

The Power of Pleasure Reading

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A Literacy Crisis: Cause for Alarm

- Every school day, more than 3,000 students drop out of high school (Alliance for Excellent Education).
- Only 70% of high school students graduate on time with a regular diploma, and fewer than 60% of African-American and Latino students do so (Greene, 2002).
- More than 8 million students in grades 4 – 12 are struggling readers (U.S. DoE).

Reading Next
Alliance for Excellent Education
Carnegie, 2004

“Teachers can provide instruction in the most essential literacy skills, but if our students are not motivated to read, they will never reach their full literacy potential.”

Gambrell, Malloy & Mazzoni, 2007

Best Practices in Literacy Instruction
Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley (Eds), 2007



MOTIVATION...

It is not a question of whether rewards enhance or undermine intrinsic motivation, but rather under what conditions do rewards *undermine* intrinsic motivation (Cameron, 2001; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001).

Intrinsic Motivation and Rewards: What Sustains Young Children’s Engagement with Text?

Marinak, B. & Gambrell, L. B., *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 2008

This study explored the reward proximity hypothesis and the effect of choice of reward on the intrinsic reading motivation of average third grade readers.

Participants

- 75 third-grade students from three elementary schools in a large suburban school district were randomly assigned to treatment groups: book reward, token reward, no reward.
- Library book selection task

Dependent Variables

Intrinsic motivation to read was measured by three indicators of task persistence:

- 1. first activity selected (reading, jigsaw puzzle, and math game)
- 2. time spent reading
- 3. number of words read

First Activity Selected

	Book Reward Group (n = 30)	Token Reward Group (n = 30)	Control Group (n = 15)
Reading	77%	17%	73%
Math Game	17%	53%	7%
Jigsaw Puzzle	6%	30%	20%

The findings from this study support the **reward proximity hypothesis** (Gambrell, 1996) and the notion that the proximity of the reward to the desired behavior is a particularly salient factor in enhancing intrinsic motivation to read.

Implications

- Using rewards proximal to reading supports intrinsic motivation to read.
- Carefully chosen rewards can foster a culture of reading motivation:
 - *BOOKS!
 - *more time for SSR
 - *more time for teacher read aloud...

Access to an abundance of books within the classroom results in increased motivation and increased reading achievement.

Guthrie, Schafer, Von Secker, & Alban, 2000

Literally hundreds of correlational studies find that the best readers read the most and that poor readers read the least. These correlational studies suggest that **the more children read, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.**

National Reading Panel, 2000

The volume of independent, silent reading students do **in school** is significantly related to gains in reading achievement.

Cunningham & Stanovich, 1996

**Authentic Literacy Tasks: Reading, Writing, and Discussion
in 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade Classrooms**



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According to Purcell-Gates (2002), authentic reading, writing, and discussion involve meaningful, purposeful and functional experiences that motivate and engage students.

What are authentic literacy experiences?
Authentic reading, writing and discussion experiences are like those that are encountered in the day-to-day lives of people, as opposed to school-like activities such as completing worksheets or answering teacher-posed questions.

- This study explored the effects of authentic reading, writing, and discussion tasks on elementary age students literacy motivation and critical thinking.

Three research questions guided this study of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students:

1. What is the effect of engagement with authentic literacy tasks on the reading **motivation** of fourth and fifth grade students?
2. In the context of authentic literacy tasks, how do small group **discussions** reflect accountability to community, knowledge, and critical thinking?
3. What do students report regarding their experiences of **participation** in authentic literacy tasks?

When students share their personal understandings with peers, they benefit as individuals, extending and enriching the personal understanding they build when reading on their own.
P. David Pearson, 2005

Literacy Motivation Survey (LMS)
(22 items)

Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Mean/SD	Mean/SD
51.1 (29.8)	57.0 (23.5)*

P = .01

LMS Sub-scales: Self-concept and Value

- LMS pre-Intervention: Statistically significant difference in favor of girls.
- LMS post-Intervention: Motivation increased from pre to post assessment for both boys and girls. No gender differences were found for self-concept, however, there was a statistically significant difference (pre-post) on value of reading in favor of boys.

Assessing Peer-led Discussions of Text (ACCC)

- I. Accountability to the Community
- II. Accountability to Content
- III. Accountability to Critical Thinking

(inter-rater reliability = 81%)

Assessing Peer-led Discussions of Text (ACCC) Rater: _____
Teacher: _____ Grade: ____ Discussion #: ____

I. Accountability to the Community

_____ student talk remains related to text/subject/issue
 _____ student talk is NOT related to text
 _____ related issues or topics are introduced and elaborated
 _____ students expand on the ideas under discussion
 _____ students clarify or define terms/ideas under discussion
 _____ students summarize, paraphrase other students' comments

- *Example - students clarifying ideas under discussion:*

Student #1 – "...it looks like they're having church. Is that what they're doing?"

Student #2 – "Yeah, because it says they started the first Sunday service whenever they got there. It says right here, 'New Connecticut colonists hear their first Sunday service.'"

II. Accountability to Content

- _____ students make specific reference to text to support arguments and assertions
- _____ students make clear reference to new knowledge gained in the course of the discussion
- _____ students use outside knowledge (prior knowledge, other text) that is accurate and relevant
- _____ evidence is provided for claims
- _____ unsupported claims are questioned
- _____ requests are made for factual information, elaboration, rephrasing, etc.
- _____ students call for definitions and clarification of terms

- *Example - students making specific reference to text to support arguments and assertions:*

“Yeah, on page 11, it says, ‘When the women went visiting, they brought their spinning wheels along. They tied the spinning wheels to the back of their horse. Then they could spin while they visited... No one could say that they were wasting time... See that’s what I’m talking about. That’s real friendship.”

III. Accountability to Critical Thinking

- _____ students refer to a variety of texts
- _____ students connect ideas across the text
- _____ students agree/disagree, providing supporting information
- _____ students redefine or change explanations
- _____ students ask questions about concepts
- _____ students compare and contrast ideas
- _____ students make inferences and draw conclusions

- *Example - students asking questions about concepts:*

Student # 1 – “...on page 40, ‘For headaches the Indians chewed on bark from the willow trees... today we know what the bark contains...”

Student # 2 – “I have a question, ...why did they eat bark from trees?”

Student # 1 – “They ate it because they found out that it helps them with headaches...the bark contains an ingredient in aspirin.”

Student comments about Adult Pen Pals:

“Well, I get most excited when our new books come, and when our new pen pal letters come, because I really love to hear what my pen pal has to say...and I really love to read the books and see if I have the same thoughts as my pen pal.”

“The best thing is making him, your pen pal, like your best friend, but just writing it on paper. I don’t know Brent that much but...I feel like I’m right in front of him, like he’s talking to me. And I feel like I know what his family, his wife, his dogs, his cats are like...”

Students reported that the best part about being involved in the program was:

- having a pen pal and getting letters (57%)
- reading the books (37%)
- writing letters to an adult pen pal (33%)
- receiving the books (20%)

Students reported that the most exciting thing about the program was:

- receiving the letters from the adult pen pal (48%)
- receiving the books (24%)


- 4th grade student:

We're like writers...and then we have discussion group...It's like "Oh, guys! This page was so interesting!" I like having a pen pal best 'cause you can have a best friend and not judge them by the outside.


- **Teacher journal entry – session 12:**

"... it has created a natural reading and writing environment that does not 'stress out' my kids. Even today a mother came into my room and talked to me about her daughter. She explained that her shy, quiet daughter has never come home and said anything positive about school. Her explanation of how her child struggled year after year with her mistakes outweighing her accomplishments and how that always kept her from trying – it broke my heart. (She) told her mom she could say anything in her discussion groups and no one would laugh...she could take ideas and then apply her own ideas and thoughts. I think this student is having fun and pushing herself instead of feeling pushed."

- *The People of the Book*
- *The Book Thief*
- *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*
- *The Reader*
- *How Full is Your Bucket?*
- *The 10 – anything from this series!*



"The great teachers fill you up with hope and shower you with a thousand reasons to embrace all aspects of life."



**Pat Conroy
*My Losing Season***