

Providing proximal rewards in reading instruction: The effects of teacher practices on motivation to read

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Principles of Reading Motivation (The Salient 7)

1. **Choice** (Jang, Conradi, Mckenna, & Jones, 2015)
2. **Collaboration** (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000)
3. **Control** (Turner & Paris, 1995)
4. **Challenge** (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000)
5. **Authenticity** (Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, & Malloy, 2011)
6. **Technology** (Conradi, 2014)
7. **Proximal Reward** (Gambrell, 1996)

Theoretical Framework

- ▶ Gambrell (1996)
- ▶ Expectancy Value Theory (Eccles, 1983)
- ▶ Value, Self-Concept (Dweck, 2000)
- ▶ Engaged Reader (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000)

Context

- ▶ Teachers given choice to participate in reading motivation study
 - ▶ Provided 4-hour training on motivational principles
- ▶ Teachers select practices to implement based on seven motivational principles.
- ▶ Provided teachers resources for classroom books to support implementation of principles.

Rewards

Intrinsic rewards

- Any reward received that comes naturally from within the heart and mind of the individual
- Love doing it for the sake of doing it
- Natural, consistent predisposition in favor of a given task or a given goal. They like doing it. It feels good. It is enjoyable. It makes them happy. It is rewarding in and of itself.

Extrinsic Rewards

- Any reward given outside the individual that is used to reward him or her for completing a goal or finishing a task.
- Tangible & Non Tangible rewards
 - Tangible = trinkets, pizza coupons, grades, money, books, book marks, etc.
 - Non Tangible = feedback, praise
- Proximal rewards: any reward that mirrors the goal

Reward Proximity Hypothesis

► Simply Stated:

The more proximate the reward is to the desired behavior, the more likely the reward is to bring about the desired behavior.

(Gambrell, 1996)

Examples of Proximal Rewards in classroom practice

▶ Books

- ▶ (books as rewards, books as gifts, book order selections, increased classroom library)

▶ Increased read aloud time

- ▶ (mystery readers, choose the read aloud, extra session at end of day)

▶ Increased time for self-selected reading time

- ▶ (Friday flashlight, read-a-thons, raffle coupons, class goal events)

▶ Time to talk about books

- ▶ (bless books, battle of books, sidewalk chalk-talks)

▶ Increased time in libraries and book selections

- (choose read aloud, book orders, book mobiles,)

▶ Book clubs

- ▶ (Book clubs, response projects)

Research Questions

1. How will the **teachers respond** as proximal rewards are implemented in their classrooms?
2. How did the **students respond** as proximal rewards were implemented by their teachers?

Methods

▶ Data collection

- ▶ Observation Notes - several times per month
- ▶ Teacher Self-journaling - monthly
- ▶ Pre, intermittent, and post one-on-one interviews
- ▶ Teacher Questionnaire - end of study

▶ Participants

- ▶ qualitative data analyzed for 18 elementary teachers from grade 1-6
- ▶ Over three different schools and four years

Analysis

- ▶ **Triangulation** through analysis of the classroom observations, pre and post interviews, and teacher self-journaling

- ▶ Use of the **5-Step content analysis** (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003)
 1. Get to know your data
 2. Focus the analysis
 3. Categorize information
 4. Identify patterns and connections within and between categories
 5. Interpretation-bringing it all together

Answering Question 1: The influence proximal rewards had on teacher practice

- ▶ **Changed the teachers' way of thinking about reading instruction.**
 - ▶ Influenced other parts of their curriculum
 - ▶ Helped reading instruction be fun
 - ▶ Validated the act of reading
 - ▶ Inspired intrinsic motivation
-
- ▶ “I never used reading as a reward for reading. For some reason I just never did... it never clicked with me. And that's something that really validated reading for me.. It validated reading for my students. It wasn't a chore. We read to get to read more. We read to get to more reading and more adventures kind of thing Proximate rewards validated the act of reading.”

Answering Question 1: The influence proximal rewards had on teacher practice

- ▶ Changed the teachers' way of thinking about reading instruction.
 - ▶ **Influenced other parts of their curriculum**
 - ▶ Helped reading instruction be fun
 - ▶ Validated the act of reading
 - ▶ Inspired intrinsic motivation
-
- ▶ “I think a motivation practice that's really helped my students this year, that I've noticed, has been the proximal rewards. And I love the fact that I have moved away from candy, or class incentive money, and things like that to finish stuff. And that's bled into, not just my reading, but into math and science, all those different things, like, "You do this good thing and you get to do more of that same good thing.“ (2)

Answering Question 1: The influence proximal rewards had on teacher practice

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-
- ▶ At first I was a little hesitant. "I don't know how to motivate kids without class points, and money, and treats, and things like that, and free time. Yet, it's so easy to do. In fact, I loved it!" (3)

This morning I told my students, "Why don't you finish this reading assignment up, and when you're lining up to go to another class, you can just take a book and read?" A couple of my kids are like, "Yes!" They were so excited! (4)

Answering Question 1: The influence proximal rewards had on teacher practice

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- ▶ Influenced other parts of their curriculum
- ▶ Helped reading instruction be fun
- ▶ Validated the act of reading
- ▶ **Inspired intrinsic motivation**

- ▶ With the reading incentives, I've always believed that ... having students work towards goals is important. But having those proximal rewards, it's a game changer for sure."
 - ▶ "One thing that I've really been wrapping my head around this year is that I have seen more of my students demonstrate an intrinsic motivation for reading. I've never had students put books on their desk. If you look around my classroom, almost every student has a book on their desk. And I've never told them to do that. That has just appeared."
 - ▶ "And I have never fought reading in my classroom before, like, "Put that book away. It's math time right now." But they're excited. And I think that's what proximal rewards has really done. Reading became less of a chore and a skill and more fun."

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

- ▶ Student buy-in
 - ▶ Students read more in school
 - ▶ Student read more outside of school
 - ▶ Children met or exceeded reading goals
 - ▶ Excitement for reading and class activities associated with reading
 - ▶ Talked about books differently in classroom.
- ▶ Struggling readers improved
 - ▶ Started to look forward to reading activities
 - ▶ Confidence in reading
 - ▶ Number of books read

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

- ▶ I Get to Read!
- ▶ “I think that proximal rewards helped change my student’s point of view of reading. Maybe not all of them, but most of them. I’ve noticed the majority, they look at reading as more of a thing that we enjoy doing. We use it to learn. We use it for enjoyment, to get somewhere, for a goal, like an accomplishment. They look at it more as, “Oh, I get to read!” My students look at reading differently.”

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

Proximate Rewards--Dining Room Share



- ▶ Students read and did a response projects for their book and then got to come to “dinner” to share with their friends.

Recognizing Reading for Reading

Struggling readers improved. Started to look forward to reading activities.
Confidence in reading Number of books read

Authenticity-Picture Wall



Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

Proximate Reward - Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Event



Willy Wonka Incentive Event

“We came up with the goal that every student would read about 40 minutes a day. I had to talk them down from like an hour. I typically require 20 minutes for daily reading. But they wanted 40. And they surpassed all the goals other fourth graders had made. I had some students who would read at least an hour a day. At least. Sometimes two.”

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

Proximate Rewards-Flashlight Friday



Flashlight Friday

When reading tasks for the week have been completed, then Flashlight Friday was a reward activity.

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

Proximate Reward - Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Event



End-of-the-year Incentive Event

“Students made goals. And the goals they made were self-made goals. We did make some collectively together, and then they all worked to contribute to that goal. But as they met their goals in reading individually and collectively, that's how they earned their time to come. And along the way they would also earn tickets for reading a certain amount, to put into a drawing for new books at the event.

Answering Question 2: The response of students when teachers implemented proximate rewards in the classroom

▶ Reluctant Reader

- ▶ Struggling readers improved
 - ▶ Started to look forward to reading activities
 - ▶ Confidence in reading
 - ▶ Number of books read

“One of my reluctant readers is not confident in his reading abilities, because he's also an English language learner. So he's not too low in speaking, and reading, and writing English, but he definitely didn't have the confidence. And so working on these reading goals for a proximate reward, and I think having more experiences reading, made him realize, "Wait, I can read and I'm good at it. I'm actually good at it.”

Discussion: Influence on teachers

Cultivating motivation through proximal rewards

▶ Teachers

- ▶ Shifts in teachers' focus towards literacy instruction
 - ▶ Proximal rewards seen throughout literacy instruction
 - ▶ Authenticity unplanned and spontaneous (Practice and attitude)
 - ▶ Reading/books became away to build class community and interpersonal relationships with students
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- ▶ “I was looking for reasons to praise my kids. With this book project, it made it easy”
 - ▶ “Student would come to me concerning questions about a book and we could sit down and have one on one time as we talked about books.”
 - ▶ “Talking about books gave me a way to connect with my students
 - ▶ “One of my happiest moments this year were seeing my students accomplish something they were trying to do all year long.”

Discussion: Influence on students

▶ Students

▶ Student buy-in

- ▶ *“Can I read further?”* *“Can we read more?”* *“Don’t stop there!”* *“Oh man, I don’t even want to stop.”*

▶ Exceeded goals and increased in reading goals

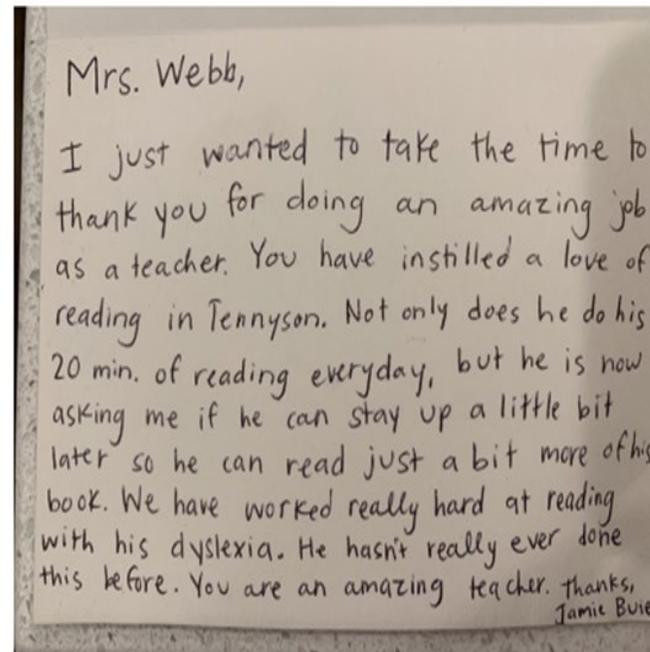
- ▶ choosing to read at recess, and other free time
- ▶ reading more books than they ever have
- ▶ wanting to take home their books to read at home

▶ Student progress in reading skills

Discussion: Beyond the classroom

► Parents

- Parents started to buy into it too and started giving books as rewards and encouraging their children to read.
- Mom wrote a letter and told teacher it was the first time her child wanted to read. Moved up two grade level

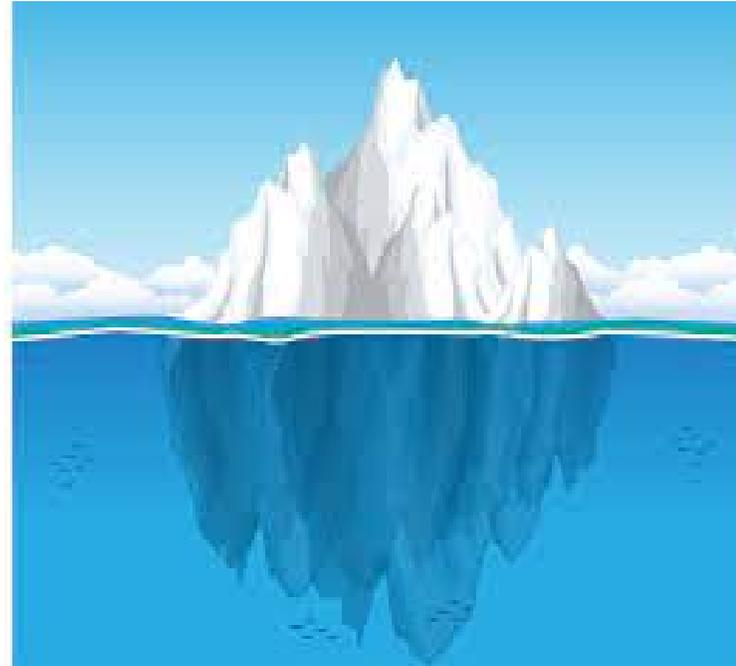


Mrs. Webb,
I just wanted to take the time to thank you for doing an amazing job as a teacher. You have instilled a love of reading in Tennyson. Not only does he do his 20 min. of reading everyday, but he is now asking me if he can stay up a little bit later so he can read just a bit more of his book. We have worked really hard at reading with his dyslexia. He hasn't really ever done this before. You are an amazing teacher. Thanks,
Jamie Buie

Discussion: Influence of class culture on proximal rewards

- ▶ Your management style
- ▶ Your own genuine love of books
- ▶ Your relationships with the students
- ▶ Students' relationship with each other
- ▶ Having and teaching with a growth mindset

Note: It is all in how you say it!



Conclusion

- ▶ Learning about proximal rewards caused teachers to change
 - ▶ Literacy tasks
 - ▶ Started off small in their goals
 - ▶ Enlarged their vision as new ways bubbled up
 - ▶ Attitudes towards literacy instruction
 - ▶ Shift in focus in terms of what is and isn't important in teaching reading
- ▶ All teachers reported a positive shift in attitude towards reading among all their readers, including struggling readers.
- ▶ Students came to value reading when there were lots of books around and they were given encouragement and opportunities to successfully read them.

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Thank you!

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Answering Question 1: The influence using motivational principles had on teacher practice

Read alouds

- ▶ Became consistent on a daily basis
- ▶ Became interactive with discussion
- ▶ Teacher's were/became passionate themselves for the book
- ▶ Student's choose book

Motivation principles: Choice, Authenticity, Collaboration

Answering Question 1: The influence using proximal rewards had on teacher practice

Literacy Circles

- ▶ Choice of books
- ▶ Accountability for reading (assignments and/or jobs)
- ▶ Student discussions about books
- ▶ Choice within performance ability
- ▶ Teacher monitoring/feedback/participation
- ▶ Consistent- occurred on a regular basis

Motivation principles: Collaboration, Choice, Authenticity, Control, Challenge, Technology

Answering Question 1: The influence reading motivational principles had on teacher practice

Book Talk

- ▶ Literature circles
- ▶ Read alouds
- ▶ Blessing of Books
- ▶ Peer book share integrated into instruction

Motivation principles: Choice, Collaboration, Authenticity

Answering Question 1: The influence reading motivational principles had on teacher practice

Reading Response Activities

- ▶ Book response projects
- ▶ Wax Museum Activity

Motivation principles: Choice, Collaboration, Challenge, Control, Authenticity, Technology

Answering Question 1: The influence reading motivational principles had on teacher practice

Technology

- ▶ Email/blogs/spreadsheets
 - ▶ Praised students
 - ▶ Acknowledged comments in the reading group
 - ▶ Tracked progress
 - ▶ Posted and explained assignments
- ▶ Used internet for student research

Motivation principles: Technology, Choice, Control, Authenticity, Collaboration, Challenge

Answering Question 1: The influence reading motivational principles had on teacher practice

Setting goals

- ▶ How much is expected to be read
- ▶ Tracking of progress
- ▶ Meeting a real author

Motivation principles: Challenge, Choice, Collaboration, Authenticity, Technology, Proximate Rewards

Answering Question 1: The influence reading motivational principles had on teacher practice

Teaching reading skills within the context of books

- ▶ Shift in focus
- ▶ Read alouds
- ▶ Research/writing/fluency
- ▶ Summarizing/Main Idea/Vocabulary
- ▶ Quotes from teachers.....

Motivation principles: Challenge, Authenticity

Can Proximal Rewards Foster Intrinsic Motivation?

- ▶ Yes, if!
 - ▶ **Engaging**
 - ▶ Can we keep doing this? Is it time to quit already? Do we have to stop?
 - ▶ **Challenging**
 - ▶ Look what I did!
 - ▶ **Choice**
 - ▶ I got to choose!
 - ▶ **Control**
 - ▶ I know I can do this!
 - ▶ **Collaboration**
 - ▶ We are all in this together.
 - ▶ **Authenticity**
 - ▶ I see how this is relevant to me.

Note: It is not a reward unless there is some sense that the effort required will bring some type of positive payoff.

Discussion

Influence of Classroom Culture on Proximal Rewards

