

A Qualitative Examination of Teacher Practices on Student Motivation

Lorilynn Brandt, Ann C. Sharp, & Doug Gardner

Utah Valley University

2016 ALER Conference

Context

- Teachers were given choice in participating in a motivational study where they were given a 4-hour training on motivational principles
- Each teacher was allowed to select practices they would implement in their classrooms based on seven motivational principles.
- Teachers were provided money to select books to augment their classroom libraries to encourage reading
- Teachers were provided an opportunity to have their students spend a day with an author as a reward for reading

Theoretical Framework

Eccles:

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 Theory (Gambrell, 1996)

Research Questions

1. How will the teachers respond as motivational principles are implemented in their classrooms?
2. How did the students respond as motivational practices are implemented by their teachers?

Methods

- **Data collection**
 - Observation Notes – several times per month
 - Self-journaling – monthly
 - Pre, intermittent, and post interviews
 - Questionnaires – end of study
 - Pre-post attitude assessments for students
- **Participants**
 - 2 major themes came from qualitative data analyzed for all 9 teachers
 - Those themes were explored in more depth using 4 of the 8 teachers
 - 5th and 6th grade teachers
 - These four teachers students all took the same My Reading Profile Revise
 - All their students showed significant increase in reading motivation

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 reading 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 reading motivational principles 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

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

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

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

Proximate Rewards

- Book give-aways
- Read-a-thon
- Author visits
- More time reading
- Motivation itself inspires intrinsic rewards

Motivation principles: Proximate Rewards, Choice, Authenticity

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

Motivation principles: Challenge, Authenticity

Answering Question 2:

The response of students when teachers implemented motivational practices in the classroom

- Student buy-in
 - Children met or exceeded reading goals
 - Children wanted to read outside of school
 - Talked about books differently in classroom.
- Struggling readers improved
 - Confidence in reading
 - Number of books read

Discussion

Cultivating motivation within the classroom

- Teachers
 - Shifts in teachers' focus towards literacy instruction
 - Motivational principles seen throughout literacy instruction
 - Authenticity unplanned and spontaneous (Practice and attitude)
 - Reading/books became away to build class community and interpersonal relationships with students

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

Conclusion

- Learning about reading motivational principles caused teachers to change
 - Literacy tasks
 - Started off small in their goals
 - Enlarged their vision as new ways bubbled up
 - Attitudes towards literacy instruction
 - Focus in term 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 lots of encouragement/opportunities to successfully read them.

References

- Conradi, K. (2014). Tapping technology's potential to motivate readers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(3), 54-57.
- Edmunds, K. M., & Bauserman, K. L. (2006). What teachers can learn about reading motivation through conversations with children. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 414-424.
- Gambrell, L. B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *The reading teacher*, 50(1), 14.
- Gambrell, L. B., Hughes, E. M., Calvert, L., Malloy, J. A., & Igo, B. (2011). Authentic reading, writing, and discussion. *The Elementary School Journal*, 112(2), 234-258.
- Grabe, W. (2004). 3. Research on teaching reading. *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 24, 44-69.
- Ivey, G., & Johnston, P. H. (2013). Engagement with young adult literature: Outcomes and processes. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(3), 255-275.
- Jang, B. G., Conradi, K., McKenna, M. C., & Jones, J. S. (2015). Motivation. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(2), 239-247.
- Schraw, G., & Bruning, R. (1999). How implicit models of reading affect motivation to read and reading engagement. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3(3), 281-302.
- Skinner, E. A., & Pitzer, J. R. (2012). Developmental dynamics of student engagement, coping, and everyday resilience. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 21-44). Springer US.
- Taylor-Powell, E., & Renner, M. (2003). Analyzing qualitative data.
- Turner, J., & Paris, S. G. (1995). How literacy tasks influence children's motivation for literacy. *The reading teacher*, 48(8), 662-673.
- Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J. T. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. *Handbook of reading research*, 3, 403-422.

Thank you!

Lorilynn Brandt lorilynn.brandt@uvu.edu

Ann C. Sharp ann.sharp@uvu.edu

Doug Gardner dgardner@uvu.edu