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How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?

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by

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To my parents, thank you for encouraging my love of reading, and supporting me along this journey. I would not be where I am today without you both.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Setting the Scene

Imagine you are a middle school student. Your day begins and you walk into your reading class, knowing that this is an area in which you struggle. You hate reading because it is hard for you, so why invest the time to care? It is a new school year, maybe even a new school, and you are already nervous, and your defenses are raised. Class begins, so you sit down and listen to the teacher start talking about the importance of reading. You try to tune your teacher out because you are not a reader, and you do not see why it is important. When you open a book it is confusing, perhaps even disheartening, so why do it? Later, you go to lunch and hear about reading classes your friends are taking, and you realize that your class is not quite the same as theirs. They have "Reading" on their schedule while you are in a class with a different name, "Intervention." Now you are someone who knows you struggle in reading, you are in a separate class and you are feeling even more down about your reading achievement.

Every year, many of my students enter my classroom with this mindset. They feel unequal in regards to reading, like they are someone different who needs to be put in a special class. Consequently, they put up a wall which is hard to break through let alone break down. For the last few years I have taught sixth grade reading intervention to between 35 and 50 students. While I teach a few students who love to read, even though they struggle, more often than not, the first conversation with them at Open House is about their aversion to reading. I always smile and say that my goal is for them to

discover at least one book they enjoy by the end of the year. Every time I encounter this attitude in students, it feels insurmountable. It is because of these experience with struggling readers that my capstone question is: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

An Early Reader

I am a reader; always have been and always will be. Perhaps my love of reading comes from my aunt who gave me books at every occasion inscribed with my name and a note written inside. Perhaps the passion also comes from my parents who read to me every night, or my grandmother, who had a stash of books ready whenever I visited. Books have always been an important part of my life. Rebecca, Margaret and Nasty Annie were three elderly pigs I adored, and Fred, a feline friend who always seemed to be so busy. Later it was the Dear America series that captured my time, but it was Harry Potter who truly captured my heart and imagination.

The entire Harry Potter series created the first "world" where I remember finding my escape. A world where I could imagine walking down Diagon Alley, waiting nervously in the Great Hall for the Sorting Hat to decide my House and playing quidditch in the open air. Those books took root in my soul. They were the stories that reignited reading for my generation and reaffirmed my personal love of reading.

Desire to be an Educator

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be a teacher. After middle school, I wanted to be just like my social studies teacher. I knew that I would stand in front of a group of high school students and talk about the origins of World War I

or the building of the American government. I was steadfast in the belief that this was my path. I was motivated to work with students and share my love of learning. Four years of college were spent studying history, government, geography, and sociology. After graduation, the reality hit that social studies was a saturated discipline and finding a job would be challenging. I still needed a job and preferred one that used the degree I had spent four years attaining. Substitute teaching seemed to be the only option I had at the time.

After working in the same building several times, I found out that they had a building substitute position that was vacant. Being a building substitute was not a job I knew existed, but the idea of knowing I had a job every day in a consistent place would give me a foot in the door. After being in other people's classrooms everyday, I was desperate for a job and wanted a classroom to call my own. After several months of subbing, I approached the principal, mentioning to him that I was thinking of going back to school to get another degree. I wondered if he had any recommendations on an area that he saw a need. He responded instantly: reading. He told me that if I were to get a reading license, there might be a position I could fill within the building. I enrolled in Hamline University's online K-12 Reading Licensure program and soon after was hired to teach a reading intervention program that focused on fluency.

The reading licensure program at Hamline University afforded me an opportunity to discover more about the role of literacy in our lives. Through each course I found myself falling in love with literacy and wanting to share this passion with my students. Soon I began to realize that instead of teaching them about history, I had the opportunity

to let them learn it on their own. Once I got kids interested in reading, and reading at higher levels, they could read and learn anything they wanted. I could help students develop and hone a life skill. Yet, as each school year began, I found myself faced with a new group of students who would rather be doing almost anything other than reading. This idea seemed strange to me because, as previously mentioned, I loved to read from a very early age.

Teaching Reading Intervention

My first year teaching reading intervention, took place in what could generously be described as a closet. What once was a walk through space between the hallway and an office, was transformed with a patched doorway, a wall made of file cabinets and strategically placed posters. It became a small classroom large enough only for five students. At the time I was happy to have a job, but I had no idea what I was actually diving into. It was my job to duplicate what another educator was doing in her room which made me feel better about not having a reading background. I did not think much about the bigger picture, I just wanted to make sure I followed procedures and get students to love reading as much as I did. The next year reading instruction seemed foreign to me and I was not completely confident I could do it.

However, I was confident that I had the best of intentions even if my heart was not fully in it. In my heart of hearts I wanted to be a social studies teacher and that is how I would introduce myself to new people. When they asked, “what do you do?” I would respond, “I am a social studies teacher, but I am teaching reading right now.” It always seemed like a stepping stone, a foot in the door, a layover on the way to what I

thought I was meant to do. In reality, I wanted to teach kids about government, history, and ancient civilizations.

Now I was teaching System 44 and Read 180, which are both research based reading intervention programs from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. System 44 focuses on foundational reading instruction: phonics, decoding, word recognition, and writing. With a mix of independent and guided reading, small group lessons and a software program that is individualized and adaptive to the students growth, System 44 targets students who are significantly behind their peers. Read 180's focus is on reading comprehension. The Read 180 model includes whole group instruction, independent reading, small group instruction and a computer software program that is individualized for each student. This program is for students who are moderately behind their peers, those who need just an extra push of support to get them to grade level.

When I think back on the Harry Potter series from my childhood, I know that, as an educator I want my students to have a book or two, or a series that does the same for them. A book which makes them smile when they think about it, and one that transports them somewhere new on a grand adventure. Books that introduce them to new friends who are ready to welcome them back anytime they choose to visit. Books that push them to imagine and dream in ways that a video game or baseball bat never could. Books rooted themselves early in my life and never let go. Whatever it was that opened up that place, that passion, that enjoyment for me, unfortunately, my students have not had that moment, book, or person in their lives to help them discover reading is not just a chore.

As I research and reflect on the question of motivation, I hope to find ways to motivate the struggling readers I work with each year. My experience in the classroom, thus far, has lead me to believe that motivation and engagement go hand in hand, a bit of each encourages the other. Motivation cannot be pushed aside and worried about later, as it may be the "most important part of reading" (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010, pg. 16). As a reading teacher, I do not need to have every student love reading by the end of the year. Realistically, I know that might not happen. I know this because I feel this way about math; no matter how fun you make it, or how often you explain to me it is necessary for my job or a useful skill, I believe I will never love math. Similarly, this is how many of my students view reading. However, if I can get a student to not *hate* or *fear* reading by the end of the school year, then I feel I am on the path to success.

This idea of success might look different to every teacher. Even now, in my fifth year of teaching reading intervention, I am still honing my idea of what that looks like for the students in my classroom. For me, success is catching a student who "doesn't like to read" hunched over a book, a student walking into my class and heading straight for the library, or seeing growth in my students, or improved performance in literacy heavy content. It might be that a student really enjoys a book and wants to read the whole series. Or when a former student comes back the next year and tells me about what they are reading while asking for a recommendation. When I get to be one of the people who helps plant the seed for literacy in my students, I believe that I have succeeded.

Looking at the research and the discoveries made by scholars in the area of motivation, middle schoolers, and reading, I hope to be able to identify what it is that

sparks motivation for students, and how I can apply this in my classroom. Once applied in my classroom my goal is to be able to share this with other teachers who may also struggle, find ways to motivate their challenged readers.

Summary

As someone who has always wanted to be a social studies teacher, I stumbled into teaching reading intervention. Once there, I became passionate about lighting the spark in my students, encouraging them to enjoy reading and not dread it. The difficulty in an intervention classroom is that students do not always want to do the very thing they need to read to become better readers. While facing a new classroom each year, I want to find the best tools and resources to use to motivate my students. While they may not all make leaps and bounds in their reading growth, it is important to me that they begin to discover the doors reading can unlock. My question remains: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

In Chapter One, I shared some of my personal background in literacy. I also discussed my desire to become a teacher and how my professional journey led me to working in a reading intervention classroom. As was previously shared, growing up I always loved to read. When confronted every September with classes full of students who do not like to read, I wondered how I can help motivate struggling readers who are in my classroom each year.

Looking Ahead

In the following chapter, I will discuss research in the areas of student motivation, struggling readers and middle school students. This research will illuminate issues

surrounding my research question. These issues will then be further explored and analyzed for their relation and usefulness in creating a set of literacy resources for teachers. Next, Chapter Three will discuss the methods I will use to create these resources for those who wish to motivate struggling readers in the intervention classroom. This chapter will also discuss the setting where I currently work, provide understanding of the circumstances around my research question. It will also provide description of my curriculum creation and development process. Chapter Four will share my results, which is my curriculum, created to enhance engagement and motivation in the classroom. Finally, Chapter Five will include my reflections and future study of my question.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter One highlighted a scenario of what it might be like to be one of the struggling readers who begin in my classroom each September. In the previous chapter, I also shared background about my life as an early reader and my desire from an early age to become a teacher. My journey from college to a full-time teaching position was not the one I had imagined, but that journey landed me in teaching middle school reading intervention. Teaching reading intervention has led me to witness, year after year, the disinterest and disengagement that plague some middle school readers. As someone who loves to read, this resistance to reading was baffling. This resistance led me to wonder: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

In this chapter I will review the existing research surrounding my capstone question. Starting out, it was important to recognize research that related to middle school students in particular. I wanted to hone in on the specific characteristics of the students I serve each day in my classroom. With that lens in place, I examined research from a variety of authors in the areas of struggling readers and motivation. Additionally, I encountered questions that helped discover even more about motivating students. Some of the questions that I encountered and have integrated into my research and thinking included the following:

- What leads to motivation and what does motivation in turn lead to?

- What are actions educators can take to motivate struggling readers while still focusing on authentic literacy, real text for real-life purposes?
- How does the role of relationship in the classroom affect motivation?

While researching motivation, it became clear that engagement and student choice played an important role and thus, the search parameters to answer my initial question were expanded.

Ask any teacher what is one of the biggest obstacles they face and chances are high they will offer up "motivation" as the heart of the problem (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996). It seems that a majority of their students are not motivated to read, and it can be a challenge to encourage them to even look at text. Some reading specialists and literacy educators might say that motivation is the single most important part of reading (Cambria, 2010). With this in mind, when O'Brien, Beach & Scharber (2007) identify that for struggling readers, "motivation is largely neglected in instructional practice and interventions in comparison with the dominant emphasis on strategies and skill instruction" (pg. 2). If educators believe that motivation is the heart of the problem, then why is it neglected in classrooms? Why are teachers focusing on skills instruction rather than strategies to motivate students? Walking into a classroom, day after day, facing seats full of middle school readers who struggle with reading can be a challenge. A challenge that teachers are ready and willing to tackle, but the issue is so overwhelming, they often do not know where to start. However, most would agree that it begins with the student.

Defining Struggling Readers

It is important to define what a struggling reader looks like before addressing the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* Finding a single, comprehensive definition for "struggling reader" can be a challenge. The challenge exists in part because each student has a unique set of circumstances that contribute to their achievement. For most, the term struggling reader is equivalent to a low achiever; without that achievement these students lag behind. For some, defining struggling readers is not about achievement but rather a lack of ability. This lack of ability may be due to a concern in phonemic awareness, sight word recognition, fluency, or comprehension. While each of these concerns plays a part in what makes a struggling reader, it does not account for all factors. A student's choices or their behavior in the classroom contribute to this lack of achievement as well. Researchers encourage expanding that definition to acknowledge these students are disconnected from classroom literacy, and "are not engaged in the reading and writing done in school" (Moje, Young, Readence & Moore, 2000, pg. 405). Whether or not they are able to read at grade level is not the only question. It is also important to note if the student is purposefully detaching themselves from the text. This contributes to their lack of understanding and therefore the student is labeled "low achiever."

This disengagement can play out through a student's actions and attitudes. Struggling readers often handicap themselves in the classroom (Guthrie, 2003). In an effort to protect their image and self-esteem these students often procrastinate, avoid completing work, and do not participate voluntarily. Frequently, these struggling middle

school students do not put forth the effort that might make a difference. By doing this, they can blame poor grades on their behavioral choices rather than an academic struggle in an attempt to save face. This lack of effort is then a result of the student's choice not to work rather than just a lack of ability (Guthrie, 2003). The choice in their behavior gives them a feeling of control over something that overwhelms them.

Students put barriers up during middle school years, often to protect their image, disengaging from the learning happening in the classroom. This causes students to begin to fall behind due to lack of engagement and participation in the classroom. The more they fall behind, the more they need to defend and protect themselves. This creates more barriers and further disengagement. As a response to this, expectations might be lowered on the part of the school, parents, or the student themselves. A concern in my district is it is also possible that the student might be tracked in classes unnecessarily, placed in interventions they may not need, or may struggle to get out of. This scenario is all too common among intervention students is a barrier to which teachers are struggling to break down.

Even after years of support, in the intervention classroom or with a tutor, some of these students continue through their educational journey and are unable catch up to their peers (Miller, 2009). For students who do not catch up, the achievement expectation for them may have been held at a lower level. From my experience, with lower expectations, the student does not see the need to challenge themselves. Their lifestyle can become one of complacency and acceptance, instead of one rooted in challenge, self-confidence, and motivation.

Dependent readers. Struggling readers could also be considered "dependent readers" (Beers, 2003, pg. 16). If an independent reader were reading a text and began to struggle, they would have a variety of skills they have learned and practiced to use in order to make sense of the text. On the other hand, dependent readers rely on other sources. Frequently, they look to their peers for answers. Often times, when called on in class they may wait to answer in hopes that someone else jumps in. Their teacher becomes the main source for correct information, as they leave it to their teacher to interpret their brief response. These sources often end up doing the work for them rather than simply giving the student the knowledge to do it on their own (Beers, 2003).

With these various points in mind, according to Beers (2003), it is important to note, that "there is no single template for the struggling reader," (pg. 7). However, it is also important, for the purposes of this research, that a cohesive definition for "struggling reader" is outlined. Therefore, after looking at Beers, Guthrie, and Moje's work, along with my experience with this population of students I have come to a conclusion on how we could define a struggling reader. Moving forward, a struggling reader refers to a student who is disengaged from literacy due to a perceived or identified lower achievement level. This includes, but is not limited to, students with learning disabilities, English language learners, Title I or low-income students, and alternative learning students.

Understanding Motivation

With a definition of struggling reader in place, the question remains: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* In

order to answer this research question fully, the definition of motivation must be established as it applies to struggling readers. Motivation provides the prompting for a set of behaviors (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2007). It is the inner voice that drives a student to complete a task or take a particular action. Therefore, if a student is motivated, those behaviors they exhibit are directed, sustained, and energized (Santrock, 2008). In other words, the behaviors they demonstrate are done purposefully, over a longer period of time, and with enthusiasm. In the case of reading, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) propose that what is meant by motivation is "the values, beliefs, and behaviors surrounding reading for an individual" (pg. 16). While the reading skills are important, this focuses on the will and actions of the student, not just their skills or abilities. With motivation in reading, it is about how the student values the task, what they believe about the task and themselves (Santrock, 2008), and how they respond to the reading that exemplifies their motivation. For example, a student might pick up a book, read a few sentences while looking around the room and thinking about lunch. Clearly, this response to reading shows the student is not a motivated middle school reader. A motivated middle schooler will tune out distractions and focus on the book in their hands. If they get distracted, the student will be able to refocus themselves with little time lost. More specifically, while reading they are thinking about what they are reading and not just looking at the words on the page. Students are giving these words meaning, connecting to them, visualizing the scene, predicting what is next, asking questions, and making inferences (Beers, 2003). Skills that students learn in reading classrooms, like mine, are skills that will benefit them

in other classrooms. They are focused on the task at hand, are able to read for a sustained amount of time, and are purposeful in what they are doing.

The psychological perspectives on what it is that motivates students can be applied to these struggling middle school readers.

Psychological perspectives on motivation. While analyzing motivation there are several psychological perspectives that offer insight into how students are motivated. Digging deeper into how these different perspectives on motivation unfold, Santrock (2008) lays out four psychological perspectives of motivation:

- Humanistic,
- Cognitive,
- Social,
- Behavioral.

These perspectives offer insight on how students are motivated. Understanding the psychological aspects of motivation helps to answer the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

The humanistic perspective relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, of which most educators acquired knowledge during psychology education courses. Before a student can achieve at a high level in the classroom, their basic needs (physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization) must be met first. For example, if a student is hungry, they are not going to care about, or focus on, the number of pages they read. A student who doubts themselves and their abilities will not take the initiative to go back, read again, and apply strategies to an article they do not comprehend. Comprehending

and connecting to a book they just read is irrelevant when the student is concerned about their physical safety. If they have concerns about their own wellbeing, it is difficult for them to focus on reading, learning, and other classroom activities. As humans we fight to survive. These survival needs come first and classroom work second. Therefore, it is not in their best interest for students to worry about academics when their most basic needs are not being met.

The cognitive perspective states that students are intrinsically motivated. Rather than external forces, the focus is on student achievement in order to motivate them (Santrock, 2008). In this perspective, the expectancy theory is the "why" and "how" a student behaves in one way versus another. In addition to the expectancy theory, the goal-setting theory is also important in cognitive perspective. Which, as it sounds, discusses the importance of making goals (Sincero, n.d.). Here specific, challenging, and attainable goals are what motivate an individual. Using the SMART goal format is the most common practice for students writing goals.

SMART goals are created by the student and for the student, which gives a struggling reader the opportunity to feel in control of their learning. The cognitive perspective suggests that for some, this goal-setting motivates individuals. Creating SMART goals for the benefit of students is a strategy we have implemented at my school. The goal must be a specific goal that can be measured, for example end of term grades or a certain percentage on a test. In addition to measurement, it is important that the goal is attainable. How will the student reach the goal? Is it possible for them to do so? Setting a goal that is unrealistic for students can do more harm than good. If a student sets goals

that are unrealistic for them, and continue to not meet their goal, this affects their mindset and attitude toward the work they are doing. This can lead to lowered engagement and motivation to try the next time they set a goal. After it is determined that the goal is attainable, it must be relevant to the student. The goal should make sense for the student, and be realistic for them. Finally, a SMART goal must be timely or time-bound. There should always be a timeframe so progress can be tracked, the student can be held accountable to reach their goal. While SMART goals are important to goal-setting theory in the cognitive perspective, the social perspective focuses on interpersonal relationships which is also important because building relationships with students, and being a part of a community help them feel invested in the work.

According to the social perspective students are motivated by meaningful and positive relationships. A student's perception of their relationship with their teacher is "an important factor in student's motivation and achievement" (McCombs, 2001; McCombs & Quiat, 2001; Santrock, 2008, pg. 453). When teachers are supportive, and students have positive relationships with them, the students place more value on what they are doing in that classroom. If students value the work they are doing, it can then increase their motivation. Also, it is worth pointing out that students may not want to disappoint their teachers after creating a bond, and building a positive relationship. Students will often finish a book so their teacher is not disappointed. As a result, their relationship with you can represent an extrinsic motivation for the student. Knowing this, it is important to help students build their intrinsic motivation so they can become more independent and take ownership of their learning.

While this social perspective focuses on external forces, the behavioral perspective puts emphasis on rewards and punishments as the motivating factors for students. For example, when a person completes an assigned task, they are rewarded. If they do not complete the task, they do not receive the reward and may receive a negative response of some kind (Santrock, 2008). This may result in receiving a lower grade or negative feedback from a teacher. Frequently, incentives are given to motivate a student to action. These incentives are often organized into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation along with rewards. These specific motivators focus on both internal and external rewards, and the consequences, dependent on the outcome of expectation.

Extrinsic motivation. When a student chooses to complete a task in order to receive something such as a sticker or a lollipop, they are being extrinsically motivated. Of the four perspectives on motivation (the humanistic, cognitive, social and behavioral), the behavioral perspective, relies most heavily on extrinsic motivation. For example, a struggling reader might pick up a book and read it because of an upcoming quiz, an assignment, or because they want their teacher's approval. This extrinsic motivation, while often successful in the moment, is not always beneficial in the long term when the goal is for students to become lifelong readers (Santrock, 2008; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008).

Some may argue that extrinsic motivation has no place in the middle school classroom. Santrock (2008) offers that a balance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is needed because there is a balance of both in the real world. He believes this prepares students for a life in the workforce. For example, a worker has intrinsic

motivation because they are emotionally rewarded by their work. However, a person also needs to pay the bills, so there is the extrinsic motivation of a paycheck.

In a classroom this might look like a student reading a book before bed because they enjoy it but having to read a science textbook to study for a summative test. The balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is everywhere in our day to day lives. Adding to this argument is the belief that external rewards and motivations are not always detrimental to a student's intrinsic motivation and in fact, may enhance it or lead to it (Cameron 2001; Cameron & Pierce, 1996; Moley, Bandre & George, 2011). Santrock (2008) shares in Cameron's work when "tangible rewards… were offered contingent on task performance or given unexpectedly, intrinsic motivation was maintained" (pg. 458). Therefore, tangible extrinsic rewards are not always exclusively detrimental to motivation as one might believe. Extrinsic motivations can sometimes condition students or lead students to experience intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation. If a student were to read a book because they like the subject matter, they are intrinsically motivated to read it. They are completing something because it is interesting or enjoyable, not because they are obligated to do it. In both cognitive and humanistic perspectives on motivation, intrinsic motivation is the more effective form of motivation. Many in education argue that intrinsic motivation is the key to authentic engagement, and deeper learning (Guthrie, 2010; Mucherah & Yoder, 2008; Santrock, 2008). Therefore, if it is the key, then this is what educators need to focus on in their classrooms. This intrinsic motivation may prove to be more sustainable and reliable long term because extrinsic motivations are often temporary and can be taken away. It is

harder to lose the drive, passion, and force that is inside of you once it has been cultivated and tended to. The trouble is when a struggling middle school reader continues to struggle or experience failure, they lose confidence in themselves. This loss of confidence can lead to decreased intrinsic motivation during the middle school years (Guthrie, 1997).

As a result, teachers want to foster a love or appreciation of reading in their students and harness that balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, that does not exclusively involve the teacher themselves. The hope is that students will want to read, find enjoyment, and learn new things on their own. This hope relies on the intrinsic motivation of students which, for struggling middle school readers, may be non-existent. Most struggling readers will not become avid readers without support. This support includes their families, peers, and teachers. Therefore, their teachers need to form scaffolded support, so students do not rely too heavily on them and can independently find success (Padak & Potenza-Radis, 2010).

Research shows that as intrinsic motivations decrease, extrinsic motivations increase. As students transition from elementary to middle school, this is particularly the case (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). For example, a student becomes less interested in reading, and to get them to work harder, a teacher may be more likely to come up with extrinsic rewards. Sticker charts, candy rewards, or a little friendly competition may be used to entice students to complete a task. In the middle school reading intervention classroom, these extrinsic rewards can often be seen on display. While intrinsic motivation may be non-existent for struggling readers, starting with extrinsic motivation may help build

intrinsic motivation, and with it a self-driven desire to read, or at the very least, to try harder during class. In trying to answer: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* it is important to define what motivation is, and with that definition in place, it is important to identify what causes motivation to decline.

Causes of Motivational Decline

Guthrie and Alao (1997) found a multitude of research and studies that demonstrate a decline of motivation in literacy, along with motivation in other subjects, as students enter middle school. So, what causes this shift from elementary to middle school? Perhaps this decline occurs because students do not believe reading is important. They assume that because they are assigned reading in content area classes, or they read a paragraph here and there, then they do not need to read a book. It could also be the transition from elementary to middle school becomes more social than academic. For example, during adolescence, they face increased pressure from relationships and friendships. This transition and social aspect of middle school was recently discussed among colleagues in my school. To many middle schoolers, the desire to fit in can matter more than how they perform in class academically. This seems to be an increasing factor as students move from sixth to eighth grade. For example, in sixth grade, the students still have an elementary mentality and are learning how middle school works. However, by eighth grade, these students begin to develop a "top dog" mentality. As a result, peers can have greater influence on them as their minds might begin to think of the transition to high school. In addition to a change in peer relationships, students also have more

opportunities to participate in activities in middle school than they did in elementary school. For example, most middle schools also offer after school activities and sports. Many middle school students join these activities which can take time away from academics. Of the many reasons that exist as an explanation to this motivational decline, the students' struggle, intervention or pull out classes, and various school factors seem to play the largest role.

Students struggle. When students enter a middle school atmosphere they are responsible for their choices and actions more than ever before. As some of these students continue to struggle, they continue to encounter failure (Guthrie, 2010). Frequently, they become passive learners because they feel it is better to be disengaged then fail in their own eyes and in the eyes of their peers.

Additionally, struggling readers may sit in content area classes all day where texts are often above their reading level (Allington, 2013). Most of these texts assume a high level of prior knowledge, and with lack of vocabulary on the part of the students, and minimal confidence in themselves, it is no wonder that these students are not fully engaged with the text. The level of their self worth and motivation is negatively affected by this frustration as is the way they view themselves as a reader and writer (Alvermann, 2002). When they see themselves as not as capable as their peers, they disengage (Miller, 2003; O'Brien, 2007). These struggling readers lose intrinsic motivation more quickly than students who view themselves as a competent, capable readers (Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992). Because of this, it is even more critical that struggling readers find support in the classroom and build their intrinsic motivation. Providing students with

opportunities for success can help. In a reading intervention classroom, students are graded or held accountable at their reading level which allows the student to feel successful. The success they feel in that classroom can seep out into their other content area classes encouraging the student to participate and engage there as well. If they do not, these students will again fall into a pattern of disengagement and failure, from which it can be hard to break free.

Intervention or pull out classes. In middle schools there are many different ways that struggling, dependent readers are supported. In some schools, a reading specialist is called in to conduct temporary, pull out interventions. These intensive interventions are meant to support the students and accelerate their progress to reach grade level more quickly. Sometimes these reading specialists might have their own classrooms. In these intervention rooms, reading teachers or specialists work with a full class of struggling readers, who are often unmotivated and disengaged. Students in these rooms might be frustrated because they know they struggle with reading and are in a special class that is different than their friends. Therefore, it is the role of the teacher to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable.

Building relationships between the teacher and student and among the students themselves is vital in the intervention classroom. If a student is comfortable asking their teacher for help, they are less likely to sit in their desk stuck on a question. The time they might spend disengaged because of difficult material could be redirected into a positive experience, if their is a positive relationship. By having a supportive relationship and rapport with their teacher, the student feels more comfortable in taking a chance by

asking a question. Providing opportunities for students to successfully interact with their teachers along with their peers allows them to build relationships that are safe (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2007). Additionally, these safe peer relationships can also be encouraging outside of the intervention classrooms, because the relationships formed in their reading classroom can build a support system for them when they leave your class.

Differences in reading ability or performance can become apparent to other students, as struggling readers are singled out and placed in a classroom together. They are pulled from other classes, like a core science, social studies or language arts class, while other struggling students are pulled from art, family and consumer science, or technology education classrooms. For students who are cognitively aware of why they are missing these classes, they may become more frustrated being seen as different than the norm. This frustration can play out in their attitudes towards the material, or their interactions with the teacher which could become strained or even combative. This strained relationship can negatively impact the classroom environment, causing students to disengage.

School factors. The transition from elementary to middle school can be challenging for many students. Typically, middle schools have a larger population than an elementary school. This change in population can result in larger class sizes and less one on one time for students with their teacher. Previously students had one teacher they saw the majority of their day, to now seeing multiple teachers each day. Building multiple relationships with adults can be difficult for students especially when teachers' approaches to teaching, personalities, expectations and classroom routines can vary

widely. I have had students comment on the teachers they connect with and why, and often the teacher's style is a factor. It is often discussed with colleagues how in some of our classes teachers may be more formal while in others teachers may value building relationships and in turn, are more open, relaxed, and informal with their students. Discipline and expectations look different in each class they visit which can cause students who struggle with transitioning to be labeled as "troubled," "intentional non-learners," even students with a "lower potential." These labels used exist because students are putting up their defenses to protect themselves against the possibility of rejection and failure, and so they are labeled as a struggling student. As a colleague said to me, "many of our students believe it is better to not try than to try, fail, and have your classmates see it all" (May 16, 2016).

When considering other school factors, middle schoolers are transitioning into an environment increasingly focused on performance and grades, rather than the process. Changes in grading also occur, where students are responsible for tracking their progress when before it was parents and teachers. With a letter grade and GPA dependent more and more on the end result, versus the process of getting there, struggling students find middle school to be a daunting change (Daniels, 2005). While some students may not seem to care about their grades, others find these to be the only measurement of their ability and find them motivating. In sixth grade, students enter middle school with little concept of how grades work which could easily contribute to a student's disengagement.

Common Core State Standards now exist in forty-two states (Ujifusa, 2015). As standards become a bigger focus in the classroom, the demands on the individual student

increases. As a result, the reading experience can change quickly for students as they enter middle school and leave elementary. According to Guthrie & Davis (2003),

> These changes tend to fall along six dimensions: (1) detachment of reading instruction from content, (2) formidable texts and textbook structures, (3) formal, non-personal response expectations, (4) diminished student choice, (5) isolation of students from teachers, and (6) minimal linkage of real-world interaction with the reading. (pg. 66)

Of these reading experience changes that students face, choice and student-teacher relationship also emerged as large factors in student motivation.

Influences on Motivation

There many things that influence motivation, so what motivates someone to read? Cambria and Guthrie (2010) contend that, it is students' interest, dedication, and confidence. While these are three distinct areas, they are also synergistic; when one increases, it in turn positively affects the other two. For example, when interest, dedication, and confidence all increase in a reader, so does their performance. After defining motivation, we can further discover and examine how it affects other aspects of our students.

Think of motivation as a circular chain of links: student choice, motivation, relationship, and engagement. Each link in the chain is important and serves its purpose. Alone these links are not enough to hold together a reader as each link makes them stronger. Furthermore, Moley, Bandre and George (2011) reflect on Guthrie and Davis' work noting that "choice affects motivation, and motivation, when combined with

cognitive competence and social interaction, leads to engagement" (pg 251). Looking at the ideas presented here there is evidence that even a simple choice can make a difference in the classroom.

Choice. It should not come as a surprise that as children grow up, they want to be more independent, and they want to make their own decisions (Guthrie, 1997). As a result, the student is the biggest stakeholder in their own education, so it is important to consider and involve them in the learning process. So, how much control should students be given? What does student choice look like in a classroom? Taking a deeper look to answer these questions affords teachers the opportunity for students to become invested in their learning.

Self selected reading. The most obvious choice we can give to students is that the books or material they would like to read. While some may argue it is important for students to read grade level texts, or only at their ability level, some find success in allowing students to choose a book with certain guidelines. Moley et al. (2011) share the story of Peter, a middle school student who selected to read *The Color Purple* (Walker, 1982) based on extrinsic motivation. This book was on a list provided by the teacher and fulfilled a particular reading requirement, in this case counting as three of the ten books he was assigned to read. Though his choices were limited by the teacher, in the end, it was still Peter's choice to make. In regards to Peter's reading motivation and the degree to which he was engaged in the text, having choices were important for him (Moley, 2011). By allowing students to decide what book they will read independently, they are being given ownership and buy-in. This in turn helps engage the student in the text.

Stairs and Burgos (2010) offer, “Literacy educators should keep independent, self-selected reading at the center” (pg. 41). This self-selected reading is important for all struggling readers, and if reading time is something they do more often in an intervention classroom, letting them select the text is critically important.

Time spent at the beginning of the school year discussing various genres can introduce students to books they would otherwise not try (Miller, 2010). The goal in letting students pick their own books is the belief that by choosing the book title they read, they will be more likely to finish the book and reflect on it. She also shares that by investing in the time to select a story, the student may find value in seeing the task to the end. The trouble is, students often grab a book off the shelf because the cover is cool, never looking to see if the length is suitable, the genre is one that appeals to the them or the reading level is appropriate. Therefore, preparing students to self-select a book becomes an important job for the reading teacher. They should be talking to students about the importance of selecting “just right” books or books at their level, rather than challenging books that would discourage them. When students read at the appropriate level, they are able to find success, while still growing as a reader. Taking time to prepare students in selecting books appropriately gives the teacher comfort in allowing students to choose their own independent reading books. Affording a very simple opportunity for student choice can make a difference for students. Miller (2010) notes, “No single practice inspires my students to read as much as the opportunity to choose their own books” (pg 32). If that book is one they selected, they may feel a sense of

ownership and accomplishment. By having a success in finishing a book they picked themselves it will encourage the student to select another story and repeat the process.

Handing over the classroom reins completely to students does not seem logical and is not what is being suggested. What is being suggested are a series of small choices. Casey (2007) points out, "as the research predicts, students are engaged because they have the opportunity to make choices about their reading, and their participation while sharing responsibility for learning with their peers and their teachers" (as cited in Casey, 2007; Guthrie, 2004; McKool, 2007). In middle school, classrooms sometimes become less student-centered and become more teacher-directed or teacher-led (Guthrie, 2003). Therefore, when teachers have multiple sections a day, with large numbers of students, it is understandable that a teacher would want greater control and direction over what takes place within their classroom walls. As a result, we can allow our students to invest in our classrooms, and thus in themselves, by offering the smallest of choices (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Therefore, it is important to look at what sort of choices can make student investment possible.

Small choices. Allowing students to choose which question they will answer about a story, which character they will reflect on, choosing their own question starter, or vocabulary words from a text are all examples of small choices. In addition, something as insignificant as choosing a bookmark or choosing where to sit while they read can also make students feel more autonomous. While they may seem insignificant, these little choices add up to a bigger sense of investment for students (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). By making these small choices, middle schoolers who seek autonomy are able to claim a

small amount in an environment that does not always lend itself to autonomy. In addition, these choices allow for more opportunities for discussion.

Padak and Potenza-Radis (2010) offer a variety of ideas to motivate struggling readers using small choices. Students can share with peers why they chose a particular character or the vocabulary word and it's definition. They can talk with their teacher what the book is about, how they relate to the characters, what they would do differently if they were in the story, or what they think the theme of the book is. In some classrooms where fluency is practiced, this choice may be when a student selects who they will read a page to. Then in turn, their listener chooses what question to ask the reader. This allows students to not only invest in themselves but offers the opportunity to teach and invest in one of their classmates, providing another opportunity to build relationships and community.

Reading teachers would agree that when a student finds a book they enjoy, one they take home, talk about, and almost begin to live and breathe with the characters in the story, that is one of the best things we can hope for (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010). Therefore, helping a student own their reading can prove to be a challenge but one that supports their ability to choose what they want to read.

Relationships. It is important for students to build relationships with each other and with the teacher in order to build their confidence. A quote that is attributed to President Theodore Roosevelt says, "People don't care how much you know, unless they know how much you care," and in the intervention classroom this is especially true. Every year in countless classrooms, teachers know the importance of taking time to build

relationships with their students, they can see the impact. This idea becomes even more evident for classes with struggling students (Cambria, 2010). Many start each year having students get to know each other and getting to know the teacher. Before struggling students can focus on, and work towards, success in school they need to make connections and build relationships with their teachers (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes love/belonging and safety or a sense of relationship and security. These essential needs for all humans, are demonstrated clearly in the classroom. When a teacher can convince their student they care about them and want them to learn and be successful, a student's perception of themselves as a reader can increase (Alvermann, 2002). Once this self-perception begins to change, the student can begin to challenge themselves and may become more motivated. These strong, authentic relationships between a teacher and their students can also help the teacher create a greater sense of community. The larger sense of community can help with increasing student effort and motivation (Daniels, 2005). Intervention classrooms that create this community, a welcoming supportive environment, within the reading classroom, is exactly what a struggling student needs the most (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Having a classroom of students, who are all struggling, unsure, disengaged, might be hard for a teacher to overcome. However, this groups of students can band together and see they are not alone. They can encourage and support one another increasing the motivation of the whole.

For struggling readers in an intervention classroom, building relationships with the teacher and each other is important. Feeling safe in that community can make a

difference (Casey, 2008). For example, in Casey's research, Sharon is a teacher who worked with students who struggled. Some of these students would come after school to simply sit and read, then share about their books. The teacher shared that, "for the first time I saw kids who couldn't or didn't read, reading" (Casey, 2008, pg 284). This teacher not only built a relationship with students but also created a safe learning environment for these kids. They felt comfortable coming in after school to work with their peers. Taking time to work with students during class and after school allows more opportunities to build success in our students and more opportunities to expose them to reading. For a teacher to have success in creating a safe and productive learning environment, classroom management is important. From experience in my own classroom to conversations with colleagues, we often reflect on how we manage our classrooms can impact the climate, and relationships within our rooms.

Opportunities for success. A student can be engaged one day and disengaged the next. The change can even happen between class periods (Guthrie, 1997). This ebb and flow can create a challenge for middle school teachers. However, the goal remains the same: to identify ways to motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom setting. If teachers can motivate them in the reading intervention classroom, perhaps this success they feel will encourage them to be engaged in other classes as well. To engage them in class, it is important that they be given the opportunity to succeed (Cambria, 2010). When students are able to find, even the smallest of success in a classroom, they begin to change their perceptions of themselves. As these perceptions

change, they gain confidence in what they are doing in the intervention classroom. This confidence can then, in turn, positively impact their work in other classes.

Time to read. It is important that, while student opportunity for choice is happening, students are not just given a few minutes to read (Stairs and Burgos, 2010). Finding an extra minute or two is not enough, but rather sustained periods of reading time are encouraged. The biggest thing struggling readers require is frequent reading opportunities, where interaction and engagement with the text is expected and higher-level thinking is encouraged (Padak & Polenza, 2010). Teachers need to support their students and provide these opportunities. Why is dedicating reading time in a safe environment important? How does it motivate students? Students who struggle with reading actually spend less time reading compared to good readers (Allington, 2013).

Offering opportunities to read gives students more opportunities for success. If we want students to succeed, we need to set them up for that success. They need readable texts, something that is not too hard and not too easy, like Goldilocks' porridge (Cambria, 2010). If a text is too hard, students cannot understand and ultimately give up. If a text is too easy it does not provide them with the opportunity to dig deeper. Texts that students can connect with, understand, and interact with are important. It is also equally important to remember what good teaching looks like.

Rationale

Jennifer Serravallo reminds teachers that meeting our students, in this case struggling readers, where they are, building relationships with them, and providing the right amount of educational support and challenge are all important aspects of good

teaching (2015). My goal is to combine this with what reading teacher Donalyn Miller (2012) believes, "By dedicating reading time, recommending books, exposing students to a variety of texts and authors, and validating their reading choices, students' interest and motivation to read increase" (pg. 92).

After all this research: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* When trying to find the answer to this question, I looked again to Cambria and Guthrie. With all of the research out there they say, "There is no formula or off-the-shelf program for motivating students" (2010, pg. 27). What I believe it comes down to is understanding these four central concepts:

1) a synergistic chain to motivation exists,
2) student choice,
3) building relationships,
4) sustained student reading.

Summary

There are many components to answering the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* In this literature review, I started by defining what is meant by a struggling reader. A struggling reader refers to a student who is disengaged from literacy due to a perceived or identified achievement level that is lower than their peers.

In reading, motivation refers to not only the behavior around reading, but also the values and beliefs the students have about reading and literacy. A student's opinions on their abilities, the purpose of reading and its usefulness all affect that student's

motivation. There are also several psychological perspectives on motivation that aid in discovering how to motivate struggling readers, each offering a different take on what exactly motivates students. These factors include: hierarchy of needs, relationship, intrinsic motivation and the idea of rewards and punishments.

It can be challenging to stave off the motivational decline that happens for middle school students. This decline can be caused by the academic struggle students face in the classroom, the transition from elementary to middle school, and the changes in teachers and grading systems. Students being placed in inappropriate intervention or pull out classrooms can also cause decline.

To summarize, there are several influences on motivation that are important to consider. These include student choice, relationships, and opportunities for success. As adolescents desire increased autonomy, giving students the opportunity to select their own reading materials and make small choices in the classroom can increase motivation. Building strong relationships between the teacher and student and within the classroom can also allow for more opportunities for students to be motivated, and ultimately successful.

Next, in Chapter Three, I will share considerations that must be taken when teachers try to motivate struggling readers in an intervention classroom. Sharing the setting of my district and classroom will offer insight into the lens with which the curriculum was created. I will also discuss the rationale behind creating curriculum and the process I used to develop it. This curriculum will help in answering the question:

How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom? Finally, I will share an outline of the essential components of my curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

In the previous chapter I shared research surrounding the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* I started by defining a struggling reader as a student who is disengaged from literacy due to a perceived or identified achievement level that is lower than their peers. Then I presented the different perspectives on motivation in order to understand how student motivation manifest or decline. As students transition to middle school, a motivational decline can begin to occur. This decline is often more intense for struggling readers. Influences on motivation include student choice, relationships, opportunities for success, and time to read. For the most part, middle schoolers want autonomy, and giving students opportunities to make choices for themselves can also increase motivation.

In Chapter Three I will discuss what needs to be considered when trying to motivate students within the classroom. Sharing the setting of my district and classroom offer insight into the lens with which the curriculum was created. Next, is the rationale for my choices in curriculum and the process I used to create it. This curriculum will help in answering the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* I will share an outline of the components for the curriculum I created. By keeping in mind the students that would be using this curriculum I moved forward to Chapter Four.

In addition, I will discuss the reasoning behind creating a resource guide and what steps were taken in the development of the curriculum. I will then share an overview of the characteristics of the resource guide to provide an understanding of format. How I plan to implement the curriculum and what makes it effective for students will also be discussed.

Setting

This capstone involves the development of resources, however it is still important to know my background to understand the precipice for this work. Currently, I teach in a first-tier metropolitan suburban school district serving approximately 85,000 residents. The school district includes two early childhood schools, ten elementary schools, three middle schools, two high schools, an alternative learning high school, and a career and college academy.

School demographics. The middle school I work in has a school population which has declined since its highest point in 2013. Since 2013 the enrollment numbers had fallen from 819 to 640 students in 2015-2016. During the 2016-2017 school year enrollment rose to 697 students.

According to the school district data profile in 2015-2016, the ethnic diversity in my building was 72%: 37% Hispanic, 28% Caucasian, 25% Black, 9% Asian and 2% American Indian. Here 22% of the students had limited English proficiency, 10% of the students qualified for special education services while 71% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch. Like many other metropolitan districts, the overall ethnic diversity

numbers at this school seem to have been on the rise since their lowest numbers in 2003-2004 when the diversity was at 40%.

Classroom demographics. This is my sixth year teaching in a middle school serving grades six through eight. Currently, I teach in a sixth grade reading intervention classroom. As was previously mentioned in Chapter One, I teach two different programs, Read 180 and System 44. Both of these are Houghton Mifflin Harcourt reading support programs are implemented as part of a regular reading class. I teach between 35 and 50 students every year. In the 2016-2017 school years I taught 38 students.

Every year, as an intervention reading teacher, I am faced with students who do not want or like to read. Therefore, my job is to take these students who are typically reading at two or more grade levels behind where they should be and bring them closer to their grade level. It is important these students become motivated readers considering the vast achievement gap they face. Taking students who are this far behind is a challenge. Perhaps the biggest challenge is the students themselves because the issues they face do not stop at my classroom door. I put time and energy into trying to build relationships with each of my students every year to overcome this challenge. For example, I talk to them in the hallways, share stories about my life, and ask about theirs. Sometimes taking a minute to talk to a student about things unrelated to what we are doing in class, can help me support students later. It is important to me to facilitate a change in my students' motivation. To do this I have conducted extensive research and discovered several key factors which will be addressed by the resources I have created.

The research findings from Chapter Two show motivation is not an isolated concept. In fact, student choice, relationships, sustained reading time, and providing opportunities for success are all important components for motivation. These ideas are the cornerstone for the resources I have created, and the work I do with my students moving forward. The next step is to take these findings, along with my personal question: *"How can teachers motivate struggling readers in an intervention classroom?"* and discover, consolidate, and create a research based resource guide for teachers.

Rationale

As someone who loved to read growing up, found success in school, and continues to enjoy learning new things- I want to help my students feel this same way. Though they may not all love to read, I hope to inspire them to find at least one book they enjoy. To do this, I know that a large factor is my students' motivation. As a reading intervention teacher, I also know it can be a challenge. As a result, I have cultivated and refined resources that will allow myself, and other teachers like me, to motivate their struggling middle school readers.

Therefore, the purpose of this capstone is to create a resource guide for reading intervention teachers who seek to motivate the struggling readers within their classroom. Through cultivating these resources, my goal is to increase the motivation of the students in my sixth grade reading intervention classroom. With the amount of research being done, I feel that creating curriculum is the best route that will be practical and the most beneficial for me at this time.

Curriculum Development Process

When developing curriculum, I started with a purpose, so the direction I am headed in is clear. I applied the research I did for the literature review to see how my work was grounded. First of all, there needed to be a foundation or framework for the curriculum. After defining the purpose, and conducting research, I collected materials, created a scope and sequence, and then correlated resources to it.

Using the work of John Guthrie, Donna Alvermann, and other literacy educational leaders, the work surrounding the project is grounded in research. Resources from educators like Jennifer Serravallo, Donalyn Miller, Kylene Beers, and my colleagues will provide practical, applicable resources that will make a difference in motivating students in reading intervention classrooms. In addition, collaborative conversations with colleagues will also provide more expertise and experience in motivating students.

When in the classroom working with struggling readers it can be a daunting task to get them motivated. There is usually a district a curriculum to follow and standards that needs to be covered. However, teachers still must to find ways to meet the needs of the students that are in their classrooms. Many consider motivation to be the most important part of reading (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010) and as such, is one of the needs that I must address. With this importance in mind, I set forth to create something that would help me meet the needs of my students.

Before I began to create curriculum, I had to decide on what format would be most beneficial to my teaching. I knew that a separate curriculum was not something that I could implement in my classroom. With a prescribed program to follow there was not

room for large amounts of additional curriculum to be implemented with intentionality and follow through. Reflecting on my professional development and what I have found to be useful, I looked to a book that I recently read. Jennifer Serravallo's *The Reading Strategies Book,* presents strategies in a straightforward and easy to implement manner. Using her book as inspiration, I decided to move forward with a handbook model for my curriculum development project. The purpose of the handbook is to include quick, easy, and effective tools that address various components of motivation.

As was previously mentioned, through the literature review, four central concepts surround motivating struggling middle school readers:

1) a synergistic chain to motivation exists,
2) student choice,
3) building relationships,
4) and sustained student reading.

I wanted to use these concepts as the foundation for the handbook, finding ways that I could address each concept within my classroom. As I worked to compile and create resources that would make up the handbook it became increasingly difficult to stay focused on the four concepts. I was creating, and discovering an overabundance of material I thought could be included in the handbook because they were useful tools. The struggle to keep each and every strategy in the handbook practical, easily adaptable, and effective was a limitation that I had not fully anticipated and prepared for. Once I was able to recognize this difficulty I was able to move forward in culling the resources I had.

Characteristics of the Handbook

For this project I compiled a handbook for reading intervention teachers. The project is organized by themes, so that a teacher needing to work on student motivation could easily identify those resources. Resources in this project will include a motivation survey and student attitude survey to administer to students and relationship building materials to aid teachers in building meaningful bonds with students. The lessons will assist in the gradual release for students so they are able to make choices to take ownership of their learning.

The resource guide is divided into three main parts: student choice, building relationships and sustained student reading. This allows the teacher to quickly find a resource that meets their needs, while adhering to the central concepts I wanted to focus on.

Each resource is on its own page which includes a brief overview of what the strategy is and information on when it can be useful. Implementation directions, ideas or examples provide a detailed description of using the strategy. Highlights from my classroom, or that of colleagues, offer insight into the practical application and success of the strategy. When applicable, copies or examples of handouts are included to ease in the use of the strategy by other educators. The hope is that a teacher can quickly pull a strategy and implement it without a lot of extra preparation time. On occasion, specific tips are shared that describe discoveries I made while implementing the strategy in my classroom.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I shared the purpose of this capstone. As a reading intervention teacher for the last five years, my experience in a suburban, highly diverse district has brought me to the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* My goal is to create a compilation of instructional resources that help to answer that question. These resources can be implemented comprehensively or individually as a teacher sees fit in order to motivate struggling readers.

Chapter Four contains my curriculum. The result of my literature review, research and personal experience this curriculum serves as a handbook for instructional strategies that can be implemented in any classroom. Chapter Five will reflect on my experiences as a reading teacher, and my work in addressing my research question. I will acknowledge limitations of my capstone project as well as discuss possible avenues for continued discovery.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

In regards to my question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* I reflected on whether or not the curriculum I created answered the question. Just as Kylene Beers reiterates "There is no single template for the struggling reader," (2003, p.7), there is no single answer or solution to motivating struggling readers. With all this in mind, I do believe the curriculum presented here gives an answer. The strategies offer a variety of ways to address various aspects of motivation: student choice, building relationships and sustained silent reading. Implementing different strategies from the curriculum will help address these concepts. In turn, by addressing these three components, the concept of a motivational chain is also addressed. All of the strategies provided are synergistic and work together to address the concern of motivation.

The Curriculum

Each strategy in my curriculum starts under a large heading: Student Choice, Building Relationships and Sustained Silent Reading. Subcategories follow along with the title of the strategy. To ensure the strategies were useful for teachers a brief description of the strategy, followed by directions for implementation start each page. Following are suggestions on when it is useful, highlights from implementation of the strategy, and occasionally specific tips from my implementation are included.

Student Choice

Supporting Their Choices

Affirming Your Students' Choice

The Strategy: *Affirming Your Students* is exactly what it sounds like. When you begin to allow students to make choices in the classroom it is important to support and affirm them.

In regards to Independent Reading:

- "Don't give them the choice not to read. Ask students what book they will be reading today." - Donalyn Miller
- If a student has chosen a book to read, support that choice. If you wish to challenge them, then do so in an affirming way.
    - When your student finishes a book, congratulate them. You can always encourage them to try a different genre, format or difficulty level.

When It's Useful: For struggling readers it is important that they can have ownership over their reading. Affirming students is ALWAYS useful. It not only supports them in their decision making, but it helps build a relationship between teacher and student.

Highlights: I had a student who only wanted to read graphic novels. When we went to the media center after his fifth graphic novel, I asked if I could show him a few books that I thought he might like. I selected texts that were non-traditional in that they still had a few pictures in them. He ended up reading two of the books we talked about that day.

adapted from Miller (2012)

Student Choice

Choosing Books

Speed Dating

The Strategy: *Speed Dating* allows students to quickly interact with a variety of texts.

Implementation:

1. Each student receives a speed dating handout and a random book.
2. Set a timer for 2-4 minutes on the board.
3. When the timer starts students will look at the following:
    a. The title of the book.
    b. The cover.
    c. The back of the book (or book description).
    d. The first few pages.
4. When time is up the students rate the book on the handout and pass the book to their neighbor.
5. Repeat several times.

When It's Useful: *Speed Dating* gives students exposure to a variety of books they might not otherwise try. By putting these books in student's hands, you are letting them discover what interests them which will help them choose their independent reading books. You can also repeat this later in the year to help students discover new genres they wouldn't otherwise try.

Highlights: At the beginning of the year students in my classroom are asked to read from a specific set of books. Using Speed Dating exposes them to unfamiliar titles and helps get books into their hands quickly at the start of the year.

adapted from Marshall Memo (February 8, 2016)

Student Choice

Choosing Books

Give Me Three

The Strategy: When students are looking to find a book and they ask you for a recommendation it can be hard to come up with a title that they will enjoy.

Implementation:

1. A student asks their teacher for a book recommendation.
2. You say to your student, "Give Me Three" things that you want to read about.
    a. They might share they prefer male or female main characters, past or present settings, genres they enjoy, topics like friendship, sports or struggles. You can take their preferences to try to find a book.
        i. For example, a student says they prefer female characters, travel and relationships.
            1. You might recommend: *13 Little Blue Envelopes* by Maureen Johnson, *The Geography of You and Me* by Jennifer E. Smith, and *Heist Society* by Ally Carter.
        ii. A student shares they like animals, present day stories, and characters their age.
            1. You might recommend *Wild Born* by Brandon Mull, *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate, *Showoff* by Gordon Korman, and *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker to the student.
3. Take the topics they told you and come up with at least three book titles. These should relate to the topics, as closely as you can, and be books that you believe they will enjoy.

4. Share with the student at least three titles and give them the freedom to choose one, or none of the books you suggested.

When It's Useful: When students wander the media center, or spend too much time in the classroom library, sometimes they just need some idea of where to focus their search.

Highlights: I had a student wander the media center endlessly, and could not find a book. I had shared the week before several of my favorite stories and none sounded interesting to her. That's when I asked her to give me three things she might want to read about. Ten minutes later, she walked out of the media center with a novel in hand. That book was the first one she finished all year.

Tip: *Give Me Three works well if you know books, and you know your students. It's hard to recommend a book to a student when you don't know what level of text is right for them, what genres they enjoy, and what books might engage them. If you are not sure what to recommend, search for books with your student so they learn how they can find books on their own.*

Student Choice

Choosing Books

Book Talks

The Strategy: *Book Talks* are given to encourage students to read a particular book. Choosing a book can be hard, there are millions of books in print, so giving book talks to your students gives them suggestions on what they might find interesting.

Implementation:

There are several essentials for book talks. Below are some essentials, followed by a brief description for each.

1. *Hold the book:* Having a physical copy of the book allows students to look at the pages, cover, and can read additional passages if they would like.
2. *Know the book:* It is best if you have read the book before you share about it. If you haven't read it, make sure to share why you think it's worth sharing with them. When talking about it you want to briefly "summarize its theme, central conflict or other details in a minute or so" (Kittle, 2013). Always try to connect the book to others in your library. Sharing what type of reader would like this book.
3. *Read a short passage:* Find a part of the story that has action, strong voice, or the text itself is beautiful. Before you read the passage share with students ask them to think about whether or not they like the writing style, or the story line. While this part can be skipped due to time constraints, it is always better for students to hear a part of the text.
4. *Keep records:* Keep track of which books you talk to your class about, not only for yourself, but for your students. Consider having a poster with the title and

adapted from "Book Love," Kittle (2013)

author's name, or notecards in your library so students can look back when trying to choose a book to read.

5. *Accept help:* Use other adults to give talks to your classroom! Consider asking your administrators, library specialist, other teachers or staff members to come in to your class for a brief book talk. You can also look to the internet to find book talks from authors or publishers which can help provide a variety of books for your students to hear about.

6. *Remember how important you are:* You are a huge influence on your students. Share your passion, it's contagious.

When It's Useful: *Book Talks* are especially helpful as you begin your school year when you are helping students get into the habit of reading and helping them select books. They are also something that can, and should, be done regularly in your classroom.

Highlights: At my school, the reading teachers collaborated on book talk presentations using Google Slides. Each page has a title, author, genre, link to a trailer if there is one, and a summary. The link to the slideshows can be provided to students when they are searching for a new book.

Tip: *It can be hard to keep up with the many books that are published each year and are available for students to read. Consider partnering with a colleague to create digital book talks that you can share with your students, or have conversations about books they recommend to their students.*

adapted from "Book Love," Kittle (2013)

Student Choice

Choosing Books

Book Drawings

The Strategy: *Book Drawing* is a way to inspire interest in a new book in your library by holding a drawing for who reads it first.

Implementation:

1. When you get new books in your library, share a bit about them with your students.
2. If a student chooses to read the book, they should put their name on a slip of paper and put it in a basket with that book title on it.
3. Then hold a drawing to see which student will read the book first.

When It's Useful: If you have added new titles to your library, or had a book talk that sparked interest in many students, then holding a book drawing can facilitate the excitement surrounding the titles. It is also an easy, and fair way, to ensure all class sections have an equal chance to check out new books from your library.

Highlights: When I added a collection of new titles to my classroom library I held a large book drawing. Students clamored to be the first to read "The Long Haul" by Jeff Kinney, "El Deafo" by Cece Bell, "Crossover" by Kwame Alexander and others. As soon as the books were handed out students were asking to be the next in line.

adapted from Miller (2014)

Student Choice

Responding to Reading

Reader's Response

The Strategy: It is common to have students react to reading. Consider using *Reader's Responses* to give your students choice in the classroom. The responses can vary based on purpose, format or medium.

Implementation:

1. Create and compile *Reader's Response* options that you will give your students during the year.
2. Select the option you will teach your students first and the order in which you will release the options to your students.
3. During the first weeks of school model using the *Reader's Responses.*
4. Establish ground rules for student choice in responses.
5. Gradually release other options for students.

When It's Useful: *Reader's Responses* can help teach students to reflect on their reading, and gives you a window into the students' thinking and understanding of the book.

Highlights: In previous years, I have given my students five reading response prompts they can choose from. They are taught how to answer them, and given guidelines. I require students to not use the same prompt twice in a row. They've completed these on a handout, or they write them in a notebook kept in the classroom.

Tip: *Start the year with only one form of Reader's Responses. As the year goes on offer students more choices. This allows them to understand the expectation and format that you use before having the opportunity to make their own choices.*

adapted from Miller (2009)

Student Choice

Ownership in Their Learning

Ketchups and Pickles

The Strategy: Many times in the classroom, some students have finished all required work, or work that is due, while others need more time. That is where *Ketchups and Pickles* can help you keep your classroom under control, but offer your students choices.

Implementation:

1. Make a list of students that still have a requirement to fulfill and those who do not.
    a. For example, students should have three assignments turned in during the week.
2. Put the lists on the board under two columns: "Ketchups" for students who need to catch up because the requirement is not yet met, and "Pickles" for students who get to pick what they will work on that day.
3. For "Pickles" it is important to set parameters for what their options are.

When It's Useful: *Ketchup and Pickles* is particularly helpful toward the end of a grading period, before a big break, or after a series of larger assignments have been turned in.

Highlights: In my classroom, "Pickles" typically have a list of three to four options that they can choose from. This gives them ownership over what they are doing, and gives them an opportunity to invest in their learning. In addition, *Ketchup and Pickles*, allows me to conference with students who are falling behind.

adapted from Teach-A-Roo (retrieved 2016)

Student Choice

Ownership in Their Learning

Must Do, May Do

The Strategy: *Must Do, May Do* is a strategy that allows students to make choices about the work they do in the classroom with some guidelines from their teacher. "Must Do" tells them what you expect all of them to complete. When they've done that, the "May Do" gives them several options of what they can do next.

Implementation:

1. Make a list of the assignments your students must complete during the class period.
2. Next, make a list of options they could do when they finish.
    a. For example, students "May Do" independent reading time, reader's responses, skills work, etc.
3. Post on the board, and introduce their options so they are clear on expectations.

When It's Useful: *Must Do, May Do* is especially useful during work time when students may be finishing assignments at different times. It helps eliminate the dozens of, "I'm done, now what" questions you get from students. With students making selections of what they want to do, you are then free to assist other students.

Highlights: A colleague said, "when I need my students to be proactive in what they are doing so that I can conference 1:1, *Must Do, May Do*, is one of the strategies I often use. As the teacher, I am able to set the agenda, but students can choose what to do when they've completed the expected work."

adapted from Jodi at Clutter-Free Classroom (2010)

Student Choice

Ownership in Their Learning

Building Your Own Project

The Strategy: *Building Your Own Project* is a fun way for students to choose how they will demonstrate what they've learned in class. Select options for your students to complete that meet your needs for assessment. If you can, find ways to incorporate different styles of learning and give students the opportunity to showcase what your students can do. For example students could write a book, illustrate a mural, rewrite song lyrics, film a video, etc.

When It's Useful: At the end of a unit when you need to assess what your students have learned, consider giving them the opportunity to choose the format of their assessment.

Highlights: I've used this method at the end of a novel unit for the book Holes by Louis Sachar. My students had a great time choosing how they wanted to do to demonstrate their understanding.

Tip: *Create rubrics so students know what is expected for each option.*

adapted from Kayla Ballmer (2012)

Holes: Final Project

As we finish reading Holes by Louis Sachar it is time to take what you have read, what you have learned, and what you know and put them together in a final project. This project consists of several parts and is part of your SUMMATIVE grade for this trimester.

For some sections of the project you will get to choose which of the options you complete. Take a careful look below to see what you need to accomplish before the end of the trimester.

Characters: **Worth 30 points.**

1. Choose a character from the novel and create a Facebook Profile page for them.
   AND **Choose one of the following:**
2. Interview a character from the novel. Make up interview questions and answers. Write an article titled "My interview with...". Please have a minimum of 5 questions/answers.
3. Imagine that you are a character in the novel. Write a journal entry expressing his or her thoughts about an experience from the novel. The journal entry should be at least 5 sentences long.
4. Imagine that you are one of the secondary characters in the novel. Design and compose a postcard to a friend, telling them about an event that happened in the novel. Write it from that character's Point-of-View. Illustrate the front of the postcard with the scene /setting.

Setting: **Worth 15 points.**

Choose one of the following:

1. Create a map depicting where the action took place in the novel. Put labels on the map to indicate what happened at each location (have a key!).
2. Create a series of postcards depicting Green Lake at different points in the novel.
   A. 110 years ago (Ch. 23)
   B. 20 years after that (Ch. 28)
   C. Present Day (Camp Green Lake)
   D. What it will look like 20 years from now (pg. 225, and Ch. 50)

Plot: **Worth 20 points.**

Choose one of the following:

1. Complete a "Somebody Wanted But So Then" form for Stanley, Kate, The Warden and your choice of a fourth character.
2. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter. Write a newspaper article based on a climactic event in the story. Make sure to answer the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? The article should be at least 8 sentences in length.

Vocabulary: **Worth 15 points.**

1. Look at your vocabulary list from the book. Choose 6 words that were new to you. Create a mini-book with vocabulary words, part of speech, definitions and sentences using those words. At least 4 of the words should have illustrations. The words must be in alphabetical order, like a mini-dictionary.

adapted from Kayla Ballmer (2012)

Student Choice

Ownership in Their Learning

Want To Learn

The Strategy: Have you ever asked your students what they *Want to Learn*? Asking students what they are interested in, shows your students that you are interested in them.

Implementation:

1. There are several ways to implement this strategy:
    a. Hold a brainstorm session, asking students what they want to learn about. Provide parameters to encourage a productive brainstorm. Take the ideas brainstormed and use that in your teaching.
    b. If your class is set up in a workshop model: before starting a new workshop or topic provide a brief overview of each and ask your students what they want to learn about next. You are covering the material you need to, but students have ownership in the content.

When It's Useful: At the beginning of the year this strategy can help you find new topics and themes to use when covering your content. It is also useful throughout the year, if your curriculum has room for some flexibility of when topics can be covered.

Highlights: Towards the end of the school year interest and engagement in the classroom can begin to wane. I had my classroom vote on which workshop they wanted to cover next in our Read 180 curriculum. After discussion and a vote they chose their next workshop, and were highly engaged throughout the unit!

Tip: *This strategy includes two aspects of motivation: getting to know your students and student choice. It's important that you don't ask students what they want to learn, and then completely disregard it. Make every effort to include their ideas in your classroom. If it doesn't fit, be honest and share why.*

adapted from Naomi Harm (2015)

Building Relationships

Getting to Know Your Students

Who Are You?

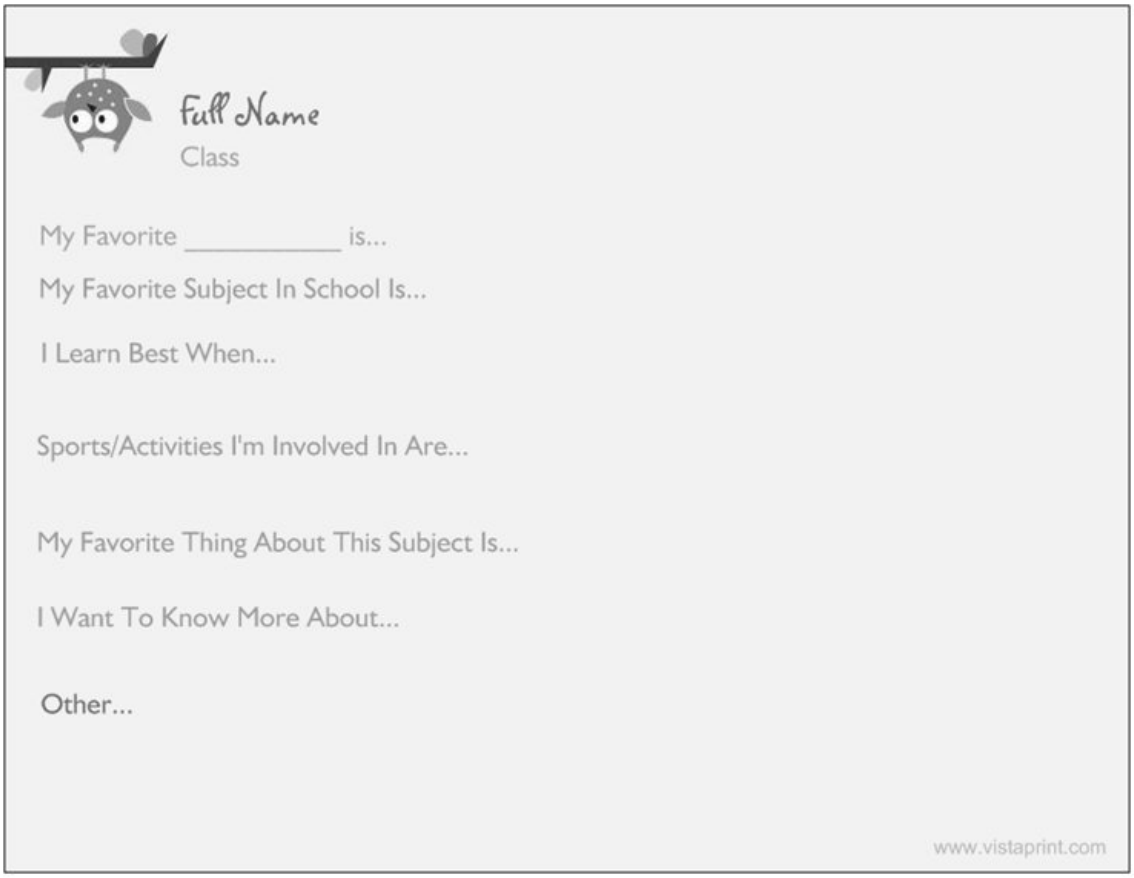
The Strategy: *Who Are You* is a very brief survey you have students fill out the first week of school. It gives quick insight into who your students are, which allows you to begin to make connections, building relationships with your students.

Implementation:

1. Create a handout or note card to have students fill out.
2. Create a brief list of questions that you would like to ask.
    a. For example, my *Who Are You?* Cards include:
        i. My favorite ____ is ____.
        ii. My favorite subject in school is ____.
        iii. I learn best when ____.
        iv. Sports/activities I'm involved in are ____.
        v. My favorite thing about school is ____.
        vi. I want to know more about____.
        vii. Other things I want my teacher to know____.
3. Hand out the survey the first few days of school.
4. Collect the cards, and look at the responses.

When It's Useful: At the beginning of the year you can use the survey to make notes about students. It allows you to follow up and begin building a relationship right away.

Highlights: Every year I use these cards to establish what kind of learning environment might be best in each class. I also make notes of things I have in common with students, questions I have so that I can begin to get to know them.



Heather Young, 2016

Building Relationships

Getting to Know Your Students

Student Reading Life Survey

The Strategy: By using the *Student Reading Life Survey*, with just a few questions you can get a glimpse into their attitudes, preferences, and experiences with reading. Not only does it give you information but it allows you the opportunity to begin to identify books your students might like to read.

When It's Useful: Using this printed survey at the beginning of the year this survey is helpful when getting to know your student's reading habits.

Highlights: I enjoy taking time to go over each student's responses and find a few books that I can recommend to them. Talking with the student about their answers, and sharing a few recommendations helps build a relationship with my students!

Tip: *Consider taking information from the survey and keeping it somewhere you have access to all year. This way when your students are looking for a book and ask for help you have your notes about topics they enjoy that can help you.*

adapted from Miller (2009)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading Interest-a-lyzer

As your reading teacher, part of my job includes helping you discover the reader you are. That includes helping you find books that you might enjoy, and showing you how to find new books to read. This survey will be really helpful. Please be honest, answer every question, and do your best.

1. How old are you? _____

2. Are you currently reading a book for enjoyment? YES or NO

3. Do you ever read books for enjoyment? YES or NO

4. In the past week, you read for at least 20 minutes on ____:

__ No days __ 1-2 days __ 3-5 days __ 6-7 days

5. In the past month, I have read ____ book(s) for enjoyment.

__ No books __ 1 book

__ 2 books __ 3 books __ More than 3 books

6. When I read for enjoyment, I pick the following (choose all that apply):

__ Novels/Chapter books __ Magazines __ Cartoons/Comics

__ Fiction books __ Non-fiction books __ Graphic novels

__ Picture books __ Books that are funny __ Scary books

__ Books about history __ Biographies __ Mystery books

__ Sports related books __ Fantasy books __ Science books

__ Poems __ Books I think I can relate to

__ About a topic/subject I like

7. I am more likely to read a book that (choose all that apply):

__ a teacher suggests __ a librarian suggests __ my friend suggests

__ is by an author whose books I have read __ has won an award

__ other: _____

adapted from Miller (2009)

8. I have a PUBLIC library card. YES or NO

9. I borrow books from the PUBLIC library. YES or NO

10. I borrow books from the SCHOOL library. YES or NO

11. I have _____ books in my home.

12. If I could meet a character from any book, (for example Hermione from Harry Potter, or Four from Divergent) I would want to meet:

    -

    -

13. The last three books I read were:

    -

    -

    -

14. What is the BEST book you remember reading?

15. What did you like about that book?

16. What is a book you did NOT like?

17. My favorite tv shows and movies include:

18. What kind of activities are interest to you?

adapted from Miller (2009)

Building Relationships

Getting to Know Your Students

Building Trust

The Strategy: *Building Trust* with your students is important because it frames every conversation and every interaction between you.

Specific Implementation Ideas:

There are several strategies that I learned from Doug Lemov in his book "Teach Like a Champion" that help me build trust between my students and I.

1. "Allow plausible anonymity."
    a. When there is behavior that needs to be corrected in the classroom, try leaving their names out of it. If not everyone is looking at the board, try a statement like, "Class make sure that your eyes are up front." If there is not positive intention on the part of the students, then you may need to use names.
2. Use "precise praise." There are two parts to this:
    a. Make sure to differentiate between acknowledgment and praise. You do not want to diminish the power of your praise by using it for things like getting out a piece of paper when asked, or bringing a book to class. When expectations are met, you acknowledge; when something exceptional happens, then you praise.
    b. Praise and acknowledge students publicly, but correct or fix behavior as privately as possible. You don't want to put students in a defensive position
3. Handling Right and Wrong Answers
    a. To build an environment of trust it is important that students do not fear giving the wrong answer, and conversely do not rely too heavily on the praise of the teacher for right answers.

adapted from Lemov (2010)

i. Make wrong answers a part of the norm in your classroom. This can be done by either stating the student is wrong and move on, or by removing the right/wrong response from an incorrect answer and help the student through the process of finding the answer again.

ii. When students give a correct answer do not fuss over the student. Acknowledge students are correct and move on.

b. Handling answers in these ways shows that you expect both right and wrong answers in your classroom and supports your students.

When It's Useful: It is always important to have a community where there is trust. Start off with these procedures at the beginning of the year to establish trust in your classroom.

Highlights: Plausible anonymity is one of the quickest, easiest classroom management tools I've used in my classroom.

adapted from Lemov (2010)

Building Relationships

Helping Students Get to Know You

Meet Your Teacher Slide

The Strategy: Take time at the beginning of the year to share a bit about yourself with your students. You ask them to fill out surveys, and share their interests, so you should do the same. By allowing students to get to know you, you are helping build a relationship that can help you with classroom management, and differentiate instruction.

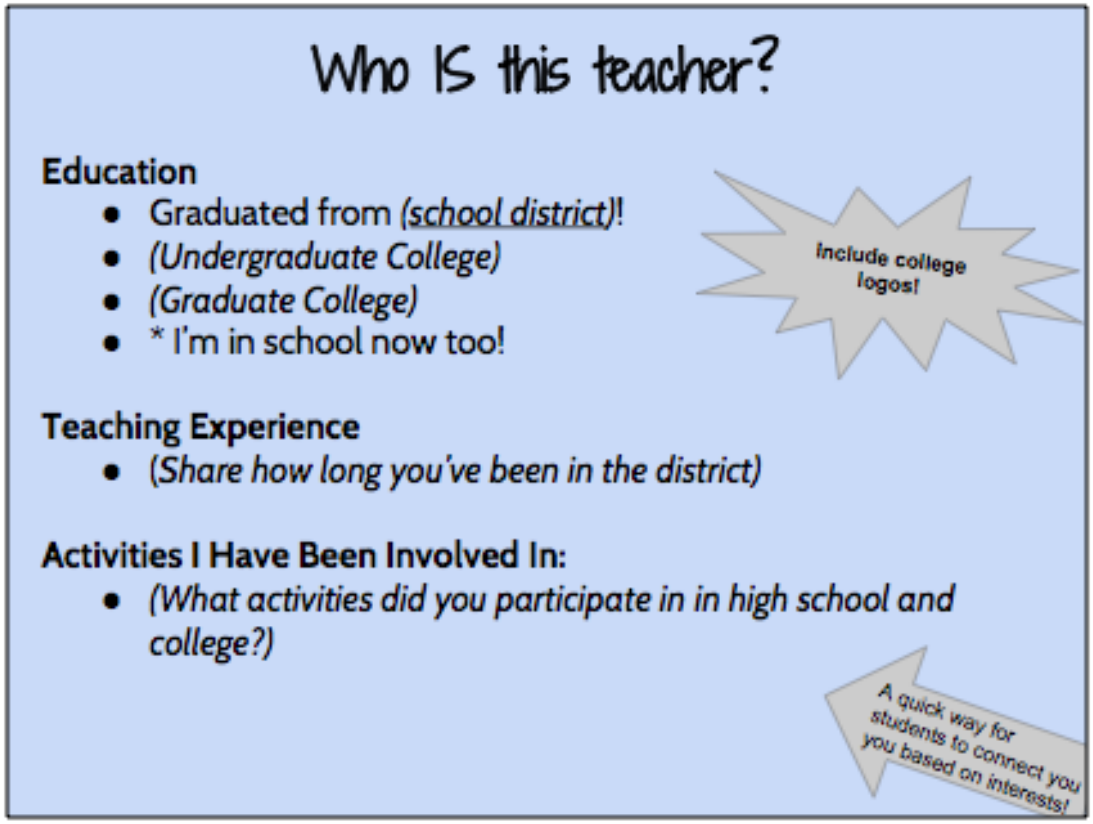
Implementation Ideas:

1. Create and share a slide or two at the beginning of the year with your students.
2. Buy a blank book and create a book about you that is available to students. This could include pages about your family, hobbies, interests, favorite books or quotes, etc. Anything that lets your students get to know you on a personal level.
3. Hold an "Ask the Teacher" session. Have students write questions for you on a piece of paper and put them in a basket. Draw papers and answer them.

When It's Useful: Taking time at the start of the year to share about who you are as a a person, helps build relationships between you and your students.

Highlights: The very first day of school I share two slides with my students. One gives a brief outline of my educational and work background. The second slide shares pictures and images of my favorite things. The kids have fun guessing what each picture represents, and helps them feel more comfortable in my classroom on day one.

adapted from Erin Griffin Boyle (2013)



adapted from Erin Griffin Boyle (2013)

Sharing your life with your students.

- Sharing a bit about with your students is important.
- If they get to know you as a person, they allow you to get to know them.
- Decide early what you are comfortable sharing and what you are not.
    - For example: I share about my interests, my background, my thoughts and a little about my family. I do not share my political beliefs or details about my personal life.

How To Share

- At the beginning of the year I share the following two slides, personalized to me, with my students to give a quick introduction to who I am.
- Throughout the year I share stories with them, and answer questions when appropriate.

adapted from Erin Griffin Boyle (2013)

Building Relationships

Community Building

The Maze Game

The Strategy: *The Maze Game* can be played in as little as 15 minutes, but helps build community in your classroom. This game gives students the opportunity to work together, mistakes are okay, and being supportive is important because we learn from others mistakes.

Implementation:

1. Using masking tape put a grid on your floor that is at least 5x6 squares.
2. On a notecard create a path of blocks. They cannot skip over a row/ column, each step is on a concurrent block.
3. All students start on one side of the grid. The goal is to get from one side to the other in one turn.
4. You can move forward, sideways, or diagonally.
5. The first student, steps on a block in the first row.
    a. If this is the same as the path you've created, you say yes or ring a bell. The student then takes another step.
    b. If it is not, you say no, or hit a buzzer sound. The student goes to the end of the line, and the next student gives it a try.
6. Different Rounds (Make sure a new path is created each time.)
    a. Round One: Students can not help each other in any way.
    b. Round Two: Students may not use words, but should feel free to help each other. This means pointing or head shaking are encouraged.
    c. Round Three: Students should feel free to help each other.
    d. Round Four: Tell students the path, and make each of them walk it.
7. The Purpose:

adapted from Summer Wagman (2014)

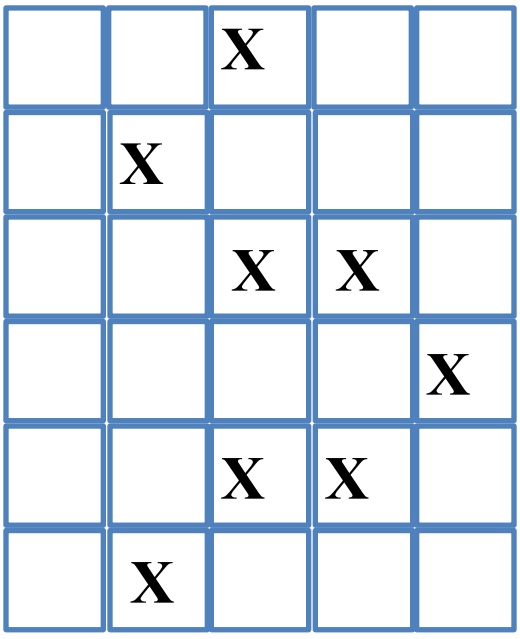
a. Students are successful in *The Maze Game* because they learn from other students' mistakes. We don't relish our classmates mistakes, but rather encourage them when they try again. It is also easier when you accept help from other students.
b. Round Four's purpose is to show students that getting the answer from the teacher can take out the fun of learning and discovery.

When It's Useful: At the beginning of the year, or after a break, use this game to help build community or reinforce an environment of support.

Highlights: This is one of my favorite things to do at the start of the school year. When I debrief with my students after, they quickly realize the purpose and we can refer back to it later in the year.

Tip*: Be prepared to play this more than once. Students love this game!*

Example of Path:



adapted from Summer Wagman (2014)

Building Relationships

Community Building

Know Their Names

The Strategy: *Know Their Names* is a two pronged strategy. The first part is as the teacher it is important to know your students names, the second is students need to know their classmates names.

Implementation:

1. On the first day of school have students create a name tent.
    a. Consider having students add a trait that describes them that starts with the same letter of their first name (ex. Happy Heather).
2. Greet students at your door.
    a. This gives you a chance to use their name, or have a quick conversation which helps you get to know them. These conversations can help with the memorization of student names.
3. After a few days of school, challenge students to name all of their classmates.

When It's Useful: At the beginning of the school year find ways to help your students learn each other's names. Many of them will know each other from previous years, but it's important to establish your classroom community.

Highlights: Learning my students names is sometimes a challenge for me. I challenge myself by sharing with the students that my goal is to learn all of their names by the end of the second week of school. It's fun to find ways to remember students names with mnemonics or some other word association.

adapted from Beers (2003)

Building Relationships

Celebrations

Bells and Applause

The Strategy: When students in your classroom hit a certain goal or reach a certain level in your classroom, it is important for the classroom community to celebrate. It is important for students to help each other when they struggle, encourage them when learning, and celebrate when they succeed. Using *Bells and Applause* or a similar strategy helps do that. It is easily adaptable to fit your classroom needs and procedures!

Implementation:

1. Decide what achievements or milestones will be celebrated in your room.
2. Decide on how you will celebrate in your classroom.
    a. For example, students ring a bell, then the whole class claps.
3. Teach the routine the first time a student reaches the milestone.
    a. When a student signals their achievement, pause all activity.
    b. Recognize the student, "Timmy has ____, let's clap for him on 3."
    c. Have students clap, then immediately return to work.

When It's Useful: Start out the year building a community of support, it is important to celebrate student success in the classroom, and helping them support each other.

Highlights: This is my favorite thing I implement in my classroom each year. In one class, I had a student who did not like to ring the bell, but had hit a "Green Screen" which we celebrate. Her classmates saw this, they all stopped what they were doing. They rang the bell, and followed the steps to celebrate her success, all on their own.

Tip: *Having a particular pattern for students to clap, means that every single person, every single time gets the same applause. This ensures that the outgoing, popular students in the room, get the same recognition as the quiet ones.*

adapted from Lemov (2003)

Building Relationships

Conferencing

Conferences That Monitor Reading Life

The Strategy: *Conferences That Monitor a Reading Life* are different than those that monitor for comprehension. In this form of conferencing, it's about the students' choices in regards to reading, not just what they are understanding from the text. Penny Kittle's "Book Love" is where I discovered the essential questions to this type of conference.

Implementation:

1. Questions to ask students:
    a. What are you reading? How did you choose this book?
    b. What is on your Up-Next list?
    c. Which authors/genres are your favorite?
    d. How much did you read last year? For fun? For school?
    e. Would you consider yourself a reader?

When It's Useful: At the beginning of the school year, I find *Conferences That Monitor Reading Life* to be especially important. They give me insight into my students, and help build relationships rooted in reading!

Highlights: Focusing on my students' reading life in a conference is a different style that requires a different mindset. I enjoy chatting with students in this more informal style to get a sense of their reading life throughout the school year.

adapted from Miller (2014) and Kittle (2013)

Building Relationships

Conferencing

Conferencing Structure

The Strategy: Knowing how a *Conferencing Structure* should look can be hard, and there is no one right way to do it. Conferences can serve several purposes: to check students' comprehension, to monitor reading life, to teach strategic reading or to help students plan their reading. In Penny Kittle's "Book Love" (2013) she shares a structure that has been helpful for me as a reading teacher.

Implementation:

1. The structure of a conference as shared by Kittle:
    a. "Question and listen,"
    b. "Recognize insights from that information"
    c. "Try to find out whether the reader has plans for next steps."
    d. Most importantly, always "try to encourage readers!"

When It's Useful: Knowing the basic structure of a reading conference is important. You can always tailor a conference to fit the needs of the student, but knowing the basic structure is helpful.

Highlights: When I first started as a reading teacher I did not know how to do a reading conference. People told me it was easy, but I wanted to make sure I did it right. Finding this structure from Penny Kittle helped ease my concerns and made the format of a conference clearer.

adapted from Kittle (2013)

Building Relationships

Collaboration

Students Respond and Share Out

The Strategy: Finding different ways for students to *Share Out* in the classroom helps build relationships and allows for many different types of collaboration in the reading classroom. An printed slideshow presentation with directions for each of the *Share Outs* ideas can be found in the appendix.

Implementation:

1. Teach the procedures for *Share Outs* as you use them. It's a good idea to use a few different methods in your classroom and not just one idea.
2. Select the best version of a share out based on the amount of time you have and the type of reflecting you want your students to do.

Share Out Versions:

- Four Corners: Ask your students a question and give them four options. Students choose an answer and move to that corner. The group then discusses why they selected that answer.
    - This allows for a bigger group conversation without being whole class. After the groups discuss then a volunteer shares a summary of the discussion with the other groups.
- Idea Wave: A quick way for every student to share their answer.
    - One student shares their answer, the student next to them immediately shares theirs, and so on.
- Line Up!:
    - Students line up on a continuum according to their opinion or belief of a topic or question presented by the teacher. Then the teacher folds the line in half so students have a partner. A

discussion can then begin between to the students of why they stood where they did.

- Numbered Heads: This version groups students and allows them all to share their answers in a small group.
    - Group students and have them number themselves. Select a number and that student synthesizes the responses with the class.
- Paired Verbal Fluency:
    - A strategy that pairs students up and has them share something memorable or interesting that they learned in 60 seconds. The process is repeated as the time for sharing is lowered to 40 seconds, nothing can be repeated, it must be new ideas. One more round happens with only 20 seconds each. The pair summarizes their conversation and shares with the class.
- Pick One: A list of sentence starters are put on the board to help students formulate a response to the topic being taught or what they read.
    - You can have students share these verbally, or write them on a notecard. If you have students respond on a notecard shuffle them and pass them back out to students. They can then respond to their classmates work. Another option is for the notecard to be used as a formative quick check of understanding.
- Quiz-Quiz-Trade: This strategy allows for a more interactive version of responding to a topic or text.
    - Each student gets a notecard and writes a question based on the teacher's guidelines (either a question the student has or a question that might be on a quiz). They find a partner and ask each other their question. Students trade cards, find a new partner and then repeat the process.
- Share Out: Simply call on students by using popsicle sticks with their names on them, or by having students raise their hands.

    - Tell students how you will select who will share with the class so they are prepared.
- Silent Debate: In this version students are paired up and have a debate silently, on paper.
    - The students decide on who will be "pro" and who will be "con" in regards to the topic. The pro partner writes a supportive statement of the topic on the left side of the paper. The con partner reads the statement, and writes a counter statement on the right side of the paper. This is repeated several times.
- Think-(Write)-Pair-Share: A simple form of sharing, it allows students to think on their own, then share with just one other student in the classroom.
    - You start by presenting a question to your students and ask them to just think about it. Then have them write their answer on paper. Pair them up and have them share their responses.
- Three Whats: These questions allow students to reflect on what they learned, think about why it's important and what they next steps are or how it impacts their thinking.
    - Have students share their responses to the following questions: What did we learn today? So what? Now what? Responses can be shared with the whole class, small groups, or partners.

When It's Useful: *Share Outs* are useful anytime you want to do a review, comprehension check, or have your students pause and reflect on what they've learned.

Highlights: The idea wave is one of my favorite ways to have students share out. Everyone shares their answers, and the process is quick.

Four Corners

Question: _____

Answers: 1
2
3
4

* Choose one answer and move to that corner.
* Discuss with those in your group about why you select that answer.

Heather Young, 2016

IDEA WAVE

1. A student is chosen to start the wave by sharing their answer.

2. We will continue around the class in a wave-like fashion with each student sharing their answer.

adapted from Kinsella (2011)

Line Up!

There are two opposite ideas on each side of a continuum.

Line-up along the continuum according to your opinion/belief.

(Teacher: Fold the class in half and pair up. have a discussion on why you stood where you did.)

adapted from Vogt & Echevarría, 2008.

Numbered Heads

1. Count off in your groups.
2. Show me your numbers.
3. Share you answer in your group and listen actively.
4. All # ___'s will synthesize what the group said and share out.

* Each reporter must add-on to what the other groups have said; share why your group agreed or disagreed.

adapted from Kagan (2005)

Paired Verbal Fluency

1. Decide who is partner A and who is partner B.
2. Partner __ starts. Share something that was memorable or interesting about what you learned for 60 seconds while your partner listens.
3. Switch roles. You can't repeat anything that was already said.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with only 40 seconds.
5. Repeat steps 2 and 3 again but this time summarize what you learned for 20 seconds.
6. Summarize your conversation and share with the class.

adapted from Lipton & Wellman, 2000.

Pick One or Two

I learned…

I'm beginning to wonder…

I think…

Today, I understand…

I feel…

I was surprised that…

I would still like to know more about…

Partner up. Each share you responses. React to partner's statement.

Heather Young, 2016

Quiz-Quiz-Trade

* Review what you've learned *

1. Write a question related to _____.
2. Find a partner.
3. Ask each other your questions.
4. Trade cards.
5. Find a new partner.
6. Repeat.

adapted from Kagan & Kagan, 1994

SHARE OUT

Please be ready to "share out" your ideas with the class!

Today we will share by:

Raising hands / popsicle sticks / _____

(Teacher will circle one.)

Heather Young, 2016

Silent Debate

1. Decide who is the "pro" side and who is the "con" side.
2. Draw a line down the middle of your page.
3. Pro Partner: Writes a supportive statement on the paper.
4. Con Partner: Read the statement and write a comment against the topic.

adapted from AVID Training, 2013

Think-(Write)-Pair-Share

1. Think about your answer.
2. Write it down.
3. Pair up with a partner.
4. Share your responses.
5. Be prepared to share your partner's answer with the class.

adapted from Jennifer Malecha, Staff Development, 2014

Three Whats

What did we learn today?

So what?

Now what?

Work with a partner and write your answers in complete sentences.

Heather Young, 2016

Sustained Student Reading

Setting Them Up for Success in Reading

Finding The Right Reading Spot

The Strategy: For struggling readers, being in the right physical space for reading can be important. This is why *Finding the Right Reading Spot* is an important strategy to teach students at the beginning of the year. Originally found in Jennifer Serravallo's *The Reading Strategies Book,* you will find my suggestions for implementation below.

Implementation:

1. Create a presentation or anchor chart to help demonstrate the strategy.
2. Discuss with students the importance of having a good spot for reading, and how knowing what the best environment for them is.
3. Lead students in a discussion of elements that can affect the environment:
    a. Lighting, noise, type of room, seating options, and seating position.
4. Have students write out on a notecard, bookmark or in a notebook what their "Right Reading Spot" is and where they can find it.
5. Encourage students to try reading in the spot for a few days.
6. After a few days have students reflect on how effective their spot was.

When It's Useful: Use this strategy at the beginning of the year to help students identify the "Right Reading Spot" for them. This allows them to think about at home reading spots and in school reading spots. This strategy can also be used if in reading conferences you notice that students are struggling to read at home. You can talk with students to discover if perhaps they are distracted by their environment, then use this strategy to make a plan for their reading environment.

Highlights: Struggling readers do not know how important environment can be on their reading. Identifying their "Right Reading Spot" may help them find success in reading.

adapted from Serravallo (2015)

adapted from Serravallo (2015)

adapted from Serravallo (2015)

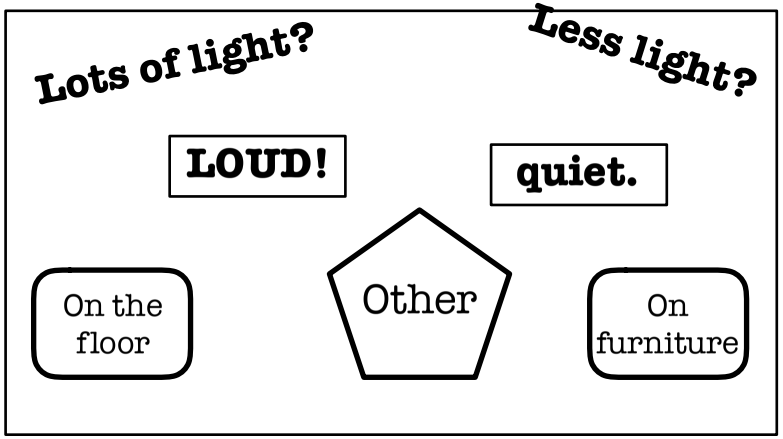
adapted from Serravallo (2015)

9/11

YOU'VE CONSIDERED WHERE YOU'D DO YOUR BEST SO THOUGHTFULLY.

NOW GIVE IT A TRY!

10/11



11/11

A PERFECT READING SPOT

LET'S SEE WHERE WE ALL LAND!

Sustained Student Reading

Setting Them Up for Success in Reading

Silent Reading Rate

The Strategy: Identifying your students *Silent Reading Rate* help set your students up for success. This rate helps you and your students set achievable, yet challenging goals for independent reading.

Implementation:

1. Ensure all students have independent reading material, at their level, before you begin.
2. Have them read for a minute.
3. Count the number of words read.
4. Repeat this two more times.
5. Add the three numbers, and divide by three to find the average silent reading rate.
6. After they read, ask questions about what the student read to check for comprehension. If the student isn't demonstrating comprehension then a different level of passages may need to be selected.

When It's Useful: The rate gives students a goal for independent reading, and can be used to by you to track progress as students increase their stamina for reading. Perform reading rate tests several times throughout the year to help you monitor progress.

Highlights: This strategy is for silent reading rates, Oral Fluency Assessments, or OFA's can also be helpful to track student growth. Tracking students Silent Reading Rate helps ensure that students are reading appropriate material. Reading fluently and understanding the material may help improve students' attitudes towards reading.

adapted from Beers (2003)

Sustained Student Reading

Setting Them Up for Success in Reading

Setting Goals: Stamina

The Strategy: For struggling readers it can be hard to read for sustained periods of time. *Setting Goals: Stamina* is about helping your students increase their sustained silent reading stamina.

Implementation:

1. Create a form or format for your students to use to track their stamina and set goals.
2. Have students chart their reading minutes, consider including a space for an engagement rating (1= I was not engaged at all, 5= I was totally engaged).
3. After a week of tracking, discuss goal setting with your students. If you do not have a format, I highly recommend using the SMART Goal format.
4. Have your students create a goal in regards to their reading stamina. They should write it down somewhere they will see it.
5. Check in with students, and have them reflect on their goal.

When It's Useful: Having students track their stamina, and set a goal to increase it is especially helpful during the first few months of school. It's important to help students increase their stamina early in the year to allow for increased reading time.

Highlights: I have found success with students creating bar charts for a variety of things in the classroom. The visual helps students reflect, and setting goals helps set them up for success.

adapted from Serravallo (2015)

Sustained Student Reading

Setting Them Up for Success in Reading

Setting Goals: Pages

The Strategy: Identifying your students *Independent Reading Page Goal* help set your students up for success. This rate helps you and your students set achievable, yet challenging goals for independent reading.

Implementation:

1. Ensure all students have independent reading material, at their level, before you begin.
2. Have students begin reading, and read silently for three minutes.
3. They should tally the pages they were able to read (round to the nearest half page).
4. Students should multiply this number by 5. This gives them the number of pages they should read, in 15 minutes, a daily page goal.
5. Multiply their daily page goal by the number of days a week you'd like your students reading, and this is their weekly page goal.

When It's Useful: The goal gives students a goal for independent reading, and can be used to by you to track progress as students increase their stamina for reading.

Highlights: A colleague using this strategy to help students self-monitor their reading. He also uses the page goal to hold students accountable during conferences with students. Knowing how many pages they should have read allows him to see if they are reading at home and in school.

adapted from Miller (2014), Serravallo (2015)

Sustained Student Reading

Tracking Reading

Status of the Class

The Strategy: *Status of the Class* gives a quick overview of where every student is in their independent reading book. There are several ways to vary the strategy to fit your classroom needs. You might have a form that you use for all students to simply track book titles and page numbers, or one form for each student that tracks book title, page number and a one sentence description of where they are in the text.

Implementation:

1. Option 1: Pass around a *Status of the Class* sheet at the beginning of each class period. Students should fill it out on their own.
2. Option 2: At the end of independent reading time do a roll call style call out of each students name, and fill in the *Status of the Class* form yourself. This allows you to make notes on the sheet as you see fit.
3. Option 3: Students have an individual *Status of the Class* form that students keep in a box, or in a notebook. They fill this out each day.

When It's Useful: Use the strategy at the start of the school year to help establish reading habits of your students. Taking *Status of the Class* gives you the opportunity to monitor your students reading, and aides in quick check-ins if you have time.

Highlights: In my classroom I do a roll call style *Status of the Class* every day at the end of the hour. Asking students for a book title, and page number they ended on. By doing this I am able to quickly track how students are doing, if they are finishing books or daydreaming instead of reading.

Tip: *Consider keeping the forms to track long range patterns of students' reading.*

adapted from Miller (2014)

Week of: _____ Class: _____

Status of the Class

Name	Book	School or Home	M	T	W	H	F

adapted from Miller (2014)

Week of: _____ Class: _____

Date	Title	Page	I'm at the part where…	Rate

adapted from Miller (2014)

Sustained Student Reading

Tracking Reading

Daily Reading Logs

The Strategy: *Daily Reading Logs* help struggling readers stay organized, which helps transition into and out of sustained silent reading time. These logs typically include the date, book title, and pages read.

Implementation:

1. Decide on the best format for your students to track their daily reading
    a. Will it be on paper or digital? Will it be for at home or in school reading? Will it track minutes and pages read or just pages?
2. Model for students how to fill out the log as they fill out their own during the first day of implementation.
3. *Daily Reading Logs* should be used as a tool by both the student and the teacher.

When It's Useful: In a class where students read at different times, or for at home reading, *Daily Reading Logs* are especially useful.

Highlights: I used these logs when students would read during three separate rotations. I did not have time to conference as much as I would have liked to and these logs gave me insight into student reading.

Tip: *You can combine the Daily Reading Log with a Reader's Response to make one stop for students after they read independently in the classroom.*

adapted from Summer Wagman (2015)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading Log

Book Title: _____

Monday pg _____- _____	**Question**: Write a question about what you read today.
Tuesday pg _____- _____	**Connection**: Use the frame: " ____ reminds me of ____ because ____."
Wednesday pg _____- _____	**Inference**: Use the frame: "I think _____ because _____."
Thursday pg _____- _____	**Prediction**: Use the frame: "I predict that _____ will ___ because _____."
Friday pg _____- _____	**Summary**: Summarize in 2-4 sentences what you read this week. Be specific!

adapted from Jennifer Malecha (2015)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Daily Reading Log

Date	Book Title	Start Page	End Page	Reading Zone Level

Reading Zone Levels:

Level 5: WHAT?! You just interrupted me and I was totally into my book!

Level 4: I am in the zone! I have been reading for several minutes and am not distracted by much of anything.

Level 3: I am getting in the zone. I am reading, but am often distracted.

Level 2: I am trying, but am not in the zone. I just read and I don't remember anything.

Level 1: I am distracted. I can't read my book because of my own distractions.

Sustained Student Reading

Tracking Reading

Book Tracker

The Strategy: Teaching students to keep a *Book Tracker* helps them track the reading that they are completing. The list can include a variety of items that are helpful to both the student and the teacher.

Implementation:

1. Decide where students will house their tracker, for instance in a notebook or folder.
2. Create a *Book Tracker* template. It may include the title and author of the book, the date the student started and finished reading it, a rating, page count, genre, and a spot for students to make notes about the story.
3. Create a format for students to follow. Either a table they handwrite or a handout they use.
4. Teach students the routine of filling in the log with their first book. Reinforce the trackers throughout the year to ensure they are being used.

When It's Useful: Start these trackers at the beginning of the school year to help build an independent reading routine. It is also useful for conferencing because it can help you and the student have a conversation about reading patterns.

Highlights: Using a *Book Tracker* is a strategy many of my colleagues use. One shared that they like taking a moment during conferences with students to reflect on the reading log. They are able to discuss students preferences in genre, the amount of reading they do, if students are finishing books or abandoning them. She recommends reading teachers consider using *Book Trackers* from the first day of school.

adapted from Miller (2014)

Name: _____ Class: _____

Books Read Log

Date Started	Date Finished	Book Title	Author	Rating

adapted from Miller (2014)

Sustained Student Reading

Tracking Reading

The Up-Next List

The Strategy: Getting struggling readers interested in picking up a book can be a challenge. With the book talks, book trailers, and recommendations you share with students it is important that they have a place to record books that interest them. *The Up Next List* is the tool that helps!

Implementation:

1. Decide on the format for your *Up Next Lists.* These can be hard copies or digital, notecards or paper, handouts or in a notebook. There are endless options.
2. Share with students the importance of keeping an *Up Next List.*
3. Show a series of book trailers, or do several book talks.
4. Encourage students to add at least one title to their list.
5. Before first media center visit, ask students to get out their lists and bring them with to make the search for a book faster.

When It's Useful: In the beginning of the school year, before your first trip to the media center having students start an *Up Next List* is helpful. It is something students can hold onto throughout the year, and saves time when going to the media center.

Highlights: On a particularly busy day we had to squeeze in a quick visit to the media center. My students were able to pull out their *Up Next Lists* and use them to find their next independent reading book. Having several books on the list is beneficial in case books are already checked out!

adapted from Miller (2014)

Week of: _____ Class: _____

My Up Next List

#	Title	Author	Notes
EX	Cinder	Meyer, M	* MHL Nominee 14-15 * retelling/version of Cinderella

adapted from Miller (2014)

Summary

After conducting an intensive literature review, I created a curriculum guide that would be immediately beneficial to the work I do in my classroom. This curriculum provides a variety of strategies that will work synergistically to answer my research question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the process for creating a curriculum which would address the question: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?*

In this chapter I will revisit the research I completed in my literature review. I will also share the implications and limitations of the work presented in this capstone. Next, I will discuss ways in which I plan to share my curriculum with other educators. Finally, I will share ideas for expanding the curriculum and research that could be done in the future.

Reflection

My work as a reading intervention teacher and my classes at Hamline University lead me to ask: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* I wanted to find ways to share my love of reading with students. While I realized I would not turn them all into passionate, avid readers, I do hope to open their eyes to the wonders of reading and the idea that it can be done for enjoyment. I wanted to discover tools and strategies that would help me, help my students.

In striving to answer this question, I examined a variety of research in the field of middle school students, reading strategies, intervention, and motivation. I felt it was important to identify the central, fundamental concepts surrounding my research question. By doing this, I was able to have a more direct focus for my curriculum.

Revisiting the Literature Review

The first thing I felt was important in my literature review was to define the term "struggling reader." A student who is disengaged from literacy due to a perceived or identified achievement level that is lower than their peers is how I defined struggling reader for the purposes of this capstone. The next step was to discover what reading motivation referred to. I learned that it does not refer only to a student's behavior, but also their beliefs and values towards reading. How they view themselves and why reading is important also plays a part in understanding student motivation.

As was discussed earlier in this capstone, often times motivation declines as students enter, and progress through middle school, with many different factors coming together to impact student motivation. The transition to middle school, changes in how grading happens, the number of teachers students have, and scheduling can all result in students losing motivation in the reading classroom. As I began to research what influences motivation a few ideas became clear. Motivation, engagement, and several other factors are synergistic and create a chain of sorts. In addition to this chain, research shows student choice, relationships, opportunities for success and time to read are all important influences on motivation.

Possible Implications and Limitations

Using the resource handbook I have created I hope that teachers will have a variety of strategies they could use in their classrooms to help motivate their students. The curriculum is by no means comprehensive. The ideas being used in classrooms, those shared in this curriculum, and those yet to be discovered, are more than the

selection of strategies I have included. Within the timeframe for working on this capstone I was unable to discover and create more strategies. This limitation affords one of several next steps that could be taken to further this work.

Next Steps

To further the work I have started with this capstone there are several steps that I could take. One of these steps would be to flush out each of the concepts (student choice, building relationships, and sustained silent reading) even further. It is clear there are a wide variety of experiences and ideas that others in the education field could offer. In addition, there are many different aspects and nuances to each concept. For example, in regards to building relationships this can include teacher-student, student-student, class-class, and more. How do each of these relationships impact others? What strategies can be used to address each type of relationship? Analyzing and addressing these nuances offers more insight into motivating struggling middle school readers. This analysis allows for a creation and compilation of more strategies that teachers could use to help motivate their students. The concept of "opportunities for success" in particular was not covered explicitly in the curriculum I created. A partial explanation for this resides in the idea that opportunities for success are embedded in each of the other concepts.

Another next step would be to create a calendar of when the strategies could best be implemented. The calendar would need to serve as suggestions, as the needs of every classroom is different. However, it would benefit teachers to have a quick visual on when they could consider each strategy.

Summary

Throughout my courses in the Masters of Arts in Literacy Education program my learning and experience led me to ask: *How can teachers motivate struggling middle school readers in an intervention classroom?* What I discovered is that while no one method for motiving these students exists, there are four central concepts that apply:

1) a synergistic chain to motivation exists,
2) student choice,
3) building relationships,
4) and sustained student reading.

Keeping these principles in mind, and using the curriculum I have created will assist me in providing a supportive, encouraging, productive classroom environment for my students. Often these struggling readers that make their way into my classroom each year are resistant to the idea of reading. It is hard for them to see how being a stronger reader can help them. Often it is an even bigger challenge to get them to see reading as something they might choose to do because they enjoy it.

As a reader, whose heart and imagination were captured by books at an early age, it was hard for me to understand why many of my students did not share the same passion for reading. When I began teaching, I would have said that my work as a reading teacher was "just a job." My early experiences with reading, my work with struggling readers, along with my educational journey have led me to believe that it is no longer "just a job." Rather, without me realizing, it has become a calling.

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Appendix A

Book Lists

Sustained Student Reading

Book Lists

Read Alouds

Read Alouds are often a student favorite. The following is a list compiled from experiences in my classroom, and those of my colleagues.

- Middle School Read Aloud Favorites
    - *Crossover*, by Kwame Alexander
    - *Blackwater*, by Eve Bunting
    - *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, by Gennifer Choldenko
    - *Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins
    - *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*, by Christopher Paul Curtis
    - *Double Dutch*, by Sharon M. Draper
    - *Fire From the Rock*, by Sharon M Draper
    - *Seedfolks*, by Paul Fleischman
    - *The Graveyard Book*, by Neil Gaiman
    - *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*, by Jack Gantos
    - *Among the Hidden*, by Margaret Peterson Haddix
    - *Hoot*, by Carl Hiaasen
    - *Alabama Moon*, by Watt Key
    - *6th Grade Nickname Game*, by Gordon Korman
    - *Juvie Three*, by Gordon Korman
    - *Heat*, by Mike Lupica
    - *Trash,* by Andy Mulligan
    - *Monster*, by Walter Dean Myers (8th grade and up)
    - *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio
    - *A Long Walk to Water,* by Linda Sue Park
    - *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen
    - *Freak the Mighty*, by Rodman Philbrick

- *The Lightning Thief*, by Rick Riordan
- *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, by Louis Sachar
- *Between Shades of Gray*, by Ruta Sepetys
- *Emako Blue*, by Brenda A Woods
- *Brown Girl Dreaming*, by Jacqueline Woodson

Sustained Student Reading

Book Lists

Favorite Books and Series

The small list below includes a variety of Favorite Books and Series recommended by middle school students. Lists from a variety of resources, along with my classroom have been culled and combined.

The Crossover, by Kwame Alexander

Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson

Gregor the Overlander, by Suzanne Collins

Walk Two Moons, by Sharon Creech

Love That Dog, by Sharon Creech

The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963, by Christopher Paul Curtis

Inkheart, by Cornelia Funke

Among the Hidden, by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Stormbreaker (Alex Rider Series), by Anthony Horowitz

The Misfits, by James Howe

The Sixth Grade Nickname Game, by Gordon Korman

Guardians of Ga'Hoole: The Capture, by Kathryn Lasky

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry

Monster, by Walter Dean Myers

TTFN, by Lauren Myrade

Eragon: Inheritance Trilogy #1, by Christopher Paolini

I Funny, by James Patterson

Hatchet, by Gary Paulsen

A Child Called It, by Dave Pelzer

The Lightning Thief, by Rick Riordan

Harry Potter Series, by J.K. Rowling

Esperanza Rising, by Pam Munoz Ryan

The Wednesday Wars, by Gary Schmidt

Cirque du Freak Series, by Darren Shan

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie, by Jordan Sonnenblick

Crash, by Jerry Spinelli

Smile, by Raina Telgemeier

Uglies Trilogy, by Scott Westerfield

adapted from Stairs & Stairs Burgos (2010), Miller (2003, 2013).

Sustained Student Reading

Book Lists

Online Lists

When there are millions of books in print, it can be hard to find what's out there and what is good, when you are only one person. Throughout the years I've come across many lists that have been helpful when looking for books to share with my students. Below are some of those lists.

- Look for Nominees and Winners of the:
    - Newberry Award
    - Coretta Scott King Award
    - Pura Belpre Award
    - Printz Award
    - Sibert Award
    - Edgar Allen Poe Award (http://www.theedgars.com)
- The Best Books for Young Adults list from the American Library Association
- Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers from the American Library Association
- Time's 100 Best Young-Adult Books of All Time (http://time.com/100-best-young-adult-books/)
- Jen Robinson's Book Page (http://jkrbooks.typepad.com/)
- Teen Reads (http://www.teenreads.com/)

Appendix B

Additional Resources

Additional Resources

Educators to Follow on Twitter

Building Your Twitter PLN

Twitter has become a wonderful resource for building your professional learning network. The following is a list of educators that you should considering following on Twitter!

- Kylene Beers @KyleneBeers
- Kelly Gallagher @KellyGToGo
- Sara Mulhern Gross @thereadingzone
- Penny Kittle @pennykittle
- Donalyn Miller @donalynbooks
- John Schu @MrSchuReads
- Jennifer Serravallo @JSerravallo

Consider a Twitter search for Education chats in your field. Below is a link to a Google Calendar for Education Chats on Twitter.

- https://sites.google.com/site/twittereducationchats/