

Engaging Middle Schoolers: Teaching Strategies for Boosting Independent Reading Motivation  
in Middle School

by

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## **Project Outline**

From personal and professional experiences, I have found the importance of creating environments that foster students' love for reading, specifically in middle school students. These experiences have led me to my capstone project question: *What factors impact reading motivation in middle school students to help them identify as readers?* After an extensive review of the literature on the factors that impact reading motivation and my experience with social media, I realized that my project would best be delivered through four weekly educational blog posts. I used my already active Blogger.com account to publish each blog post (see Appendices). I selected educational blog posts for my project because I wanted to share my research with a larger audience. I see value in being able to access information in a manner that is easy and accessible.

Furthermore, the information I discovered while reviewing the literature will benefit teachers as they start out the school year. These educational blog posts were spread out over four weeks to allow teachers to implement their learning in their classroom. It also allowed time for individual reflection and goal setting. My educational blog posts targeted teachers, specifically middle school teachers who are active members of my Instagram community. The educational blog posts addressed four topics over four weeks. The topics included creating a literacy-rich environment (Appendix A), building a classroom library (Appendix B), bringing student choice into a reading curriculum (Appendix C), and resources to connect with families that foster reading engagement and motivation in middle school students (Appendix D). I will further explain these topics and the educational blog posts in the following paragraph.

Each blog post followed a similar format. I provided the readers research-based content that supports the topic of each post. Teachers were able to click into specific articles referenced.

Additionally, each educational blog post included real classroom photos and reflection points for educators. This allows teachers to see how others are already implementing the strategies and approaches described in each post. Furthermore, I felt that it was important that readers had access to printable resources. Resources included were how to write essential questions, anchor chart checklist, library building checklist, a family reading survey, how to implement a debate, homework support choice board, and analyzing diverse perspectives (see appendixes). All of which encourage reflection and support when implementing their newfound ideas. I also found value in providing a space where educators shared their thoughts through the blog's comment section. The discussions were fostered through the reflection section found at the end of each post. Educators reflected on centered challenges they face with curriculum mandates, what others are doing in their classrooms, and their journey in implementing strategies and approaches described in each post. All posts support my capstone project question: *What factors impact reading motivation in middle school students to help them identify as readers?*

### **Participants**

My intended audience was middle school teachers grades six through eight, who needed to create a space where students are motivated and engaged to read. Specifically, the audience was teachers who follow my educational Instagram—a following of just over 18.8K educators from around the world.

### **Social Media and Blogging Theory**

Luo, Freeman, and Stefaniak (2020) supported that social media enables professional learning environments to be highly interactive since participants can control with whom they interact and can learn from each other within the social media space (p. 1660). It was also stated that to ensure faculty stay up to date with current trends and learning strategies, faculty need to

“engage in comprehensive professional learning environments that can meet their individual needs” (p. 1660) meaning learning needs to be easily accessible. Additionally, blogs have strong archival features, therefore, through the input of keywords, educators can continue to access the information for years to come (Tan, Eu, John, Ho, and Yuen, 2008, p. 3). Ultimately, blogging is a quick and effective way for teachers to connect with other educators from around the world. It is a space where they can reflect on what is happening within their classrooms.

## **Project Links**

### *Appendix A*

[Link to educational blog post #1: How to Create a Print-Rich Environment](#)

***Link to Educational Blog Post #1 Resources***

[Blog post 1 resources](#)

[The Great Debate](#)

### *Appendix B*

[Link to educational blog post #2: The Classroom Library](#)

***Link to Educational Blog Post #2 Resources***

[Blog post 2 resources](#)

### *Appendix C*

[Link to educational blog post #3: Add Student Choice in Curriculum](#)

***Link to educational blog post #3 Resources***

[Blog post 3 resources](#)

### *Appendix D*

[Link to educational blog post #4: Connecting with Families](#)

**Link to educational blog post #4 Resources**

[Blog post 4 resources](#)

[Family reading survey](#)

[Summer series blog post survey](#)

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## **Website Resources**

[5 Ways to Give Your Students More Voice and Choice](#)

[5 Ways to Promote Healthy Discourse During Project-Based Learning](#)

[7 Teacher Discourse Moves That Let The Kids Talk!](#)

[10 Ways to Incorporate Student Choice in Your Classroom](#)

[10 Ideas for Virtual Learning Stations](#)

[Asking Questions and Promoting Discourse](#)

[The Benefits of Reading for Fun for Middle and High School Students](#)

[Building an Effective Classroom Library Susan Catapano Jane Fleming Martille Elias](#)

[Discourse - Cognitive Perspective - Comprehension, Questions, Text, and Levels -](#)

[StateUniversity.com](#)

[Establishing a Culture of Questioning](#)

[How to Build Your Classroom Library](#)

[How to Create Learning Stations to Engage Students: The Design Process](#)

[How to Give Students More Choice](#)

[How to Promote Family Involvement in Literacy Education](#)

[How to Start Literacy Centers | Upper Elementary and Middle School](#)

[Imitate and Innovate Anchor Charts](#)

[Little-known caregivers](#)

[NCTE Position Statement on Independent Reading.](#)

[Passion Projects for Independent Reading As teachers, we often feel like in order to get kids](#)

['Shadow Banned' meaning explained: Secret social media blocking is a normal practice.](#)

[Statement on Classroom Libraries](#)

[Using Project-Based Learning to Boost Online Engagement](#)

[Using Project-Based Learning to Boost Online Engagement](#)