

Fall 2017

What Are Effective Strategies To Enhance Motivation And Engagement Of Secondary Struggling Readers To Grow Reading Achievement?

David Hemmesch
hamlin

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hemmesch, David, "What Are Effective Strategies To Enhance Motivation And Engagement Of Secondary Struggling Readers To Grow Reading Achievement?" (2017). *School of Education Student Capstone Projects*. 67.
https://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hse_cp/67

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at DigitalCommons@Hamline. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Education Student Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Hamline. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hamline.edu, lterveer01@hamline.edu.

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE MOTIVATION AND
ENGAGEMENT OF SECONDARY STRUGGLING READERS TO GROW READING
ACHIEVEMENT?

by

David M. Hemmesch

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts Literacy Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

December, 2017

Primary Advisor: Laura Haldin
Content Expert: Rebacca Keller

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE	4
Introduction.....	4
Classroom Teaching.....	5
Career Change	7
Summary	9
CHAPTER TWO	11
Literature Review.....	11
Introduction	11
Current Trends in Secondary Reading	12
Scripted reading programs.....	12
Teacher driven programs.....	14
Summary of current trends.....	15
Mindset.....	15
Example of fixed and growth mindset.....	16
Changing Behavior: Switch	17
The Rider.....	18
The Elephant.....	21
The Path.....	23
Conclusion.....	25
Motivation	25
Rewards and punishments.....	25
Autonomy.....	28
Mastery.....	29
Purpose.....	30
Summary	31
CHAPTER THREE	33
Project Description.....	33
Introduction	33
Curriculum	34
Setting.....	37
Implementation.....	38
Summary	39
CHAPTER FOUR.....	40

Conclusions.....	40
Researcher, Writer, and Learner	40
Implications.....	42
Policy Implications.....	43
Limitations	44
Potential Future Projects	44
Summary	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Five years ago I started a new teaching position that consisted of five reading classes. Two years ago I left that teaching position to work for a software company and create digital learning content that explains how to use the software. The journey from teaching to software company was not arduous or negative, but merely a result of a school making changes to their reading program. My licenses didn't fit this new program, and instead of interviewing for other teaching jobs, I decided to interview outside of teaching. The course work for this Master's program straddles my career change to create a unique situation where I completed course work in education while working in an education adjacent field for a software company.

My final years teaching were spent teaching five reading intervention courses to a diverse student group. Two of those classes had no set curriculum to cover, and my instructions were to improve these students as readers and prepare them for the state reading test. The other reading classes required me to use scripted curriculum that I went through extensive training to implement with fidelity. I started to notice, anecdotally, that my students in class one appeared far more motivated to read, and I had higher levels of engagement. Therefore my question is, "What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?"

Several differences existed between these two reading classes, but I noticed two main ones. First, students in class one participated in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) and focused on reading for enjoyment. Student choice was limited only by what was

available in my classroom library or our school's library. Twenty minutes of almost every class were set aside for reading in class. The scripted class did not have SSR, and students were encouraged to read at home, completed assignments connected to the books, and instructed to pick books at their reading level. Secondly, since this was scripted curriculum, I taught units based on the need to cover the material. The unit on building fluency was taught even if fluency wasn't a weakness of many of the students. Class one was taught reacting to students' perceived needs or weaknesses. While I taught both classes to the best of my ability, it is possible that an implicit bias affected my enthusiasm creating a better classroom environment in the class I preferred.

Classroom Teaching

When I was working toward my reading license, I remember a class where the professor explained she specialized in motivation and engagement. This surprised me. Until then people I was learning from had subject areas or grade level ranges as areas of expertise and not a broad cross-discipline focal point. The seed was planted. Then I saw Donalyn Miller and Stephen Layne, renown reading experts and authors, present their theories live and in person, read *Drive*(2009) by Daniel Pink, and experimented and adapted my learning in the classroom for a few years; I've gravitated towards this topic for an extended time.

In *Drive*, by Daniel Pink, he identifies three main factors that motivate people: autonomy, mastery and purpose. According to Pink autonomy is having some say in how you do what you do. Mastery is the ability to get better at what you do, and purpose means connecting to a cause that is larger than yourself. The differences in my two reading classes reflect two of these factors. Students in class one had high levels of

autonomy, more than class two. Could this be a reason for higher engagement? Maybe. Also, the unscripted class contained higher degrees of mastery because of the ability to respond to the needs of students and get better at those areas of concern.

I didn't want to spend many months extolling the negative aspects of a particular scripted curriculum, so my topic examines what worked. What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers? Is it effective to implement SSR into the curriculum or will struggling readers merely practice bad habits during the reading time? How important is student choice in the secondary reading classroom?

I have noticed a few reoccurring themes that exist in the secondary reading classrooms I've taught. First, one frequent mentality or mindset amongst many students was what I called being in denial. A student did not believe help was needed with their reading, and he would claim he read just fine. Getting him to admit a problem existed was extremely challenging even after sharing standardized test scores that showed a lagging skill. A common response from him was, "I didn't try" or "That test was stupid". A strong reason for choosing my topic was to develop or discover ways to engage this type of student. Another common mentality was the belief that reading is not important. Many students shared the belief that in today's world reading is boring, unimportant, and many other interesting ways to learn new information exist like through videos on youtube. What are effective ways to motivate and engage this mindset? Third, parental involvement was not particularly strong in regards to attendance at parent-teacher conferences, returning phone calls or emails, and reaching out to the teacher in general.

Eventually I stopped expecting a high level of parental involvement because of this experience.

When the amount of reading required of today's young people continues to rise, combined with the belief that many struggling readers feel reading is no longer that necessary, engaging and motivating these students is vitally important.

Personally I love to read and deep down believe everyone can love reading too. I also love talking about my recent reading with others to share stories, new learning or interesting tidbits, and I love the feeling I get when surrounded by many books like in libraries or bookstores. Therefore, finding effective motivation and engagement practices affects me at my core because I want to learn about transferring this love of reading to my students. I don't want them to simply read better; I want them to learn to love reading, the way I do. Maybe that's too hopeful, but I think it's possible.

When I saw Donalyn Miller present her ideas, I connected so much that I purchased her book, *The Book Whisperer*(2009), and read every one of her blog posts. She believed everyone is a reader and recognized three types of readers who might need help: developing readers (which is commonly called struggling), dormant readers(can pass reading tests but do not read), and underground readers(likes to read but not for school). I had experience with each one of these readers and agreed completely with their existence.

One aspect of this paper was the possibility that a new class could be developed at our high school to meet the needs of secondary struggling readers. It would incorporate aspects learned and disseminated from this project.

Career Change

Then as life often does, it threw a curveball, and my principal let me know that our reading program consisting of two full-time teachers and one part-time teacher would cease to exist in its current format. The high school would now service struggling readers through Language Arts classes and create new classes that taught normal Language Arts curriculum but in twice the amount of time or simply what used to be a one-hour class stretched into two hours. If I wanted to I could teach these new classes, but I needed to enroll in a program to get my Language Arts license since I was licensed in Social Studies and Reading. As I was not done with my Masters in Literacy yet and wasn't fond of the Language Arts curriculum, the idea of two more years of college classes to teach something I wasn't excited about did not appeal to me. I started looking for other employment and surprisingly landed a position at a student information software company creating instructional videos.

This felt like an amazing opportunity to try something new, but an adverse effect was that I lost my motivation to continue working on this writing because I could not see how my new position could relate to this topic that I had put so much research into already. Then one day at my new job I was asked to review and give feedback to an interactive training module in which the creator was attempting to create a more game-like environment to increase engagement with our already created training materials. Suddenly I had my idea! I could write curriculum that could be turned into software to help motivate and engage not only struggling readers but also all readers who had access to the software. My motivation was back. Creating self-paced, interacted and engaging reading curriculum became something that was my new obsession. My now previous high school had access to online classes, and I remembered looking through that for

something that could help my students. In particular the counselors often approached me about helping students whose schedules or core class credit deficiency would not allow them to be placed into a reading class. In my opinion the reading specific online options were poorly done, and I wouldn't recommend that option. Instead I'd offer workbooks or copies of material that I had used successfully and tried to meet with the students to explain them and after completion give feedback. From my perspective, a strong need existed for quality reading curriculum that could be incorporated into software. This eventually led to the creation of an e-learning course that would help change students' mindsets.

In summary when I started this journey, I thought I'd be conducting research on struggling readers to examine effective practices to motivate and engage them. My earlier focus changed because of no longer working directly with students, and this led to the idea of creating curriculum that could be incorporated into software. Is this an effective way to motivate and engage struggling readers or young readers in general? "What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?"

Summary

Along this arduous writing journey, which was twisting and turning far more than I expected, I started with an interest in, "What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?" That interest remained constant throughout along with the belief that researching and writing about this topic was hugely important for students, teachers, and administration.

I've spent my professional learning freely on this topic for several years. In Chapter 2, I examine the literature on current reading trends, mindsets, behavior change, and motivation. Chapter 3 consists of the content and format of the curriculum and how it might be used and by whom.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The amount of scholarly material on the question, “What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?” is vast and covers a wide area in both grade level and subject matter. While researching for this literature review, I gravitated towards the work of several scholars including that of Daniel Pink, Carol Dweck, and Chip and Dan Heath. These authors do not write about reading specific content, but instead focus on motivation and engagement. It was interesting to discover that these authors often cited one another to help make a point or add value to their perspective.

First, I examine the current state of secondary reading instruction from my own experience and from several sources. The status of what is happening in our reading classrooms in the 21st century can be seen as the foundation of this capstone. Some schools approach reading instruction with school administration determining the curriculum of the reading class by purchasing a pre-packaged program, while other schools allow reading teachers to determine the content of the curriculum. One is a top down approach, and the other is more of teacher directed, student-centered approached. This is a big difference I have experienced in my time as a reading teacher.

This transitions into human behavior and effective ways to change it. I dissect the metaphor of an Elephant, Rider, and Path, and possible examples from both in and out of the classroom are included to illustrate how it could be used. The ideas of this chapter may not typically be included in an education focused capstone, but this content is critical

to understand before a teacher can work to improve the skills of a struggling reader. Students must be motivated and engaged before improvement can happen.

Thirdly, I cover motivation and what science and experiments show us about what effectively motivates people for long-term success. Historically leaders, authority figures, and management used rewards and punishment to motivate workers and students, but research in the last fifty years proves these methods to be less than ideal. It may be surprising that many negative consequences are produced when rewards and punishment get used in an academic setting.

Current Trends in Secondary Reading

Current trends in secondary reading instruction revolve around two different approaches to teaching reading skills to struggling students. Schools that do use scripted reading instruction programs, and schools that do not. Scripted programs consist of many different platforms available for purchase that have daily lesson plans which teachers follow. Program developers ask that their program be taught with fidelity, and teachers often feel pressure to teach the curriculum with fidelity from administrators and program developers. Schools that do not use these rely on the teachers to provide sound reading instruction. This contrast raises the question: which is better?

Scripted reading programs. When examining scripted reading instruction programs, it is important to understand how or why schools use them. Scanlon reports some school administrators believe IDEIA legislation, a law that requires schools to meet the needs of struggling students, requires it (2013). “This is not so. Rather, IDEIA emphasizes the use of scientifically based reading research to inform practice” (2013, p. 20). Instantly when I read this I thought, this cannot be the only reason. The popularity

of these programs is not based simply on the misinterpretation of a law. A building principal tasked with raising reading test scores is also convinced to buy a program because it is marketed as research proven. This is how Read 180, a popular reading program, markets itself; “Read 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development proven to raise reading achievement for struggling readers in grade 4-12” (Read180.com). This is convincing because it claims to be proven and covers all aspects of a reading intervention program. The website also includes information about the program’s basis in research, and in fact claims, no program is more thoroughly researched (Read180.com, n.d.). However, Parsons and Harrington(2009) insist the research, both behind the curriculum of scripted programs and the proclaimed results, need a closer look.

Since I taught with a scripted reading program, I often had questions about the developers and their experience. Parsons and Harrington(2009) encourage four questions when examining these programs. First, the authors ask: who did the research, and what did the results really show? Often, but not always, the program’s developer conducted the research and holds a bias to the effectiveness of the program. The results from a literacy program need to show higher performance on meaningful assessments and not on meaningless, isolated reading tasks. The second question asks what is the best literacy program? The authors contend that no single program that is best exists as research proven or tested on similar students to the ones who would receive the instruction. Searching for the best program to raise test scores limits the goal of education, as opposed to encouraging students to read and write for many different reasons. Thirdly, will teachers become better reading and writing teachers using the program? Parsons and

Harrington believe the answer is no for most programs because of the inability of the teacher to respond to the students because of the focus on the script. The final question presented asks a poignant one about whether you'd want your own children taught reading in the way the program suggests. Many programs have low level skill work instead of thoughtful, meaningful instructions (Parsons & Harrington 2009, p. 748-750). The last question clearly indicates the feelings of the authors against scripted programs. The question I am examining for this paper, what are effective motivation and engagement techniques for secondary struggling readers, was not addressed. Are these programs effective at motivating and engaging struggling readers?

Scanlon(2009) believes some programs in general have been researched properly and only a few shown effectiveness. However, the effects proven will not be effective for even a majority of students who took part in the program. She reported that teacher decision making during instruction, or what the teacher did with the program, was the most critical factor in determining the success of the students (2009, p. 21). If it matters most what teachers do with the program, teachers must be changing the script at some level. In fact that is exactly what Datnow and Castellano (2000) discovered. "11 of 12 teachers reported making alterations in the program in spite of the insistence of administrators and program developers for program fidelity" (2000, p. 27).

Teacher driven programs. Schools that do not buy a program to use for reading intervention can still provide effective instruction. These schools rely on teachers to be the experts, respond to student's needs, and make decisions about curriculum. "We looked at our resources, considered our students' needs, and consulted the most recent research in adolescent literacy instruction and decided to use our funds to build a

classroom library with high-interest young adult novels, create an appealing and comfortable environment for teens, and provide professional development for teachers” (McCarty Plucker 2010, p. 60). Set up this way, reading intervention courses can be ultra-sensitive to the school climate and feel like a good fit within any school. This style depends on teachers providing quality instruction, but effective scripted instruction does as well. What makes non-scripted reading intervention effective? Richard Allington (2007) studied the characteristics of highly effective comprehension teachers and discovered several common traits. These included aspects like giving students choices, individualized instruction, understanding strategies and asking students to apply or demonstrate them, and changing the size of the instruction group from large to small depending on need (Allington 2002; Beers, Probst & Reif 2007). Non-scripted intervention has been highly effective also, and students showed significant increases in reading performance on standardized tests when compared with peers (McCarty Plucker, 2010).

Summary of current trends. It appears now that two ways exist to implement a reading intervention program. One way involves schools in which licensed teachers implement reading instruction to struggling readers, and the other way consists of schools purchasing scripted intervention programs that most licensed teachers adapt to their needs as he or she instructs struggling readers. Both ways can be done with research based, best practices in mind, but why not save the expense of the scripted programs apply those resources to other areas like a classroom library or professional development?

Mindset

When examining effective ways to motivate and engage struggling readers, the work of Carol Dweck highlights important aspects of the teenage mindset or brain development in general. In her book *Mindset* (2006), she created two categories of mindsets or beliefs: fixed and growth. Fixed mindset people believe that their traits, like intelligence or ability, are fixed and do not change. A person with a fixed mindset believes one can be born smart or that intelligence is set. In contrast the growth mindset person thinks traits can be developed through effort and hard work. Setbacks and mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities, and effort can overcome them. “In one world, effort is a bad thing. In the other world, effort is what makes you smart or talented” (Dweck 2006, p. 18). As a secondary reading teacher, I’ve seen these mindsets on display in the classroom. Students often express the belief that working on their reading does not help them, a great example of the fixed mindset. Is it possible to change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset? Dweck argues that it is. One way to help students make the change is through effective feedback. For example telling a student he or she is incredibly smart supports the fixed mindset, while praising the effort that student put in cultivates the growth mindset (2006). Another effective way to build the growth mindset involves presenting challenging learning assignments as exciting and easy assignments as boring (Dweck 2010).

Example of fixed and growth mindset. Dweck has several scenarios in her book examining fixed mindset reactions versus growth mindset reactions to real-world situations. In one of these, a young person is rejected from the only graduate school she applied to, and the fixed mindset reaction concludes that her application was simply not good enough and therefore she was not good enough. Experts viewed her work as

average, and she should move on. The growth mindset reaction contrasts this by searching for feedback about what could have been done better, and leads this young person to call the admissions office to ask what she could have done better for next time. The admissions director takes a second look at this young person's application because of her initiative to seek honest feedback which leads to her eventual acceptance into the program (Dweck, 2006 p. 226-227). The fixed mindset person thinks my skills are not good enough, while the growth mindset person searches for ways to improve to reach their goal. Many times in Dweck's writing, she points out that this difference leads to increased achievement amongst growth mindset people. In the education world, this could mean students with fixed mindsets regarding reading could see dramatic improvement by working to change their mindset.

Changing Behavior: Switch

Motivation, or the lack of it, crucially affects the success of a struggling adolescent reader. What actually motivates people to do better and improve? Chip and Dan Heath in *Switch* analyzed a metaphor which compares human activity and changing that behavior to an elephant with a rider following a path (Heath and Heath, 2010). At first this comparison may be difficult to connect with, but the authors explain and demonstrate it well throughout the book. In this metaphor the rider on the elephant represents the analytical part of our brains, while the elephant denotes our emotional side. The path indicates the environment these two are in, or the environment in which people live (2010). In order for people, or struggling readers, to make meaningful change, all three of these elements need to be working together. If the rider or analytical side knows the correct path or environment, and a huge elephant or emotional side disagrees, lasting

change will not happen. If the elephant and rider agree on the path, but it is the wrong one, change will not happen.

How does this relate to my question: “What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?” The rider, elephant and path metaphor could be the framework used when implementing motivation and engagement techniques to change secondary struggling reader’s habits and behaviors. In order to do this, Heath and Heath break down each third of this metaphor into usable bits of information that contain examples from a variety of sources.

The Rider. To enact meaningful behavioral or academic change, the rider needs good direction. “The Rider part of our minds has many strengths. The Rider is a thinker and a planner and can plot a course for a better future (2010, p. 32).” However, the rider has some serious weaknesses, and the rider is much more easily tired than the elephant. “The Rider loves to contemplate and analyze, and, making matters worse, his analysis is almost always directed at problems rather than bright spots (2010, p. 32-33).”

Contemplating and analyzing skills often need to be developed in young people, so is this really a bad thing? Yes, because, “the Rider will spin his wheels indefinitely unless he’s given clear direction (2010, p. 33).” Heath and Heath call this “Direct the Rider”, and one way to do it is find the bright spots. An example of finding the bright spots for the Rider exists in solutions-focused therapy, and it involves imagining a miracle scenario. Therapists ask patients if a miracle happened and corrected their most urgent problem, what would be the first small evidence that the miracle occurred. The patients answer to this question focuses on bright spots and helps direct the rider. Another example in

solutions-focused therapy is the exception question in which patients focus on times when the problem was better. The exceptions become the bright spots for the Rider, and for a struggling learner the exception questions allow him or her to focus on class periods or subjects where the most success happens. Heath and Heath explain that analyzing these bright spots gives information that can be transferred to other areas (2010, p. 38-43). When struggling readers or learners realize why or how their success happens, it can be duplicated in other parts of their life. In the education world, this means a struggling reader who finds success should analyze why or how it happened, so it can be repeated especially as the reading demands of students become more difficult.

Script critical moves. After identifying bright spots, it is important to script the critical moves and not simply tell a struggling reader to try harder or some other generic advice. An example from *Switch* examines a study of 110 abusive parents that were divided into two groups with the goal of each group to change the abusive behavior. One group underwent a normal anger-management program, and after three years, 60% of this group committed another act of child abuse. The other group participants engaged in a scripted parenting program including supervised parent and child interactions, instructions given through an in-ear monitor telling parents how to respond to their children, and how to give commands that kids will listen to. The parents found these sessions exhausting because he or she was forced to monitor their actions so closely; however after three years, only 20% of this group committed another act of child abuse (2012, p. 63-68). This shows a drastic difference between what generic advice can do versus scripting the critical moves. Most people who abuse their children do not want to, but without specific, interaction instructions did not know how to change. Likewise,

struggling readers need specific strategies to follow when he or she doesn't understand something while reading or when meaning breaks down.

Point to the destination. The final portion of directing the Rider is pointing to the destination. "When you describe a compelling destination, you're helping to correct one of the Rider's great weaknesses- the tendency to get lost in analysis (2010, p. 81)." In the teaching world, the far away destination of graduation or post-secondary plans is often too futuristic for struggling readers to grasp or motivate. Struggling students want success in school and have goals for when school is done; however, the powerful Elephant often derails these plans. I've helped students write academic SMART goals, and he or she shows initial interest; instead of reading for 30 minutes or completing their math homework, he or she ends up playing video games or chatting with friends online. He or she really meant to spend that time academically but probably rationalized that tomorrow morning or tomorrow night would be better. I actually have similar problems with my own goals. "We're all loophole-exploiting lawyers when it comes to our own self-control (2010, p. 86)." So pointing to the destination can be inspiring and stops the Rider from spinning his wheels, but a more concrete goal is needed.

Black and white goals. The authors describe black and white goals as a solution to our ability to exploit loopholes because people cannot lie to themselves about a black and white goal. An example of a black and white goal is "exercise for 20 minutes every day." It is either done or not done, and no wiggle room exists. Another example for someone who wants to be healthier is, "no more Cheetos" (2010, p. 85-88). What could a black and white goal be for a struggling reader? Maybe "read 20 minutes every day outside of

school.” In my experience most struggling readers would benefit from simple, black, and white goals individualized to him or her.

The Elephant. Directing the Rider is one thing, but remember to have meaningful change, the powerful Elephant needs to be in agreement with the Rider. It’s a misconception that people will simply analyze a situation and make a change. In reality change happens more along the lines of seeing and feeling the problem and then making the change (2010, p. 105-106). My struggling readers know their futures would be better if their reading ability went up, but that is not enough to change behaviors or motivate the Elephant.

Teens and cancer treatment. A story from the book to illustrate this point highlights teen’s struggle with cancer treatments after the cancer has gone into remission. For a long time after the initial intensive, hospital administered treatments, cancer patients take medications, and many teens fail to follow doctor’s orders (2010, 107-108). This is hard to believe because anyone who has survived a round of cancer would surely want to prevent a return of it. In an effort to increase the teen’s compliance, a video game was developed to depict a character fighting cancer cells in the body with informational video-breaks to explain the importance of taking their medications. The developers thought the game part would entice teens enough to watch the videos, but they discovered most teens only played about two levels. However, the results were impressive as the amount of medications in the blood of the game-playing patients went up 20 percent compared to those who had not seen the game (2010, p. 109). This was mysterious. The game-playing teens had basically the same level of information as regular patients with the advantage of playing a small amount of a video game. How could this change their

behavior? The developers concluded that the game acted much the same way a short advertisement does in that it created emotions or feelings. The teens wanted to be the character in the video game fighting cancer in the body, and in order to do that, they had to take their medications (2010, p. 110). This reminds me so much of basketball shoe advertisements from my youth! In those advertisements, professional basketball players usually attributed some of their success to their shoes, so the shoes felt important to me as well. Heath and Heath call this “Find the Feeling,” and for struggling readers to change and become avid readers, he or she needs to find the feeling of what reading can be – the flow of reading. Karl Kapp, a leading author in learning technology writes that “If a faculty member, trainer, or designer can provide the environment that encourages flow in the learner, he or she can move closer to putting learners into the flow state (2012, p. 73)

Shrink the change. If finding the feeling was successful, “shrink the change” can continue to motivate and engage. When a student is several grade levels below his or her grade in reading ability, making that huge improvement can seem insurmountable. “Small targets lead to small victories, and small victories can often trigger a positive spiral of behavior” (2010, p. 146). What can these small targets be in a secondary reading classroom?

Example for classroom. Frequently struggling readers see themselves as non-readers or as outsiders to the reading world because it’s something he or she cannot or will not participate in. One step towards motivating and engaging that student is through showing them ways in which he or she is already a reader, and many avenues exist in today’s culture that force young people to read like through social media, gaming, or mobile device communication. This is shrinking the change and bringing into view the

idea of being a reader. Revisiting the solution focused therapy, miracle question provides a way to shrink the change in the classroom. I envision a conversation like this as a possible way to interact with struggling readers.

Teacher: On a scale of 1-10, ten being a student who is an avid reader and one being someone who doesn't really read, where would you rate yourself?

Student: Probably a two or three.

Teacher: We're/you're 20 to 30 percent of the way towards being a ten!

Grow your people. Another way to motivate the Elephant is what Heath and Heath call "Grow Your People," and it involves getting people to change their identities or how he or she views the world (2010). This is where the work of Carol Dweck and her research around the Fixed and Growth Mindset come back into play. Are abilities or traits set and can we change them? An example from *Switch* illustrates how a company grew its people by making a simple change. Instead of having only a small segment of its workforce dedicated to product improvement, every worker become known as an inventor, and all employees were encouraged to submit ideas that could help. This company discovered that some of the best solutions came from employees who normally would never be heard from (2010, p156-158). In education this re-framing of identity is done by teachers by using the word scholars or readers to address students who have been struggling.

The Path. If the Rider and Elephant work together toward a goal, the achievement of that goal can still be derailed by the Path or environment.

Classroom example. In a secondary reading classroom, changing the environment is a popular way to engage struggling readers. Turning a typical, desk-filled classroom into

one with soft chairs and reading nooks creates appealing spaces for readers to read.

Heath and Heath referred to this as shaping the path (2010), and it's one way to make the desired behavior the easier choice for students.

Habit building. Building habits is another way to shape the Path and help stay on course. An elementary school with a track record of very low test scores and chronic behavior issues used the power of habits to change the morning routine and influence learning. Students before school routine had been chaotic from drop-off to their classroom, and this involved eating in a cafeteria and transitioning down a hallway in a fairly unstructured way. Teachers reported that the students were often wild by the time he or she arrived in the classroom. The change included greeting students in the parking lot, escorting them into the school, and engaging them as a group in the cafeteria. The overall atmosphere of the school changed because of these early morning habits established by the school (2010, p. 217-220). “A good change leader never thinks, ‘Why are these people acting so badly? They must be bad people.’ A change leader thinks, ‘How can I set up a situation that brings out the good in these people?’” (2010, p. 220)?

Classroom example. Building habits is probably one of the better ways to engage a struggling reader. If it is established early that every class period will have silent reading time, a struggling reader can get used to the idea that whenever he or she enters the room reading will happen. Many times struggling learners come from chaotic home lives, and routine in the classroom is appealing.

Rallying the herd. For those resisting the change, Heath and Heath believe rallying the herd is an effective way to help (2010). In schools this is labeled as positive peer pressure and is very convincing for teenagers. “The Elephant constantly looks to the herd

for cues about how to behave. This is why baristas and bartenders seed their tip jars – they’re trying to send signals about the ‘norm’ of the herd” (2010, p. 228). Struggling readers and teenagers in general constantly worry about what the herd is doing. In my experience, if several students disengaged during silent reading time, students sitting near them were far more likely to stop reading as well. Conversely a room full of silent readers had a powerful impact on a student reluctant to start reading.

Conclusion. The extensive examination of this metaphor provides a framework which should lead decision making processes in an intervention classroom. However, another motivational framework exists that complements the Rider, Elephant, Path metaphor well. When deciding what kind of Path to create or what to tell the Rider of a struggling reader, what should it be based on?

Motivation

Rewards and punishments. The conventional wisdom is that people need rewards or punishments to be motivated and want to do well. Daniel Pink (2009) calls this carrots and sticks and provides an intriguing argument why they do not work for most tasks in the 21st century. In particular for creative or higher level thinking tasks, the element of a reward can actually decrease the performance, but tasks that require very little cognitive ability can be helped with a reward (2009, p. 60). I classify reading, and in particular reading comprehension, as a higher level thinking task, so why are so many schools offering rewards-based reading programs to their students? Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck (2010) found that students who reported high levels of extrinsic motivation reported lower levels of reading amounts. These scholars also found a connection between students’ reading amount and students’ reading achievement, so

students who had higher extrinsic motivators read less and at lower levels. However, in a 40 year meta-analysis studying intrinsic and extrinsic incentives on people's actual performance, Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford (2014) concluded that incentives or extrinsic factors increased performance when combined with an intrinsic motivation. "Counter to claims otherwise, our research demonstrates the joint impact of incentives and intrinsic motivation is critical to performance" (2014, p. 1001).

If-then. Pink argues throughout the book that many people are stuck in the "if-then" way of thinking because that is historically what's been used to motivate people. If a person does a simple task, then the person is rewarded. If it's done faster, the reward can be more. When "if-then" rewards are offered for reading, which should be an enjoyable activity in itself, or other high level skills, they can extinguish intrinsic motivation, encourage cheating, and foster short-term thinking (2009, p. 57). Exceptions for "if-then" rewards are for low-level, boring, repetitive tasks. If a boring assignment or task needs to be completed in the classroom, an "if-then" reward is okay, and Pink offers three bits of advice to help with completion: share reasons why the task is important or part of a bigger purpose, admit that it is boring, and let students complete it their own way (2009, p. 62). Historically, many leaders have operated under the belief that people will try to avoid work if possible and need strong persuasion to engage in it. Research in the last fifty years has proven that people will be interested and engage in work just as he or she would with play (2009, p. 74).

Candle problem. The evidence against carrots and sticks as a motivational tool is very strong. An example with people using creative thinking is known as the candle problem in which participants attempt to attach a candle to the wall with these materials:

a book of matches, a candle, and a box of tacks. People typically figure out the solution after five to ten minutes. (The solution is tacking the small box which held the tacks to the wall and placing the candle in it.) Then experimenters presented some participants with the incentive of a cash reward if he or she completed the task quickly while having others simply attempt it and time their completion. The results are interesting and not what one would expect. The group being offered the cash reward took on average over three minutes longer to solve the problem (2009, p. 40-42)! The money didn't help, and it actually hurt the performance of the participants. It is alarming to think that rewards could actually make students do worse on creative tasks.

Day care example. Another example of the ineffectiveness of carrots and sticks comes from a day care instituting a new policy for parents picking up their kids after the deadline, or being late. The new policy charged a fee every time a parent missed the cut-off time. This "stick" should decrease the amount of late pick-ups, but the daycare discovered that the amount actually went up to twice the previous level after implementing the new policy. What the daycare thought was a punishment to decrease the undesired behavior actually helped people change their thinking from a moral obligation to a transaction (2009, p. 50-51). "Sticks" can have the same effect in the classroom.

Negative effects. Carrots and sticks often foster short-term thinking. Reading programs like Accelerated Reader (A.R.) offer prizes for getting to certain levels or achieving a certain number of points for reading books and taking quizzes. This is the classic definition of a carrot and many students struggle to work beyond the carrot. "So if students get a prize for reading three books, many won't pick up a fourth, let alone

embark on a lifetime of reading...” (2009, p. 56). Many schools, in particular elementary schools, do this right now. Examples include A.R but also many less formal ones like: if the entire grade reads a million minutes, then the principal will shave his head, or if the class reads one hundred books, then they get a pizza party. These incentives promote short-term thinking and can actually be harmful.

Pink narrows down people’s innate motivators into three categories: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Human beings by our very nature are curious and engaged (2009, p. 87). This exists in my own four year old who will often become so curious about a new discovering that he needs me to do internet research or visit the library for books to quench his curiosity. No grade or recognition is connected to this learning, just the internal desire to learn more about something he finds interesting.

Autonomy. One definition for autonomy by Merriam-Webster is self-directing freedom and especially moral independence. Pink adds that people want autonomy over four areas of their work: what they do, when it gets done, how they do it, and whom they work with (2009, p. 91). Private companies like 3M and Google have used this way of thinking and incorporated time in the work week allowing employees to work on whatever problems or issues he or she sees as most important or interesting. In education, teachers have morphed this idea into titles like Genius Hour or Passion Time when students work on projects and self-determine aspects of it with varying levels of guidance from the teacher. Autonomy is often included as a key element to motivation, “We saw that social contextual conditions that support one’s feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are the basis for one maintaining intrinsic motivation” (Ryan and Deci 2000, p. 65).

When people complete their work is another aspect. Several private companies have abandoned the regular office schedule and replaced it with a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE). In these work places, it is more important that one's work is done than when that work is completed. My new job at a software company would fall under the ROWE category, and after an awkward transition of feeling the need to put in a certain number of hours, I've stopped tracking my hours completely.

The technique used in a task or how someone would complete it affects the level of autonomy people feel. Call centers in particular have experimented with letting workers meet the needs of customers the best way he sees fit, and this has resulted in increased employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover (2009, p100-101).

Picking one's group or team is another level, but this contrasts mightily with the common educational practice of picking groups for students to avoid anyone feeling left out. At Facebook, new hires go through a training process, and after completing the process, he or she gets the autonomy of selecting which engineering team to join (2009, p. 102-103).

Mastery. The ability to work on something and get better and better at a meaningful endeavor is Pink's basic definition of what mastery is all about (2009, p. 109). It's highly motivating for students as well as adults to work towards becoming an expert at something on some level. This is where Pink's work intertwines with Dweck's because Pink believes mastery has three laws. The first one deals with Mindset and focuses mainly on Dweck's fixed and growth mindset theory. His second law refers to the painful nature of mastery, mastery is a pain. Pink argues that the path to mastery is

difficult and often painful, and the difference in elite level performers usually can be determined by how well an individual adheres to the path required for mastery (2009, p. 121-123). Pink's final law is a bit more confusing, and he uses a concept from algebra to illustrate the idea that mastery can never truly be attained. Mastery is an Asymptote which, in algebra, is a curved line that approaches a straight line but never touches it. This is what can be so motivating about mastery because one can never actually reach it, but one can get continually better. (2009, p. 124-125).

Purpose. Pink's final aspect of motivational theory center arounds purpose or being connected to the greater good. Across generations people express the need to be plugged into something bigger than themselves, and some companies have woven this idea into their makeup. A shoe company called TOMS gives one pair of shoes away to someone in need for every pair they sell (2009, p. 133-134). Pink labels these type of companies as "not only for profit" and often the profit is used to help the greater good.

Researchers studied the happiness of recent college graduates while also looking at whether these people had achieved their goals. The goals were grouped into two main categories: profit goals (concerned about money) and purpose goals (concerned about impact in the world). These researchers discovered that people who reached purpose goals reported higher levels of happiness and lower levels of anxiety than people who reached their profit goals. In fact people who reached their profit goals reported happiness levels that were no higher than when in school, but their anxiety and other negative feelings were higher. "If people chase profit goals, reach those goals, and still don't feel any better about their lives, one response is to increase the size and scope of the goals-to seek more money or greater outside validation" (2009, p. 143). I picture a

downward spiral for people acting this way where he or she achieves more but feels worse about it, and maybe this is why companies “not only for profit” appeal more to people.

Summary

The current secondary reading classroom varies greatly depending on school philosophy and whether schools choose a scripted program to use or have teachers direct the reading program. Both require teachers to adapt the learning to best meet the needs of the students.

Carol Dweck’s work brings the idea of people or student’s mindsets contributing greatly to the amount or level he or she achieves. Remember she divides mindsets into two camps, Fixed and Growth, and encourages effective feedback as a tool to guide students from one mindset to the other.

The metaphor of the Elephant, Rider and Path provides a framework to assist in the difficult task of actually changing behavior. All three aspects can be used to nudge students’ engagement in a secondary reading classrooms, as well as help students better understand themselves as people and what can be effective.

Finally, Daniel Pink’s motivational theories establish the foundation of what can get people motivated for the long-term and not simply for the grading term or year. Teachers can give students a sense of autonomy, a chance to pursue mastery, and hopefully teach them how achieving reading success can help students’ greater purpose.

In Chapter 3, I examined the basis for creating curriculum that applies this research into a learning experience. As my job allowed me to create electronic learning experiences, I decided to use that to my advantage.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

Since I wasn't teaching in the classroom with students, it was initially difficult to imagine what I should create to address, "What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?" I needed to develop something that would potentially benefit a classroom or school, and it needed to be self-explanatory to use. What should I develop that could be useful for students, teachers, and administrators?

First, I envisioned a secondary classroom setting in which students were working to improve their reading ability. This curriculum would not have to be used exclusively by struggling readers because it focuses on one's mindset and could benefit any level of student. However, when I created it, a secondary reading classroom was the intended audience, and I envisioned these students completing it in the first week of the class. My perfect world scenario involves a classroom of struggling learners whose self-belief system is one in which he or she believes the struggles in school exist because of his or her own lack of intelligence. The curriculum I've created aims to change that self-belief system.

The basis for the first part of this curriculum pulls from much of the research examined in Chapter 2 including the actual content which teaches, explains, and quizzes about Carol Dweck's ideas regarding mindset. This curriculum also keeps at the forefront the three tenants of motivation laid out by Daniel Pink. I added to this research by investigating gamification and the work of Karl Kapp and other leading scholars in the

gamification world. Gamification can be defined as “using game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning, and solve problems” (Kapp 2012, p. 10). My developed curriculum follows the four-door model developed first by Dr.Sivasailam “Thiagi” Thiagarajan (thiagi.com) which intertwines much of what I learned from my literature review. The four-door model is a framework that divides the learning experience into categories: the library or resources, a playground, a café or a place to ask questions, and an assessment area.

Curriculum

As I started to design an e-learning experience for students, I knew I wanted it to be interactive and provide some level of autonomy and mastery to incorporate the ideas of

Drive as much as possible. One

way autonomy shows itself in

this Mindset Mini-Course is on

the very first slide. Learners

have the opportunity to decide

what part of the course he or she

wants to start with. Following

the four-door model, I created

virtual doors for my learners to

walk through. Each blue box in Figure 1 is an area of the course that can be explored

independently of the others. Thiagi’s four door model includes a Library section where

resources are based that I have labeled ‘Library’. A playground section, which I’ve

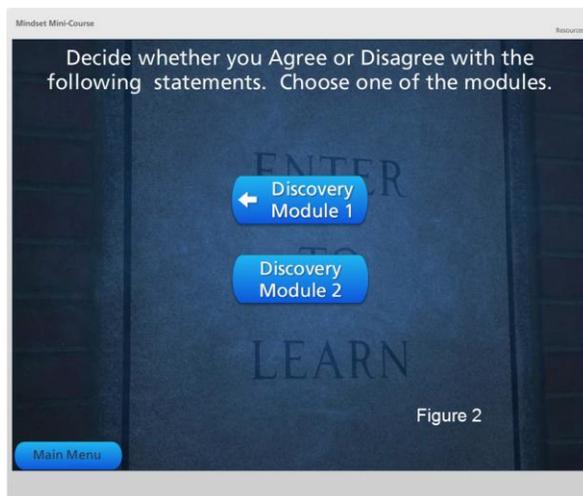
labeled ‘Discover your Mindset’, where users answer questions to determine their current



Figure 1

mindset. The third door Thiago calls the Café and is meant to be where learners can ask questions. My third door is called ‘Ask the Experts’ and has a series of frequently asked questions. The fourth door in the four-door model is for assessment or for me ‘Quiz Center’. Obviously I have a fifth blue button, and that is a result of adapting the four-door model to meet the needs of this curriculum. These doors or buttons in my case create a baseline of autonomy, and it is not a teacher or someone else telling the learner exactly how to learn the material. The only requirement is that the top four blue boxes need to be completed to unlock the quiz center.

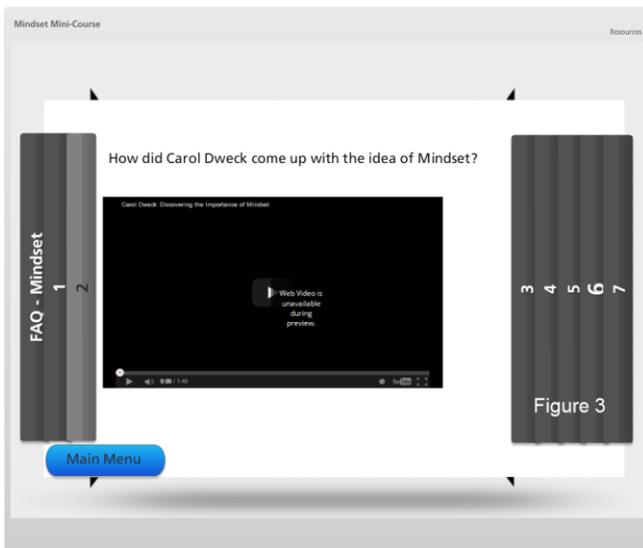
Once entering one of the virtual doors, the learner is presented with a learning experience that is different for each one. Many e-learning courses I’ve experienced are



linear or chronological and force the learner to proceed in a step by step manner. When I’ve completed this linear style myself, I am often passively clicking through the course to get to the end. If a learner starts my Mindset Mini-Course, there is not one place for

everyone to start. Starting at the top blue box, “Discover your Mindset” brings the learner to a questionnaire in which he or she can figure out whether he or she currently has a fixed or growth mindset. Again though, there is a choice as to which set of questions the learner answers (Figure 2). These questions are pulled directly from Dweck’s book Mindset, and after answering these questions, a pie chart appears

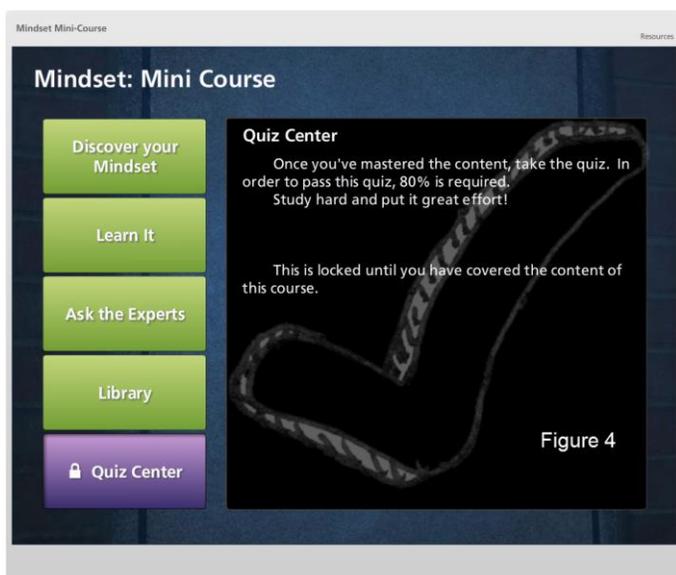
displaying what percentage of fixed or growth mindset the learner has based on his or her answers.



Starting at the second blue box (Learn It) in Figure 1 brings the learner to what is a more traditional e-learning course that explains and defines fixed and growth mindset, and then provides examples of people demonstrating the power of a growth mindset. The third blue box in Figure 1 (Ask the Experts) includes many frequently asked questions

and has video clips (Figure 3) for answers to some of the questions because I wanted multi-media in order to be more engaging for the learner.

The fourth blue box in Figure 1 (Library) means that it holds a large amount of information regarding fixed and growth mindset. Some resources under the virtual door of the Library can be found in other places within the Mindset Mini-Course, but I also included additional resources for any learner who wants to learn more about the subject matter contained in this curriculum.



The final blue box in Figure 1 (Quiz Center) is the virtual door the learner clicks through to access the quiz and show mastery of the subject matter of this

course. It is only available to the learner after visiting the other four virtual doors or blue boxes. After completing the quiz, the learner is given immediate feedback with a percentage correct and allowed to review his or her quiz. If the learner wants to re-take the quiz, the questions are pulled in at random from a question bank, so the learner would not get the same quiz again. Some of the questions might be the same but not all of them.

This Mindset Mini-Course was designed attempting to incorporate much of the literature review of chapter 2. The subject matter focuses exclusively on the ideas of Carol Dweck, while Daniel Pink's thoughts on motivation were kept in mind throughout the design process as well Heath and Heath's thoughts on finding the feeling and motivating the elephant and teaching the rider the details. As I reflected on the work it took to build an e-learning mini-course, I realized my hope is that any struggling learner could benefit from completing it, but where and how could it be used best? Here is a weblink to the Mindset Mini-Course. [Mindset Mini-Course](#)

Setting

Many times in a secondary reading classroom for struggling readers, students' mindsets about what he or she is able to achieve is the foundation for building the skills of a more advanced reader. Reading has either never been their thing or he or she can remember liking reading during elementary school or early middle school and slowly growing to dislike it. It is rare, but sometimes a student in this class environment really likes reading. One reoccurring theme that came up in individual conversations with students who do not like to read is the belief that he or she is simply not good at reading because of some reason beyond their control. Some believed a mental deficit existed, and some claimed to not have any time. Another common reason was an inability to focus,

and many more were explained to me during my teaching experience. While it's the job of a good reading teacher to help struggling readers work past these beliefs, it is important to understand that the skills needed to be a solid reader can be extremely difficult to teach if the teacher does not change the student's self-belief system. Therefore, this curriculum could be used by any secondary teacher to help a struggling learner accomplish the change needed either in a whole class setting or on a more individual basis.

Often schools have advisory or homeroom periods in which teachers cover material outside the normal curriculum. This Mindset mini-course used as advisory activity for several days would fit into the experiences I had as a classroom teacher.

Implementation. I sent this curriculum to three teachers, two co-workers, two principals, and one paraprofessional.

I sent the curriculum I've developed to teaching connections who teach classes at the secondary level. I asked these teachers to first examine the mini-course themselves, and then, if these teachers find merit in it, use it with their students. While two teachers gave very positive feedback, they have not used it with their students yet, and the third one did not respond. One teacher asked if the amount of reading in the mini-course could be reduced or if audio could be added to read out loud the material. This was a great suggestion; however I was not able to implement it.

One of the principals I sent the Mindset mini-course to asked if the content could be re-worked to better suit the elementary grades because he worked in an elementary building. His entire building was teaching about Mindset, and he thought my mini-

course could be used if I made it elementary friendly. This was another great idea that could not be done in the time frame of this class.

As of now, I do not believe any students have interacted with the course. Through feedback, it appears people want the option to tailor the mini-course to their needs which unfortunately is time-consuming and not practical while completing the capstone work.

My content expert believes this mini-course is valuable and should be shared with more teachers, and my plan is to continue to send it to more teachers.

Summary

This curriculum was written to address the question of, “What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?” My career change in the middle of this capstone created a different path to completion, but I believe the e-learning course I developed because of that career change could be used by more people than if I had remained a classroom teacher.

Mindset and the difference between a fixed and growth mindset is the main basis for the subject matter of this e-learning course. Learners or users of this mini-course will experience levels of autonomy throughout the learning experience, and the ability to demonstrate a level of mastery at the end. Both of these tenants were used specifically because of Pink’s (2011) philosophy on motivation. This curriculum was accessed by other teachers who provided feedback on the quality and the value of the mini-course. Upon receiving that feedback, I made improvements on the curriculum.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusions

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the learning that took place during the time I worked on this project of making a e-learning mini-course about Carol Dweck's idea of Mindset. I highlight some of my learning from the literature review and project creation process, and then examine some of the implications of my project. After that I address limitations of my project including the struggles involved with no longer teacher in the classroom. Finally potential future projects are addressed.

The first part of this capstone was written at least three years ago. Much has happened since then. A career change, an extended delay, and a fresh look are three phrases that come to mind as I reflect on the work for this Capstone Project. When I started, I was teaching and believed that this Capstone's completion would take place in the classroom. Students on my class rosters would inspire and motivate me to continue to examine my question, "What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?" over the extended timeframe required for this scholarly work. Changing careers was unplanned. During the transition from teaching to working for a software company, I knew it was the right decision for many reasons: less stress, excited about something new, and financially more rewarding, but demotivation for this Capstone was a side effect and a break ensued. Once it occurred to me that I could create e-learning with the software I had access to at my software company, a fresh perspective took hold. I decided to create an e-learning course about the ideas in Carol Dweck's book *Mindset* (2006).

Researcher, Writer, and Learner

The most enjoyable part of this experience was researching and learning about motivation and engagement. I have always enjoyed learning additional information, and this was no exception. The struggle for me revolved around taking good notes as I learned. As I look back on my literature review, the parts that influenced me the most, both professionally and personally, were the books *Mindset* (Dweck, 2006), *Drive* (Pink, 2009), and *Switch* (Heath & Heath, 2010). While I included supporting material for the ideas brought forth in these books, the books themselves and the way the ideas were conveyed by the authors affected me the most. Dweck's idea presents the Fixed versus Growth juxtaposition, and struggling readers should start here. A struggling reader should know if his internal belief about reading ability can be categorized as Fixed or Growth. Does he or she really believe that through effort he or she can lose the label of a struggling reader? Dweck's work would answer yes loudly!

Moving on to Pink's *Drive* (2009), a teacher, or anyone in a leadership position, should understand what motivates people. Pink makes it clear that rewards and punishments for anything other than rudimentary tasks can have negative effects. Autonomy (having some say about how you do what you do), Mastery (the chance to get better and better), and Purpose (being involved in something bigger than just ourselves) are true motivators and tapping into those can have a lasting impact on a struggling reader.

Heath and Heath's *Switch* (2010) establishes a working metaphor for how to change human behavior. These authors compare a person's cognitive reasoning to that of a Rider on top of an elephant. That elephant represents a person's emotions and motivating the elephant is powerful. The third part of the metaphor is the path or environment the rider

or elephant are in. All three of the elements included in the metaphor should be aligned for change to happen. The Rider needs to cognitively understand how the change will be beneficial, while the Elephant needs to feel the emotions, and finally the Path should be groomed for successful travel. In a secondary reading classroom, the mind of a struggling reader needs the information that shows how much better his or her life could be including career and college choices. The emotions or Elephant should find the feeling of getting lost in a book. Lastly the classroom itself, the Path, needs to make it as easy as possible to focus on reading.

When I was done with the Literature Review and brainstormed ideas about what would be my next step, I kept gravitating toward Carol Dweck's work and the Fixed and Growth Mindset paradigm. A reoccurring conversation with my overly competitive young son cemented the idea. He normally threw 'temper tantrums' if he lost in any type of game, and after he calmed down, we would discuss proper ways to behave. I found myself using Growth Mindset feedback to encourage him. "You tried really hard," or "You're new to this sport, and it takes a lot of practice to get good." I saw how powerful it was for a young boy and formed his approach to new learning or activities. I wanted to spread Dweck's work through my Capstone work.

Implications

I hope now that my Mindset mini-course could be the beginning of an online reading program. It helps students first understand what type of Mindset he or she currently holds in a private way when maybe the student is not aware of their own metacognition. A blended classroom environment where students complete work on tablets or computers might be ideal, if the students could be surrounded by actual books, and students check in

with a teacher. My hope is that my Mindset mini-course is engaging and follows the research covered in my literature review so that struggling readers could be motivated and engaged to complete it with minimal guidance.

I also imagine my mini-course used in secondary classrooms in which the teacher believes the students need a reminder of the benefits of having a growth mindset over a fixed mindset. When I started working on the idea of creating a mini-course about Mindset, it was new and had not been used and taught commonly in schools. That was over 2 years ago. During that time, through conversations with teachers and paras, I learned that some schools did building wide pushes to teach students about Mindset. Now that my mini-course is complete, and I've shared it with several teachers, a common first response has been apathy towards a topic that feels like something old to teachers who already used Dweck's ideas. That first response changed for at least one teacher when he explored my mini-course and reported back that what I created was a little different than what he previously thought. Teachers with this prior experience covering Mindset are great candidates for using it in his or her classrooms as a review, especially if the teacher observes students portraying a fixed mindset.

My content expert is a former science teacher with her Ed.D. During one of the meetings with my content expert, I was excited by her reaction to using and completing the course. She suggested several improvements, but she thought the design and overall feel of the mini-course were great. Her opinion as a veteran teacher was valuable, and she shared my mini-course with another teacher giving me that teacher's feedback as well. She thought my mini-course was valuable and should be used in the classroom.

Policy Implications

For schools that have done a building wide push to teach all kids about the Fixed and Growth Mindset, my mini-course could be part of the curriculum used. Maybe all classes could start learning about Mindset with my course! It is a free resource and publicly available. My social media platforms of Twitter and Facebook were used to share this already.

Limitations

Obvious limitations are the distractions young people face with electronic learning, tablets, and computers. Schools are using technology more and more, so teachers have practiced the art of teaching students with that technology. Another limitation was mentioned earlier and that is that many teachers, administrators, and other staff members have actively taught these concepts before and may be hesitant to look for something new. However, these concepts, fixed and growth mindsets, have not been presented in the format that I created.

Potential Future Projects

After completing this project, I noticed opportunities for other topics that could be turned into a mini-course like the one I created using the same technology. One of my struggles as a classroom teacher was the amount of change year over year conveyed by administration. An administrator learned something new over the summer and wanted to see it implemented in the building. Using my Mindset mini-course as an example, whatever idea or concept brought in by administration could be converted into an e-learning mini-course and shared with the staff or students.

Summary

Initially when discovering my question, “What are effective strategies to enhance motivation and engagement of secondary struggling readers to grow reading achievement?” I thought my research and project would discover and converge some best practices revolving around the best reading strategies. As I followed my interests in the literature review, I came to the realization that long before a student is able to utilize any specific reading strategy, a student needs to recognize their mindset toward reading. This felt so important. My hope is that I created an easy to use resource for teachers, administrators, and other staff members whether he or she has taught about fixed and growth mindsets before or is first learning about it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allington, R. L. (2002). You can't learn much from books you can't read. *Educational Leadership*, 60(3), 16-19.
- Ari, O. (2013). Matthew effects in struggling college readers. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 30(1), 4-21.
- Asher, L. (2012). Literacy kicks. Retrieved from <http://www.litkicks.com/WhyReadingIsAlwaysSocial#.VR71DBYhSZA>
- Beers, G. K., Probst, R. E., & Rief, L. (2007). *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Datnow, A., Castellano, M. (2000). Teachers' responses to success for all: How beliefs, experiences, and adaptations shape implementation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(3), 775-99.
- Duncan-Owens, D. (2009). Scripted reading programs: Fishing for success. *Principal*, 88(3), 26-29.
- Dweck, C. S. (2010). Even geniuses work hard. *Educational Leadership*, 68(1), 16-20.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

- EDIGER, M. (2012). The great debate in reading instruction. *Reading Improvement*, 49(4), 129-133.
- Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide: How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Gallagher, K. (2003). *Reading reasons: Motivational mini-lessons for middle and high school*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Gilliam, B. K., Dykes, F., Gerla, J. K., & Wright, G. L. (2011). Silent reading manifestations of adolescent struggling readers. *Reading Improvement*, 48(3), 118-127.
- Goldenberg, C., Gallimore, R., Reese, L., & Garnier, H. (2001). Cause or effect? A longitudinal study of immigrant Latino parents' aspirations and expectations, and their children's school performance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 547-582.
- Haghani, F. S. A. (2011). Intervention in the learning process of second year medical students. *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences: The Official Journal of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences*, 16(3), 346-52.
- Heath, C., Heath, D. (2010). *Switch: How to change things when change is hard*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Holmes, W. (2011). Using game-based learning to support struggling readers at home. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 36(1), 5-19.

- Jarzombek, S. (2015). Timesunion.com. Retrieved from <http://blog.timesunion.com/scottj/reading-is-social/68/>
- Jensen, E., Snider, C. (2013). *Turnaround tools for the teenage brain: Helping underperforming students become lifelong learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand.
- Kapp, K. M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: Game-based methods and strategies for training and education*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.
- Kittle, P. (2013). *Book love: Developing depth, stamina, and passion in adolescent readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Layne, S. L. (2009). Igniting a passion for reading successful strategies for building lifetime readers.
- Levy, L.M. (2007). Inducing brain growth by pure thought: Can learning and practice change the structure of the cortex? *AJNR.American Journal of Neuroradiology*, 28(10)
- Margolis, H., & McCabe, P. (2006). Motivating struggling readers in an era of mandated instructional practices. *Reading Psychology*, 27(5), 435-455.
- McCarty Plucker, J. (2010). Baiting the reading hook an academic literacy class extends the time — and builds enthusiasm — for reading. *Educational Leadership.*, 68(2), 58.

- Miller, D., & Anderson, J. (2009). *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the inner reader in every child*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.
- Padak, N. & Potenza-Radis, C. (2010). Motivating Struggling Readers: Three keys to success. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 45(2), 1-7.
- Parsons, Seth A., & Harrington, Ann D. (2009). Following the Script. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(10), 748-750.
- Pink, D. H. (2009). In New York N. (Ed.), *Drive: The Surprising Truth about what Motivates us* Riverhead Books.
- Protacio, M. S. (2012). Reading motivation: A Focus on English Learners. *Reading Teacher*, 66(1), 69-77. doi:10.1002/TRTR.01092.
- Rasinski, T. (2006). Issues and trends in literacy: Reading fluency instruction: Moving beyond accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(7), 704-706.
- Readicide. (2009).
- Risko, V. J., & Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2007). Tapping students' cultural funds of knowledge to address the achievement gap. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(1), 98-100. doi:10.1598/RT.61.1.12
- Rodriguez, M. A. (2012). "But they just can't do it": Reconciling teacher expectations of latino students. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 15, 25. doi:10.1177/1555458912442605

- Rothstein, R. (2013). Misteaching history on racial segregation. *School Administrator*, 70(11), 38-40.
- Salmela-Aro, Katariina, Tynkkynen, Lotta,. (2012). Gendered pathways in school burnout among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence Journal of Adolescence*, 35(4), 929-939.
- Van Den Bergh, L., Denessen, E., Hornstra, L., Marinus, V., & Holland, R. W. (2010). The implicit prejudiced attitudes of teachers: Relations to teacher expectations and the ethnic achievement gap. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(2), 497-527. doi:10.3102/0002831209353594 .
- Verdugo, R. R. (2010). The heavens may fall: School dropouts, the achievement gap, and statistical bias. *Education and Urban Society*, 43, 184-204.
doi:10.1177/0013124510379875.
- Thiagarajan, S. (2017). *The thiagi group - improving performance playfully*. Retrieved 10/16, 2016, from <http://www.thiagi.com/games/2015/7/31/the-4door-elearning-approach>.