imani in the Belly is a book based on the storytelling tradition of African Americans. It is a very exciting and action packed story about a village of children who are swallowed by a lion, but live to tell the tale. Deborah Newton Chocolate is a young dynamic new author who writes contemporary books for older students as well as traditional African folk tales. It was my pleasure to meet her at The California Teachers Reading Conference (1995) a few years ago, and I understand she still travels to schools to speak with young authors regarding their own literary pursuits.

Book clubs over the years have been my constant companion and friend when seeking out authentic literature for use in the classroom as well as personal free choice reading for my students. Scholastic book club, for example, has continued to provide me with a variety of quality authentic literature at an affordable price for myself and my students. Often authentic literature in hardbound is very expensive, but to me is worth the extra money. I often hesitate, however, to send such a valuable item home.

Paperbacks afford me the opportunity to provide home reading and sharing of authentic

literature outside of school, thus expanding learning.

At the secondary level the use of authentic literature can prove to be an even more powerful experience as minority adolescents begin to take ownership of literacy. As students begin to explore their feeling regarding race and culture, authentic literature can provide a powerful backdrop for such explorations. Many secondary teachers, I suspect, shy away from authentic literature due to the controversial nature of authentic literature at this level. In my district, there are already procedures in place which encourage teachers to become sensitive to the potentially controversial nature of authentic literature beforehand, forewarn students of the subject matter involved before the actual piece of literature is presented, and provide other choices when at all possible.

Book clubs

I have to be honest, I have always been turned off to the idea of making a competition out of reading books. It goes against what I believe should foster the love of reading; intrinsic motivation. It usually results in trophies and recognition for a few, and oftentimes in parents and teachers pushing just a little too much in the wrong direction. Once the bucks have been passed out, in my opinion, the unmotivated reader is till left out in the cold.

Recently I came across a publication put out by the state entitled, California Young Reader Medal Nominees sponsored by the California Young Reader Medal program. Books are nominated by student's, or teachers and librarians who notice a particular book that is requested by students repeatedly. Books must be original and published within the past five years. After books are nominated, a committee of

educators considers these books for their literary merit and quality for each age level. Books are placed into four age level categories through young adult level. From September through March, students read the nominated books and then vote for their favorite. Teachers and librarians introduce the nominated books to students in innovative ways and submit the results to the committee. The winning authors receive their California Young Reader Medal awards at a special ceremony at state conferences held annually. Participating classrooms receive an activities publication of the award winning books. The California Young Reader Medal program encourages and actively promotes recreational reading of popular contemporary literature among young people. Now that's my kind of book club. I think I will join in next year.

Book fairs

When I first arrived at my current school we had a very active P.T.A. which sponsored annual book fairs. These book fairs were always popular and well attended by students and teachers alike. I was one of their best customers. Much money was raised for the school in the form of books. Everybody was happy in the knowledge that as a school we were making a statement about how we felt about the reading of books for recreational purposes. Putting on a school site book fair takes a lot of time and effort, but the results are a good thing.

After having taught for twenty years, and developed a classroom library of my own, I decided to participate in a book fair. Since there were no volunteers, I was put in charge. Oh brother, now what do I do? I gathered together a few of my most loyal parents, other teachers I could lean on, some older interested students, and pleaded with

the P.T.A. to be our sponsors. It was a lot of hard work, but I was motivated. Our school library was sorely lacking Spanish literature books for students. I targeted this as our goal. I am not going to lie to you, there were many rough spots along the way. My greatest pleasure was in the way the older students really came through for the dumb little kindergarten teacher in helping me run the book fair. I got the book fair to give each of these students a book of their choice for their efforts. I found that doing this while I was off track was the only answer to sanity. Now mind you, I don't do this every year. Maybe only once in a lifetime. But I will never forget this experience. I still believe availability of books to be necessary to the success of motivational reading, and sometimes, I must be prepared to put my money where my mouth is.

The classroom library

As usual, I like to save the best for last. In my years of teaching, one of the wisest choices I made was to develop a classroom library for myself and my students. I have come to see my classroom library as a reflection of what I view as important in the teaching of reading. Within a well thought out classroom library is accessibility to books, variety, personal choice, fostering the love of reading, and extending the amount, breadth, and width of reading. Speaking from one teacher to another, if you were to take one thing away from reading this project, and I could pick for you, I would choose encouraging you to establish a classroom library of your own. The formation of a classroom library is time well spent in providing a thoughtful approach to promoting reading for all.

During my reading for this project, I read many articles from the field by other

teachers. The classroom library kept coming up again and again. Many literacy learning advocates such as myself are beginning to see the potential of the classroom library as one of the most powerful motivational tools of all in fostering reading engagement and the love of reading inside as well as outside the classroom. “With adequate attention to the importance of voluntary reading in school programs, we can go a long way toward realizing the goal of developing children who can and do read. Classroom libraries provide the vehicle for achieving this goal (Fractor, Martinez, Teale & Woodruff, (1993). p. 483).

Establishing a purpose for your classroom library first will help you to organize and begin. Developing a classroom library based on a theme or concept can lead to the furthering of personal choice and developing autonomy of the literacy learner when approaching reading curriculum. For example, one teacher used the yearly theme of passport to adventure as an inspirational invitation to experiencing the excitement of reading. Another concept approach to creating a library might be the development of one of the many universal themes present in literature. For example, such concepts might include good versus evil, cycles of life, experiencing loss, adaptation and change, adventure, mystery and suspense, storytelling, fantasy and make-believe; the list goes on, and will be a matter of availability of books and coordinating with the reading curriculum. The development of a theme for your library will help you to begin to organize your books in a meaningful way for yourself, and your students.

I began my own classroom with the thought in mind of using it as a vehicle to promote reading engagement in the home. As an early literacy advocate, I use the

classroom library as a motivational tool to help myself and my students begin to see reading homework not as an extension of dittos into the home, but as a valuable tool to promote reading and adopting literacy practices by reading nightly with family members. A classroom library and assigned nightly reading can be used as a means of involving families in the pleasure of reading for fun and personal profit.

When I began assigning nightly reading as the primary homework activity, I expected to get complaints. What I got was a pleasant surprise. I had many parents admit to me that they had never read a book to their child before, and as a result of this homework, they found out how enjoyable this experience was for the whole family. You might think that minority parents are the only parents who do not read regularly to their children. I personally believe that there is an epidemic of sending children off to the table, sit down, be quiet and do your homework. With young children this can be a tug of war nightly. By the time a child is older it is already too late in many cases. However, I have never met a child yet who did not willingly sit still for their turn on mother's lap to read and share a good book. With a little encouragement through assigning nightly reading homework, much can be accomplished in providing extended literacy experiences while at the same time promoting an increase in the amount of motivational reading.

I began to form my classroom library with donations from friends and family, parents, book club incentives in the form of books, garage sales, rejects from the local library, you name it. Before long I had close to one hundred books. I was ready to begin.

Check-out and return of books is an ongoing problem. Establishing an attitude toward the care, handling, and prompt return of books is the first important issue to be

dealt with. I usually send home a letter of policy. Even with the most careful planning and establishing of rules and procedures, however, accidents happen. Books circulated in the home will sometimes get lost or damaged. Over the years I have had to face this problem. When this happens, I will ask the parent to replace the book with a book from the home or with an inexpensive book from the grocery store rather than a fine. At times, I have had to resort to an emotional appeal to students and parents that books are precious and need to be treated with care. Only once in twenty years have I had to close down my library rather than face a devastating loss of books. Over the years I have had books which were lost I thought forever, turn up suddenly at the school with my name in them. Don't forget to put your name and the school inside each book. It will remind students of the trust you put in them, and they will come through for you.

Each year I take stock of my library and continue to add to the collection and selection of books toward providing a well rounded library which meets the needs of my students. Over the years I have added books in different genres, authentic literature, books at different reading levels, and for my bilingual students books in their home language whenever possible. Providing age level appropriate books is also an important consideration. I want students to be read to, but I also want students to be able to practice their own emerging literacy skills by sharing books in the home with significant others.

Part of my required nightly homework over the years has been the keeping of a reading log for each month to be signed and dated by parents. I used to have reading logs inside book envelopes, but they kept getting lost. I now prefer printing the reading logs directly on envelopes complete with an area for the title of books read, date read, and

room for parent signature and comments. Books are to be placed inside the envelopes for safekeeping in the home when not being read. Folders can also be used with older students. As soon as the reading logs are filled, I place them inside the student portfolios and use them as a self-evaluative tool to show growth and change in reading practices overtime.

Since first implementing my classroom library, I have seen many approaches to implementing potentially successful reading programs fade in and fade out. My classroom library has become the mainstay of my being able to provide accessibility to books for my students and the most powerful motivational force that I have encountered to promoting the amount, breadth, and width of reading engagement for my students.

APPENDIX D
Burke Reading Interview

NAME _____ AGE _____ DATE _____

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL _____ SEX _____ INTERVIEW SETTING _____

Interviewer _____

1. When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?
Do you ever do anything else?
2. Who is the best reader you know?
3. What makes her/him a good reader?
4. Do you think (s)he ever comes to something (s)he doesn't know when she's/he's reading?
5. YES-When (s)he does come to something (s)he doesn't know, what do you think (s)he does about it?
NO- SUPPOSE(PRETEND) that (s)he does come to something that (s)he doesn't know, what do you think (s)he does about it?

6. If you know that someone was having difficulty reading, how would you help them?

7. What would your teacher do to help that person?

8. How did you learn to read? What did they do to help you learn?

9. What would you like to do better as a reader?

10. Do you think that you are a good reader? YES OKAY

What makes you think so?

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Additional instructions

The Burke Reading Interview is used to gain insights into a reader's beliefs about the reading process. Responses to their series of open-ended questions reveal:

1. how the student copes with difficult material
 2. what qualities typify a "good" reader, according to the student
 3. what reading strategies the student would recommend to the other
 4. personal strengths and weaknesses, as reported by the student.
-

Guidelines for interviewing children

1. **PREPARE YOURSELF** for the interview setting by orally reading through the introductory statement and the interview questions several times.
2. **TAPE RECORD** each interview session.
3. **ASK THE QUESTIONS AS THEY ARE PHRASED** on the interview.
4. **DON'T RUSH.** After asking each question, wait patiently and comfortably for the person to think and respond. Restate the question **ONLY** if the person requests.
5. **LISTEN CAREFULLY** to the person's responses. Attend to whether they are responding to **THE QUESTION YOU ASKED**. If not, restate/rephrase the question. If the response is ambiguous (could be interpreted in more than one way) use the person's own words to phrase a question asking for clarification. Be sure that the person has responded as fully as they might. Allow a few moments of silence for any final thoughts and ask, "Is there anything else you might tell me?"
6. Remember that silences will seem much longer to you than they actually are and that the person being interviewed is much busier than you.
7. **NOT WRITE DURING THE INTERVIEW!** Maintain an informal and attentive atmosphere. Transcribe the tape following the interview.
8. Do not get involved in a conversation or stray from the questions. Maintain your role as interviewer.

Carolyn Burke, (1981)

The Reader Self-Perception Scale

PR	16. Reading makes me feel happy inside.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SF	17. My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	18. Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	19. I read faster than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
OC	20. I read better than other kids in my class.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PS	21. I feel calm when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
OC	22. I read more than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	23. I understand what I read better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	24. I can figure out words better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PS	25. I feel comfortable when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PS	26. I think reading is relaxing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	27. I read better now than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PR	28. When I read, I recognize more words than I did before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PS	29. Reading makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SF	30. Other kids think I'm a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SF	31. People in my family think I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
PS	32. I enjoy reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
SF	33. People in my family like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD

The reader self-perception scale scoring sheet

Student name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Date _____

Scoring key: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)
 4 = Agree (A)
 3 = Undecided (U)
 2 = Disagree (D)
 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scales

General Perception	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
1. _____	10. _____	4. _____	2. _____	5. _____
	13. _____	6. _____	3. _____	8. _____
	15. _____	11. _____	7. _____	16. _____
	18. _____	14. _____	9. _____	21. _____
	19. _____	20. _____	12. _____	25. _____
	23. _____	22. _____	17. _____	26. _____
	24. _____		30. _____	29. _____
	27. _____		31. _____	32. _____
	28. _____		33. _____	
Raw score	_____ of 45	_____ of 30	_____ of 45	_____ of 40

Score interpretation

High	44+	26+	38+	37+
Average	39	21	33	31
Low	34	16	27	25

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