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BEYOND THE CARROT: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE READING MOTIVATION IN STUDENTS FROM LOW INCOME SCHOOLS

A MASTER'S THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

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BRENNA D. SCHUELLER

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BEYOND THE CARROT: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE READING MOTIVATION IN STUDENTS FROM LOW INCOME SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the role that motivation has on reading amongst students in low income schools. Research regarding specific strategies to engage learners from low income schools shows that using a wide variety of higher-order thinking questions, incorporating structured, research based reading programs, making reading relevant to students' lives, teaching discussion strategies, and preparing students for college contribute to increasing reading success for students in low income schools. A professional development presentation application from these findings that outlines this research and strategies is then suggested. Lastly, professional application, limitations of the study, and future implications of the research are presented.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"But, Mrs. Schueller, reading is boring. I hate it. Why do I have to do this?" This phrase from one of my first grade students was not an uncommon one for me to hear. It was my first year teaching at a low-income school in an urban setting and I had started the year excited to work hard to meet my students' diverse reading and writing needs. Most of them were many years behind grade level and would need immense support to catch up. I was confident I could help them close this gap and dove into the year with all the enthusiasm of a naive first year teacher. If I could just teach them how to read, they could catch up, right? I spent large amounts of time looking for just the right curriculum, reading strategy or book that would change my students' attitude towards reading. Little did I know how my experiences that first year would shape my teaching for years to come.

What I found out that year was that my students lacked the motivation to learn to read, partly because of their circumstances, but mostly because they didn't see the importance of it in their daily lives. That year started a journey of looking for strategies and ideas that would help my students become motivated to be lifelong readers.

Every teacher would agree that the ability to read and comprehend text plays a vital role in the success of a student. Students who develop strong reading skills at the elementary level are more likely to be able to access content material as their education continues (Duke & Block, 2012) . Without this skill, students will experience difficulty understanding concepts presented in class, resulting in an apathetic view of education, ultimately threatening their ability to continue further academic learning (Becker et al., 2010).

I knew that helping my students to become successful readers would not only have an impact on their learning that school year, but also for years to come; yet, I wasn't sure which strategies would have the greatest effect on my students' reading. It was this struggle which led me to pursue what other researchers had found out about reading motivation amongst low-income students.

It has become apparent that many students, particularly those in low income schools, lack the motivation to continue reading a text when it is perceived as too difficult. Without the motivation to continue to engage in a text, students are at risk of giving up and not being able to access grade level material (Lesaux, 2012). This will have devastating results on their ability to comprehend text at a collegiate level and choices of careers in the future (Flippo, 2011). As educators and researchers seek to increase the reading proficiency of students in low income schools, the strategies that motivate them need to be discovered.

History of Reading Motivation Research

Motivation and learning in education was first studied by Paul Thomas Young at the University of Illinois (Weiner, 1990). His research laid the foundation for further studies on intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation. In 1997, Gambrell and Coldling connected the role of motivation to reading and created the need for understanding how motivation can affect the way students progress through gaining the skills necessary to be successful readers. In recent years, the connection between reading and motivation has been made and motivation has been found to be an important influencing factor in reading success (De Naeghel et al., 2012). Researchers

have conducted many studies with students around the world measuring the impact different types of motivation have had on reading ability.

Studies have looked at the role different reading strategies have had on reading motivation, the role parent involvement plays in reading success, and the role of the teacher in motivating students to learn (De Naghel et al., 2012; Gambrell, 2011; Hemmerechts, 2017). Each study has offered new findings and insights into what causes students to have continued reading success throughout their educational careers.

This research has led to an increased interest in how motivation plays a role in education across all fields of study from math and science to reading and writing. Educators want to know how they can increase motivation amongst their students as this has been proven to have a significance in success across disciplines.

Educators are now looking at the way motivation affects specific populations of students in an effort to understand how to best meet the needs of their students. Researchers have studied motivation and English language learners, motivation and the effects it has on different genders, how motivation changes between the primary and secondary grades, and many other ways motivation impacts specific groups of students. One particular population of interest are students from low-income schools.

Rationale for Research

While there has been much research done on reading and motivation, there is a need for a compilation of research specifically regarding low income schools and reading motivation. Students in these settings face unique challenges that their peers in different socioeconomic

settings do not. These challenges include limited access to reading materials, lack of an understanding of concepts of print, and parents who are unable to be involved in their child's literacy development due to their need to work to provide for their families (Morales et al., 2011). By looking at research pertaining to students from low income schools, this gap in research can be rectified.

In addition to the need for research pertaining specifically to low income schools, educators would benefit from literature that combines all of the research regarding strategies that motivate students from these schools to become better readers (Lesaux, 2012). Although there has been a large body of research dedicated to studying specific strategies, the need for a body of research that combines these findings is apparent (Piazza & Duncan, 2012). Educators could then use this as a resource in determining which strategies would be most effective in their classrooms and schools.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research project, the definitions of the following words are explained in the following paragraph. A low income school is one in which over fifty percent of its students qualify for free or reduced lunch. A struggling reader refers to a reader who is one year or more behind state standards in their reading. Lastly, motivation, in the context of this thesis, pertains to the reasons why a student chooses to complete an educational task.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine existing research regarding motivation and reading success with the goal of producing practical strategies teachers can implement in their

classrooms. This is done by looking at a variety of studies done around the globe with an emphasis on low income schools. To create a context from which reading motivation can be understood, the role socioeconomic status plays on reading motivation as well as the role both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation play in reading are first explored. Strategies that have shown successful impacts on increasing reading motivation are also compiled so that educators can employ these findings into their own school and classrooms. Finally, research regarding the role parents and teacher development play in helping to increase reading motivation are explained.

As teachers work to increase motivation to read in low income schools, the following questions need to be addressed. What are the factors that play a role in a student's motivation to read? Why might a student be unmotivated when it comes to reading? Finally, what are effective strategies for fostering a high level of motivation in reading amongst students in low income schools? These questions are explored and answered in the following chapters. The second chapter seeks to answer these questions by compiling a variety of research done on reading and motivation in low income schools. In the third chapter, practical implications for this compilation of research are explored through the use of a professional development session targeted at sharing these findings with educators in low-income schools. The last chapter draws conclusions, discusses implications for future research, and describes limitations of the study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

To locate the literature for this thesis, searches of education journals, EBSCO MegaFILE, ERIC, JSTOR Arts & Sciences VI Archive collection, Expanded Academic ASAP, ECO, and Academic Search Complete were conducted. These results were then narrowed down to include research pertaining to students in low income schools. Key words that were used in the searches were "reading motivation," "low income schools," "instructional strategies to increase reading motivation," and "professional development reading motivation." This chapter will review the literature on reading motivation in low income schools in five sections. The first section will discuss the role economic status plays in reading motivation. The second section will then look at the role motivation plays in reading success. The third section will look at instructional strategies for increasing reading motivation. In the fourth section, reading instruction professional development will be explored; and, in the final section, the role of parents in reading motivation will be discussed.

The Role of Economic Status in Reading Motivation

Prior to examining the research pertaining to effective strategies to help students remain motivated to read, it is important to understand the relationship socioeconomic status plays in reading success. This helps create a framework from which instructional strategies can then be understood. Research shows that there is a significant correlation between student success and socioeconomic status and that students who are more economically advantaged perform better in school.

In a correlational study that looked at school records of participation in free and reduced lunch programs to gather information about socioeconomic status, Geoffrey Schultz (1993) used reading and math assessment data to measure academic success, and used a self-assessment to gather information about student motivation. The results of the study indicated that there was a large correlation between the level of motivation and socioeconomic advantage and academic achievement (Schultz, 1993). In other words, students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to experience difficulties achieving academic success.

Schultz (1993) suggested that teachers work to increase their students' motivation by using strategies that increase intrinsic motivation. The role of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in reading success will be discussed in the next section.

Morales, Verhoeven, and Van Leeuwe (2011) studied 3331 fifth graders in over eleven schools throughout Peru to determine the role socio-economic status had on reading comprehension. Participants read a series of passages and then answered questions to determine reading ability while motivation was measured using a questionnaire (Morales et al., 2011). Although this study was conducted using Peruvian students, the results have practical implications for educators around the world. Researchers found that students from a higher socioeconomic status were more likely to be successful in reading while students from lower socio-economic backgrounds tended to struggle with reading comprehension (Morales et al., 2011). This is most likely because students from lower socio-economic status tend to start school behind their peers in their knowledge of concepts of print. In addition, parents of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are usually working hard to earn a living and have less time to read to their children and have less resources to buy books (Morales et al., 2011). Morales et

al. (2011) encouraged educators to understand that socio-economic status plays a role in determining the development of reading skills amongst their students and challenged them to find practical solutions to meet their students' needs in the classroom.

In another study conducted by Gentaz, Sprenger-Charolles, Theurl, and Cole (2013), 394 French children from low income homes were studied to examine the role socio-economic status played in reading success. Students were given a series of tasks to test vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding skills (Gentaz et al., 2013). As in other studies with English speaking students, students with a lower socio-economic status had lower levels of reading success (Gentaz et al., 2013). As a result, researchers from the study highlighted the importance of developing reading strategies that specifically target students from low-income homes and giving them the necessary tools to become successful in reading (Gentaz et al., 2013).

The Role of Motivation in Reading Success

Reading Motivation can be divided into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to being driven by an outside force such as a reward or fear of punishment, while intrinsic motivation comes from interest in the task at hand. Understanding the role both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation play in reading is critical to determining which reading strategies will be most effective for students long term.

In a long term study published in 2010, Becker, McElvany, and Kortenbruck gathered data from 740 students across 22 elementary schools over three years to study the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on reading. From grades three to six, students were studied to identify individual, social, and institutional factors that influence reading development (Becker et al., 2010). It was found that the more students read, the higher their intrinsic motivation was. The

relationship between extrinsic reading motivation and reading literacy was found to be negative as students progressed through the grade levels (Becker et al., 2010). As a result of the study educators and parents are warned that students who are motivated by a desire to please their parents or teachers do not achieve reading gains over time (Becker et al., 2010). Instead, they are encouraged to help students see their own literacy progression over time as this creates intrinsic motivation to be successful in reading (Becker et al., 2010).

In an effort to study the role both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation play in reading, Shaffner, Schiefele, and Ulferts (2013) studied 159 fifth graders from nine different classrooms across five different schools. Students were given the Reading Motivation Questionnaire to collect data about frequency and length of time spent reading (Shaffner et al., 2013). National reading assessment data was also collected (Shaffner et al., 2013). The collected data showed a significantly positive relationship between intrinsic reading motivation and reading amount while extrinsic motivation was found to have a negative impact on a student's reading success (Shaffner et al., 2013). As a result of the study, Shaffner suggested that educators focus on increasing intrinsic motivation among their students instead of fostering extrinsic motivation as it negatively affects reading success (Shaffner et al., 2013).

The relationship between reading and intrinsic motivation has been explored through a large body of research in recent years. An important aspect of intrinsic reading motivation in the school setting is the role a student’s teacher plays in either increasing or decreasing reading motivation. De Naeghel, Valcke, De Meyer, Warlop, and Van Braak (2014) studied 4,269 fifteen-year-olds to determine the role their teachers played in their intrinsic motivation to read. Surveys were used to collect data about intrinsic motivation and the behavior of their teachers as

well as observations in several of the schools that took part in the study (De Naeghel et al., 2014). The study showed that stimulating the student's interest and enjoyment in reading increased their reading proficiency (De Naeghel et al., 2014). Evidence for teacher involvement showed that intrinsic motivation increased the more teachers were involved and students perceived they had autonomy in their choices about reading (De Naeghel et al., 2014).

In another study that looked at intrinsic motivation and reading, Mcgeown, Duncan, Griffiths, and Stothard (2015) studied 312 students from 31 schools. Each student completed a reading motivation and habits questionnaire, tests assessing their reading skills, and answered questions about their motivation to read (Mcgeown et al., 2015). The results of the study highlighted the role intrinsic motivation plays in reading motivation, reading comprehension, summarizing skills, and reading speed (Mcgeown et al., 2015). Notably, fiction book reading was shown to be a consistent predictor of variation in reading skills (Mcgeown et al., 2015). This could be because students were more intrinsically motivated by choosing their own fiction books. As a result of the study, educators are encouraged to find ways to increase adolescents' reading motivation and engagement in fiction book reading, as a way of improving reading attainment overall (Mcgeown et al., 2015).

In 2012, De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, and Rosseel set out to clarify the relationship between intrinsic reading motivation in recreational and academic reading. To do this, they studied 1,260 fifth grade students from 45 elementary schools (De Naeghel et al., 2012). Students at these schools were given the SRQ-Reading Motivation questionnaire that measured levels of autonomous motivation as well as standardized reading comprehension tests (De Naeghel et al., 2012). In addition to these, students were also given a questionnaire that

measured how much they read in their leisure time (De Naeghel et al., 2012). Teachers contributed by rating their students on their reading engagement during class (De Naeghel et al., 2012). The study revealed that both academic as well as recreational reading motivation is comprised of two factors: autonomous and controlled motivation; and that the more intrinsically motivated students were, the more likely they were to read in their leisure time (De Naeghel et al., 2012). As a result of these findings, it is suggested that reading interventions aimed at fostering reading motivation should focus specifically on increasing autonomous reasons for reading as autonomous reading motivation leads to better reading behavior and performance (De Naeghel et al., 2012).

Summary of Reading Motivation Studies

These studies show the importance of developing intrinsic reading motivation as this type of motivation is the best predictor of long term success. Extrinsic reading motivation that focuses on external rewards or punishments should be eliminated from reading instruction as these strategies do not produce successful results over time. Although there is a large body of research pertaining to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, further research that makes specific correlations between motivation and reading is needed. In addition, instructional strategies that incorporate this research are needed as educators strive to implement effective reading strategies into their classrooms. The next section looks at instructional strategies that increase intrinsic reading motivation.

Instructional Strategies for Increasing Intrinsic Reading Motivation

The need for instructional reading strategies that increase intrinsic motivation is apparent, particularly for students in low-income schools. These strategies provide the scaffolding they

need to become successful readers throughout their educational careers. This section will look at the research pertaining to four instructional reading strategies: strategies that incorporate high level thinking skills, discussion based strategies, strategies that emphasize preparation for college, and strategies that work to contextualize reading instruction to their students' lives.

Strategy #1 The use of technology and high level thinking skills. In 2012, Cuevas, Russell, and Irving looked at three different groups of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds at a school near Atlanta, Georgia to determine the effect of technology and high-level thinking questions on reading comprehension. One group served as a control group, while the other two groups used two different methods of incorporating technology into their teaching (Cuevas et al., 2012). Although all classes followed the same curriculum and pacing guides, the control group read passages from a textbook and focused more on developing listening skills (Cuevas et al., 2012). The second group read the passages from the computer and responded to a variety of high level questions about their reading (Cuevas et al., 2012). In the third and final group, students also read the passages on the computer and responded to high level questions, but they also received additional scaffolding through the use of reading modules (Cuevas et al., 2012).

The study showed that there was a significant correlation between the use of technology and high level thinking questions and an increase in reading motivation and comprehension (Cuevas et al., 2012). Researchers concluded that incorporating technology and high level thinking skills into reading instruction not only increases comprehension for what the student is reading, but also creates interest in what the student is learning about, which can then translate into a long term increase of reading motivation (Cuevas et al., 2012).

Strategy #2 Incorporating structured, research based reading programs. In 2011, Melekoglu sought to evaluate whether students' motivation to read correlated with reading gains of struggling readers with and without learning disabilities. Melekoglu (2011) looked at 13 struggling readers with learning disabilities and 25 struggling readers without learning disabilities from two middle and one high school over a period of 18 weeks. Students who participated in the study were given a survey as well as a pretest (Melekoglu, 2011). Teachers from the schools then implemented the READ 180 programs for 5 days a week for 90 or 100 minutes (Melekoglu, 2011). At the end, students were given a final posttest (Melekoglu, 2011). Having a structured, research based reading program certainly increased motivation amongst students with and without disabilities but the shortened amount of time the students were studied as well as an insufficient survey to gather data points led to the need for further research to determine the impact reading programs can have (Melekoglu, 2011). Despite this need, there were still several important finds in the study. As reading gains increased, the researchers found that students became more motivated to continue achieving and had a more positive outlook on themselves as a reader. The study also pointed to the need for longer exposure to reading programs, particularly for struggling readers (Melekoglu, 2011).

The researcher concluded that teachers should implement structured, research based reading programs into their teaching to help struggling readers (Melekoglu, 2011). They also suggested that teachers not only teach reading strategies, but also help students understand how being able to read well can impact their lives (Melekoglu, 2011). Melekoglu's suggestion to help students understand the importance of reading leads well into the next section of research on making reading relevant to students.

Strategy #3 Relevant reading. Perhaps the most significant factor in reading success is contextualizing reading instruction and making it relevant to students' lives. Current, high-stakes reading and writing tests can cause teachers to focus heavily on preparing their students to perform well on these assessments at the expense of authentic, engaging curricula that motivates students to continue learning. This is especially true in low-income schools where students generally do not perform as well on standardized assessments.

Behizadeh and Fink conducted a study in 2015 that looked at the contradictions between authentic literacy instruction that motivates students and instruction that focuses only on improving reading and writing skills. They implemented a study in one classroom at a title-1 urban school (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). Over the course of the year, the teacher and researchers taught two dozen lessons that incorporated both authentic and effective writing instruction as well as community building within the classroom (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). At the end of the year, students were more engaged in their learning, could articulate how and why they used a specific literacy strategy, and exceeded expectations on the standardized reading test (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). Researchers suggested that teachers work to make lessons authentic for their students while still providing them with the explicit skills instruction they need (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). They suggest that students are more likely to retain what they have learned when it is something they themselves want to learn (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). Educators, therefore, need to do the work of finding out what it is that is motivating to their students and creating lessons that authentically include these factors.

An excellent example of this is a study that was conducted by Piazza and Duncan in 2012. Strategies to engage low income students, Black urban males in particular, were studied to

determine which strategies were most effective in motivating and engaging elementary and middle school students in reading.

Two adolescent males with incarcerated parents who struggled with reading were the subjects of the study. Research took place over the course of one year through a strengths-based after school program that focused on culturally relevant literacy instruction (Piazza & Duncan, 2012). The study revealed the crucial role motivation plays in building skills, the importance of relationships between educators and students, and the difficulties of selecting culturally relevant tests (Piazza & Duncan, 2012).

Both of the researchers offered several suggestions regarding relationship building for teachers who work with Black and low income students. The authors encouraged teachers to set high academic and behavioral standards while still investigating the strengths, needs, and personal issues of the students they work with (Piazza & Duncan, 2012). In addition, teachers were encouraged to look beyond their students' test scores to see the potential each student has and foster that into fruition rather than looking at their lack of skills from a deficit mindset (Piazza & Duncan, 2012). Lastly, teachers need to recognize their own bias that they bring into their teaching and instruction and work to make lessons culturally relevant to the populations they teach (Piazza & Duncan, 2012).

To help teachers understand how to do this, Linda Gambrell (2011) examined seven research-based rules of engaging students in reading instruction and the implications these rules have in the classroom setting. Her rules are consistent with the research of Melekoglu, Behizadeh and Fink, and Piazza and Duncan.

One rule is to make the reading relevant to the students' lives. This motivates students because they are able to connect what they are learning about to their everyday lives (Gambrell, 2011). Gambrell (2011) also suggests that a wide range of reading materials helps to motivate students as this gives them autonomy in their choices and helps them to develop a consistent reading habit as well as allows students to choose texts that are relevant to their lives. The compilation of research suggests that students are motivated to read when classroom incentives reflect the value of reading and contextualize reading for the students (Gambrell, 2011). Some limitations of the research include that the research was not collected via first-hand account, leaving it open to misinterpretation or bias. Despite these limitations, Gambrell's attempt to condense the studies done on reading and motivation provides a framework for understanding the essential components of engaging students in reading. As a result of these findings, Gambrell (2011) offered several suggestions to teachers. Students should be allowed opportunities to self-reflect about what they have learned in their reading and how it connects to their lives. In order to provide students with opportunities to do so, the range of reading materials should be increased to allow students to be exposed to a wide range of books (Gambrell, 2011).

Another example of how making reading relevant to students increases motivation is found in a study conducted by Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker. Guthrie et al. (2000) compared students receiving instructional intervention designed to increase intrinsic motivation with students who received traditional instruction. Data was gathered from three schools located in one mid-Atlantic state (Guthrie et al., 2000). One group of students was given a topic to research while the other group was allowed to pick a topic of research that was interesting to them (Guthrie et al., 2000). Despite the small sample size, the results show that students who

were allowed to choose their topic and research materials were more engaged and motivated to find the answers to their inquiries than those who were taught using the traditional methods (Guthrie et al., 2000). As a result of the study, teachers are encouraged to use real-world opportunities to increase the intrinsic motivation of their students and to create classroom contexts where students can explore answers to their own questions through reading (Guthrie et al., 2000).

Strategy #4 Discussion instruction. Allowing students the opportunity to discuss what they are reading also provides an authentic learning opportunity as well as provides a way to encourage the higher order thinking skills that were discussed in strategy one. In this section, research pertaining to the use of discussion instruction to increase reading motivation is explored.

Over the course of two years, McKeown, Beck, and Blake (2009) developed, implemented and compared two comprehension instruction models for six fifth grade classrooms in which half of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. The content approach offered extensive opportunities for students to share what they were learning in their reading and be challenged through high level discussion questions (McKeown et al., 2009). For both years, the content approach showed an advantage over the strategies approach for recall length and quality of narrative tests (McKeown et al., 2009). As a result of these findings, educators are encouraged to increase the amount of reading and discussion formats they use in their teaching as this promotes higher level thinking and allows students to learn from their peers' answers (McKeown et al., 2009).

In another study conducted by Nonie Lesaux in 2012, the importance of discussion based instruction for children from low income homes was researched. To find an explanation for why reading proficiency and comprehension decreases as a student continues through their education, Lesaux (2012) looked at the way reading is taught and how a student develops as a reader. As a result of her research, Lesaux (2012) concluded that although US schools have progressed in teaching students the skills that are necessary to sound out and recognize words, very little time is spent helping students develop their knowledge-based competency. This knowledge-based competency is best developed through discussion instruction (Lesaux, 2012). Several recommendations for schools are offered to help ensure these critical skills are developed. First, schools should implement reading assessments that measure where students struggle in reading-both in skill-based competencies as well as knowledge-based competencies (Lesaux, 2012) . Second, schools should implement instruction that teaches knowledge-based competencies that are critical for academic success, especially among low income students through discussion based instruction (Lesaux, 2012).

Strategy #5 Preparation for college instruction. Many educators and others view reading development as linear with the skills acquired in early elementary providing the foundation for reading success as a student progresses through their education. There has been much research done to show the importance of a solid foundation in reading; however it is important to look at how reading at the college level can affect reading instruction in the previous grades. This section looks at the research backing college preparation instruction in reading.

Using data gathered from the *College Reading and Study Strategy Research Handbook,* Rona Flippo (2011) looked at the way all teachers across grade levels can work together to ensure the reading success of their students. She explored universal issues that are common both at the secondary and collegiate levels (Flippo, 2011). These issues included the need to increase content and academic literacy, the demands of assessments, diverse students, and the policies that guide reading instruction at both levels (Flippo, 2011). Upon completing her research, Flippo suggested the need for more between-level research and implores educators to work and share information across grade levels so that students can be best prepared to be successful readers (Flippo, 2011).

Summary of Strategies for Increasing Intrinsic Reading Motivation Studies

A variety of strategies for increasing reading motivation have been researched in the past decade and have been discussed in the previous section. Effective strategies for increasing reading motivation are not limited to just one of these. Instead, educators should look for ways to incorporate several different strategies into their instruction. In this way, a variety of student needs will be met.

Reading Instruction Professional Development for Teachers

In order to successfully implement the strategies mentioned in the previous section, effective professional development for educators must be implemented. Duck and Block (2012) sought to determine whether the ideas suggested in the National Research Council report have been implemented in US Classrooms and what obstacles still remain in their study of primary grade reading instruction. By studying research and research reviews on improving primary grade reading that were published since 1998, Duck and Block (2012) found that the easier to

master skills were being implemented but that more difficult aspects of instruction such as vocabulary knowledge, conceptual and concept knowledge, and comprehension strategies were being neglected. Lack of expertise among educators was a contributing factor in preventing schools from using these strategies (Duck & Block, 2012). As a result of this study, Duke and Block (2012) concluded that teachers must receive better education on how to effectively teach hard to master reading skills so that they can meet their students' learning needs.

Similar conclusions were drawn in a study by Garcia, Pearson, Taylor, Bauer, and Stahl in 2011. Garcia et al. (2011) focused specifically on how teachers incorporated strategy instruction in their teaching of reading across the academic year. They used three professional development sessions to instruct teachers on how to incorporate response engagement instruction in their own teaching of reading (Garcia et al., 2011). The goal of these sessions was to teach educators how to facilitate groups in which students conduct conversations on their own about the texts they were reading (Garcia et al., 2011). They then tracked student discussions throughout the academic year, noting implementation issues (Garcia et al., 2011). As a result of these findings, the researchers recommend that the most effective way to improve classroom practice is to create meaningful professional development for the teachers (Garcia et al., 2011). Schools should train their teachers to effectively teach reading through high-level discussions and give them ample opportunities to practice (Garcia et al., 2011).

Interactive classroom discussions that encourage all students to participate have a substantial effect on reading comprehension; however, many classrooms across the United States do not implement these strategies in their reading instruction. In a study conducted by Lindsay Matsumra, Helen Garnier, and Jessaca Spybrook in 2012, data regarding the effects a

comprehensive literacy-coaching program had on the quality of classroom discussions was gathered. Over the course of two years, researchers performed observations to study the differences between two different coaching programs (Matsumra et al., 2012). The results showed that the schools that implemented coaching that focused on the discussion based curriculum had higher student motivation, deeper discussions, and a more thorough literacy background than those that followed the standard curriculum (Matsumra et al., 2012). As a result of the study, the researchers recommended that schools provide ongoing, practice-based professional development for school leaders and coaches (Matsumra et al., 2012). Secondly, they suggest focusing coaching resources on implementing a specific instructional model (Matsumra et al., 2012). Lastly, it was recommended that schools are assessed for their readiness for coaching interventions (Matsumra et al., 2012).

Susan Goldman (2012) sought to research what was required to be a successful reader across contents, instructional approaches that help students gain proficiency at reading to learn, and what teachers need to support students in reading to learn. To do so, she gathered data from a variety of studies. Goldman (2012) found that although different instructional strategies can be used to teach students how to read across disciplines, it is the job of each teacher, not just the language arts teacher, to ensure their students know how to read to learn in their content (Goldman, 2012). Goldman (2012) suggests several practical applications for administrators and teachers. First, teachers must be supported through the use of effective professional development such as being able to see their own classrooms through videos and both physical and virtual classroom visits (Goldman, 2012). In addition, teachers must become familiar themselves with the literacy skills necessary to access content across disciplines and then must engage their

students in discussion to help them to better be able to understand the cognitive skills necessary to succeed in each of the disciplines (Goldman, 2012).

Summary of Reading Instruction Professional Development for Teachers Studies

The importance of reading instruction professional development for educators has been made evident by the compilation of research in the preceding section. In order for teachers to effectively teach reading strategies that increase student motivation, they must be taught through effective professional development sessions. These sessions should be authentic and give teachers an opportunity to practice in their own contexts as well as provide implementation support over a long period of time.

Role of Parents in Reading Motivation .

While educators and instructional programs play a significant role in developing reading motivation amongst low income students, parent involvement also has an impact on a student's motivation to read. In 2000, Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole conducted a study of fourteen schools throughout the country, focusing on grades K-3. Principals and teachers at each of the schools were interviewed, surveyed, and observed in action once a month over a period of five months (Taylor et al., 2000). Students were also selected randomly to take a pre-test in both the fall and spring to measure growth. In addition, focus teachers were also asked to keep a log of reading strategies taught (Taylor et al., 2000). Researchers found that positive relationships with parents was one of the most effective strategies at the school level to increase the level of student success in reading (Taylor et al., 2000). Based on these results, the researchers suggested several

applications for administration and teachers (Taylor et al., 2000). Administrators, as well as teachers, should strive to incorporate parents in their child's reading progress regularly through phone calls, meetings, and newsletters (Taylor et al., 2000).

Parental involvement and socio-economic status were studied by Hemmerechts, Agirdag, and Kavadias (2017) to determine the role they play in literacy success. Using data collected from a home literacy environment questionnaire across ten countries, 43,870 students were looked at (Hemmerechts et al., 2017). The study found that students with higher economic statuses had higher levels of literacy success and more parental literacy involvement while students from lower economic statuses had lower levels of literacy success and less parental involvement (Hemmerechts et al., 2017). As a result, researchers call for policy makers to work to find ways to increase parental literacy involvement for low income students and find strategies that help their students succeed (Hemmerechts et al., 2017).

Summary of Role of Parents in Reading Motivation

The more parents are involved in their child's reading, the more potential there is for the student to be successful. Teachers can keep parents involved in their child's reading through phone calls, meetings, and newsletters and can help increase parent involvement by providing opportunities for parents to get involved in their child's reading. This can be done by inviting parents to come in to the class and read and giving parents materials to practice reading with their child at home.

Conclusion

To better understand the strategies that best help low income students become successful readers, the role socio-economic status has on reading motivation was discussed. Through the

articles examined, a significant correlation between reading success and socio-economic status was discovered. The role both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation play in reading success was also examined, revealing the importance of focusing on intrinsic motivation when working to help students develop lifelong reading skills. This finding highlighted the importance of developing practical strategies to reach these students. Several different reading strategies were then discussed, highlighting the importance of making reading relevant to the students' lives. Reading professional development was then discussed in order to successfully implement these strategies. It was found that effective professional development that allows teachers to practice implementing the strategies taught results in successful implementation of reading strategy instruction. Lastly, the role parental involvement plays in increasing reading motivation was explored. The results of these studies show that implementing meaningful strategies that allow students to relate reading instruction to their own lives results in increased life-long reading motivation.

CHAPTER III: APPLICATION OF RESEARCH

The results of the previous chapter are applied through a professional development session created for teachers at a low income school on strategies to increase reading motivation in their classrooms. This session compiles the research discussed in chapter two and is designed to give teachers practical, research based strategies to help their students experience success in reading. The presentation is designed for teachers at low income schools across grade levels as well as education assistants who assist in the classroom setting. It could be presented during weekly professional learning community meetings, at a staff meeting, or during whole school professional development sessions. To see the individual slides of the presentation, visit Appendix A.

Rationale

One of the greatest challenges educators face is taking research and knowing how to practically use it in their own classrooms. Research in chapter two points to the importance of relevant professional development in increasing reading motivation in low income schools. When teachers are well trained on strategies to increase reading success in their classrooms and held accountable to implement them, schools are most likely to see improvements in their reading success (Matsumra, 2012). This professional development session includes a variety of questions designed to help teachers immediately embed the strategies presented in their lessons. It also holds teachers accountable to implement these strategies by asking them to share their

plans to use these strategies with their colleagues. Administration could also help hold teachers accountable to embed these strategies by incorporating informal observations to help coach teachers as they work to help motivate their students to become better readers. This training will benefit educators across disciplines, and the intended audience is a staff of 40 teachers at a low income, urban elementary school. Research regarding the use of reading throughout disciplines supports the rationale behind presenting the information to the whole staff rather than just the reading specialists.

As a result of her research on reading success across disciplines, Susan Goldman (2012) suggested that teachers of all contents must be supported through effective professional development in reading strategies that increase motivation. Teachers across a variety of disciplines would participate in this session. Discussion questions also ask teachers to think about how to embed the strategies suggested into their specific content areas. This makes the training practical for teachers across settings and provides opportunities for collaboration. In addition to making the training practical, teachers also must be given the opportunity to practice the skills they are being taught.

Duke and Block (2012) suggest that teachers need better training on how to master reading skills and strategies to meet their learning needs. This session is designed to provide educators with the skills and practical ideas they need to meet the reading needs of their students regardless of the content they teach. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to master these skills by allowing time for them to practice how they would teach a specific strategy with their colleagues. This gives teachers a chance to get feedback on their implementation of reading

strategies as well as collaborate with others to gain new ideas and perspectives of what teaching reading might look like in their classroom.

Creating meaningful professional development for teachers is the most effective way to improve classroom practice (Garcia et al., 2011). When teachers are given the opportunity to think about how they will apply what they have learned in these sessions and given the chance to practice the strategies, they will have greater success in implementing new ideas and strategies (Garcia et al., 2011). This professional development session is designed to do just that through multiple turn and talks with colleagues and opportunities to practice teaching specific strategies.

Project Details

To create the professional development session, key research from chapter two as well as the strategies studied were compiled to create a professional development session to help teachers learn more about effective, research based strategies to help their students increase their motivation to read. Depending on time constraints and the needs of the school, the session could be presented all at one time or broken up into smaller sections. Teachers are first given an overview of the research regarding low income schools and motivation and then are presented with strategies for increasing reading motivation. After learning about each strategy, educators are given the opportunity to reflect on how the strategy could be implemented in their content area and then asked to practice how they might embed this strategy into their teaching with fellow colleagues. After each teacher shares their ideas, colleagues then will give feedback and supply any additional ideas they may have.

Resources needed to implement this session include the space to conduct the training, time for educators to attend the session, someone to lead the session, and a way to project the

information so that those attending can access the materials. Copies of the presentation could also be made so that those attending can add their own notes and ideas (see Appendix B). In addition, including a list of suggested resources for implementing these strategies would be useful so that those attending can easily access helpful materials after the session (see Appendix C). This will require the use of a printer and paper. Buy in from the staff will be created as they come to understand how the use of the strategies presented can affect their classrooms.

Sustainability

This session has the potential to create an impactful difference on reading success, not only during the session but for the rest of the year. By asking teachers to take the time and apply the learning they are doing to their own classrooms, teachers will be more likely to use the strategies suggested. Administration and coaches at the school could also help to ensure the session has sustainable results by embedding these strategies into observations and coaching. In this way, teachers are held accountable to implement the reading strategies they learned about. Coaches should focus on helping teachers use the strategies in meaningful ways in their classrooms so that they can have the greatest impact on students.

Professional Development Variations

This professional development session is designed to be fluid and flexible so that it can be molded to fit the needs of a variety of schools. Schools will be able to take the information and break it up as they feel will best fit their staff and available time. The session could be delivered in one half day session, broken up into a variety of small sessions, or one specific strategy could be focused on each week during PLC meetings. Teacher accountability for implementing the strategies can also be measured in several ways. Administration could perform

informal observations to check for strategy implementation, coaches could focus on a specific skill and then work with teachers to successfully embed it into their teaching, or both coaches and administration look for how teachers are using the strategies in their lesson planning. The strategies can also be adapted to include materials more relatable to elementary or secondary school students. Regardless, the session is designed to meet the needs of many different types of low income schools and help them equip their teachers with the necessary skills to increase reading motivation amongst their students.

Conclusion

This project applies the research in a meaningful way by equipping teachers with the strategies necessary to help increase reading motivation amongst students at the low income schools where they teach. It is designed to provide multiple ways for teachers to embed the strategies discussed into their teaching and be held accountable for using them. In this way, teachers will be able to see the impact these strategies can have on reading motivation in their classrooms.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

As seen in the research from chapter two, both socioeconomic status and reading motivation play an important role in a student's ability to be a successful reader. These findings provide insightful answers to the first research question regarding what factors play a role in a student's motivation to read. According to studies conducted by Schultz (1993), Morales et al. (2011), and Gentaz et al. (2013), students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to enter schools at a lower level of reading than their peers and receive less literacy support at home, placing them at risk for low levels of reading success. Intrinsic motivation was found to also play a crucial role in a student's motivation to read as it has the greatest impact on long term reading success (De Naeghel et al., 2015). It is important to note that extrinsic motivation played a negative role in long term reading success as it linked reading to external rewards rather than developing a student's' sense of reading significance throughout their educational careers (Shaffner et al, 2013).

In answer to the second guiding question, why might a student be unmotivated when it comes to reading, students are often unmotivated when it comes to reading because they do not see the significance of acquiring the skills necessary to read (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). In

addition, they do not see the connection between reading and their own lives, and often lack materials that are engaging to them (Piazza & Duncan, 2012).

The third research question regarding effective reading strategies for students in low income schools is also answered in chapter two by exploring five different strategies. Asking a wide range of high order thinking skills is one strategy that can increase student motivation as it encourages students to engage deeply with the text being read (Cuevas et al., 2012). Another strategy that was looked at was implementing well-researched reading programs into the classroom setting. These programs provide measurable progress data and motivate students by allowing them to see their reading growth and gains (Melekoglu, 2011). The third strategy seemed to produce the most effective results. Making reading relevant and relating reading skills to students' lives allows authentic implementation of reading strategies and fosters a lifelong love of reading (Behizadeh & Fink, 2015). The fourth strategy studied was discussion instruction in which group discussions were used to ask a wide range of high-level thinking questions. These discussion sessions showed higher results than the traditional programs being offered (McKeown et al., 2009). Lastly, preparation of college instruction was studied as a means of increasing reading motivation. Flippo (2011) showed that this type of instruction can be important for motivating students to connect learning done at lower levels to the learning that will need to be done in the college setting. Using a variety of these strategies and finding ways to relate reading to the student's lives will result in increased reading motivation in students from low income schools.

Professional Application

These finding have important applications for educators around the world, in the United States, and in Minnesota as data used in this literature review was collected from a variety of countries including Peru, Germany, France, and Switzerland. Struggling readers from low-income homes can be found around the world. This compilation of studies can be used by educators as they seek to meet the needs of their students worldwide. In the United States, children coming from low income homes are more likely to struggle with reading comprehension and decoding skills (Gentaz et al., 2013). The strategies discussed in the previous chapters help make reading relevant to the student's lives and increase intrinsic motivation. Educators can determine which of the five strategies explored in chapter two will best meet the needs of the students in their classrooms. In Minnesota, educators can use these strategies as well as the professional development session described in chapter three of this thesis to help reach the struggling readers at their schools. In my own classroom, I plan to use the strategies studied to create opportunities for my students to interact with the texts they are reading in relevant and authentic ways. I also plan to share the research I have gathered with my colleagues to assist them as they strive to develop students with a lifelong love of learning.

Limitations of the Research

To compile the information for this research, only information pertaining to students in low-income schools was included, excluding information about reading motivation from higher income schools. This data was excluded in order to narrow the focus of the research and concentrate only on students from low income schools.

In addition, it was difficult to find current research from the past five years regarding motivation and low income schools specifically. This was a surprise as I expected to see much

more recent research regarding reading motivation in low-income schools given the importance of assisting these students. To compensate for this lack of research, studies of reading and low-income schools from other counties were used. While these studies do not specifically look at students from the United States, many of the same strategies used to help struggling readers can be applied across cultures.

Lastly, as an educator who works in low income schools, I bring my own bias to the research. When reading through the findings on different strategies to increase reading motivation, it was sometimes difficult to remain open-minded instead of relying on my own experiences using a particular strategy. I found myself looking at each strategy through the lens of my own classroom and students instead of thinking about how the strategies could be applied more generally. To compensate for this, I looked for studies that were used across grade levels instead of focusing only on the grades I teach.

Implications for Future Research

Looking to the future, more research regarding recent reading information from low-income schools needs to be conducted. There is a lack in data from the past decade specifically related to reading motivation in low income schools. Collecting this data would help educators understand the needs confronting low income students today and provide information on how some of the strategies used in the past may have changed with the increased use of technology and digital communication.

Further research could be done on culturally responsive practices and reading motivation as well as the lack of materials that portray characters from different cultures and backgrounds. Referring to the research conducted by Piazza and Duncan (2012), students of color often do not

see themselves in reading materials and have a hard time relating what they are reading to their lives because it does not reflect the contexts in which they live. I would be interested in learning more about how making meaningful connections between students' cultures and reading can increase motivation. Possible questions for future research could be what effect does including students' cultures in reading instruction have on reading motivation? In addition researchers could ask how does seeing themselves in their reading increase reading motivation in students from low income schools?

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis sought to look at how to increase reading motivation, particularly in low income schools. The following questions were used to help guide the research: What are the factors that play a role in a student's motivation to read? Why might a student be unmotivated when it comes to reading? Finally, what are effective strategies for fostering a high level of motivation in reading amongst students in low income schools? By looking at research from a variety of countries, it was found that the most effective way to increase reading motivation is to make reading relevant to students' lives. Educators need to continue to do the hard work of building relationships with their students so that they can best apply reading and learning to the lives of those they work with, increasing motivation, and creating lifelong learners who will be successful throughout their education.

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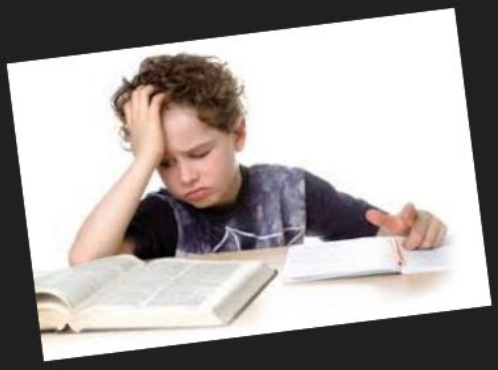
Appendix A - Presentation
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1UMk8HAts0-u4ETm7SiwLX4rJ5Uv5gLoYa-FlTWwbaqU/edit?usp=sharing

Research Says...

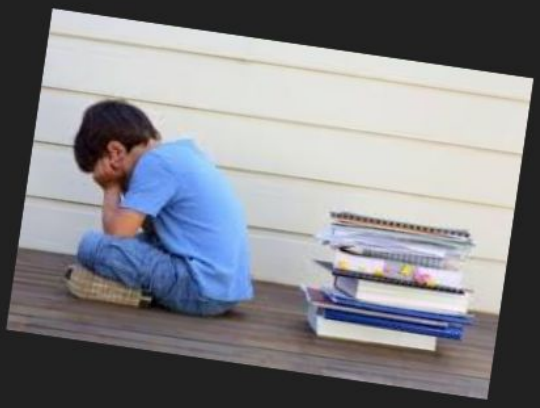


- Students from lower socio-economic status tend to start school behind their peers in their knowledge of concepts of print (Morales et al., 2011).

Research Says...

- Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to experience difficulties achieving academic success (Schultz, 1993).

Research Says...



- Students with a lower socio-economic status have lower levels of reading success (Gentaz et al., 2013).

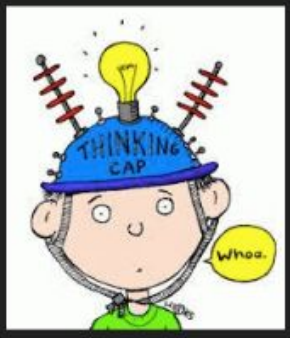
Research Says...

- Teachers need meaningful professional development that gives multiple opportunities to practice strategies (Garcia et al., 2011).

The Plan

1. Give an overview of the strategy
2. Think about how it can be used in your content area
3. Practice and collaborate with colleagues (with FEEDBACK)

Strategy #1: High Level Thinking Skills



- Using high level thinking skills increases reading comprehension (Cuevas et al., 2012).

Strategy #1: High Level Thinking Skills

- **Bloom's Sentence Stems**

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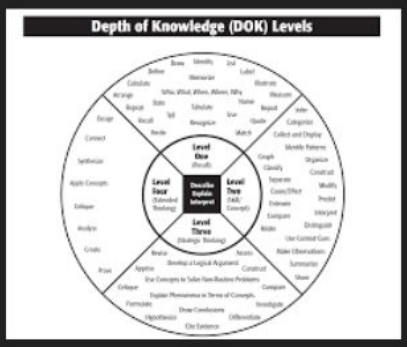
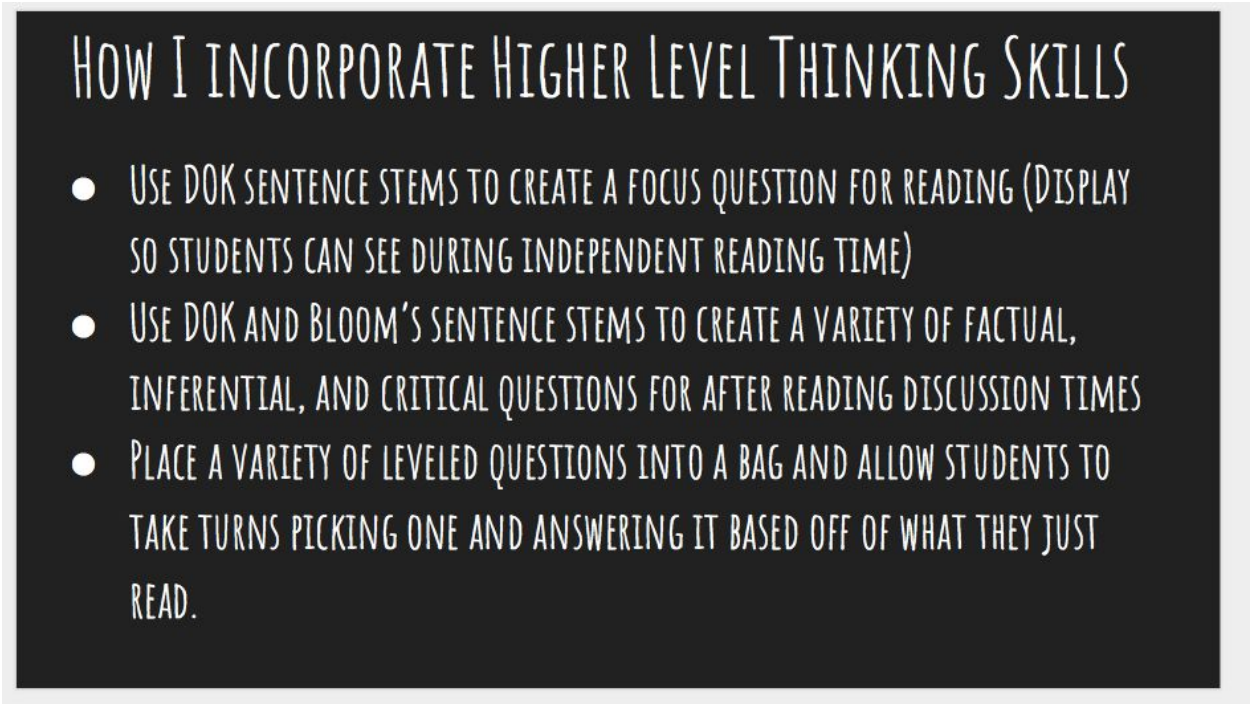
Strategy #1: High Level Thinking Skills



- **DOK Wheel and Sentence Stems**

https://croton-harmonresources.wikispaces.com/file/view/IDE%20dok_chart_and_stems.pdf/564104041/IDE%20dok_chart_and_stems.pdf


How I incorporate Higher Level Thinking Skills
Use DOK sentence stems to create a focus question for reading (Display so students can see during independent reading time)
Use DOK and Bloom's sentence stems to create a variety of factual, inferential, and critical questions for after reading discussion times
Place a variety of leveled questions into a bag and allow students to take turns picking one and answering it based off of what they just read.

How do/will you use high level thinking questions in your content area?

Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to use High level thinking skills in your teaching.

Strategy #2: Relevant Reading

- Making reading relevant to students' lives increases motivation (Piazza & Duncan, 2012).

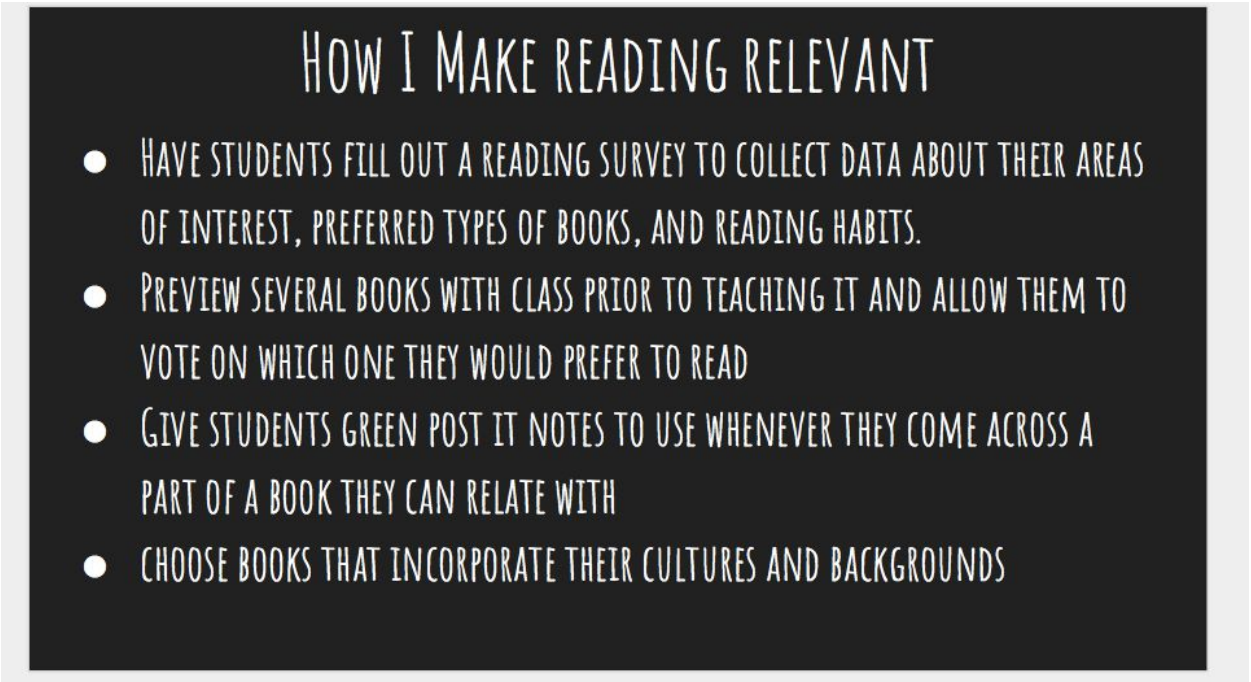
1. Book Tasting Events
2. Choosing materials that are engaging
3. Explaining how what they are reading will increase skills for the future

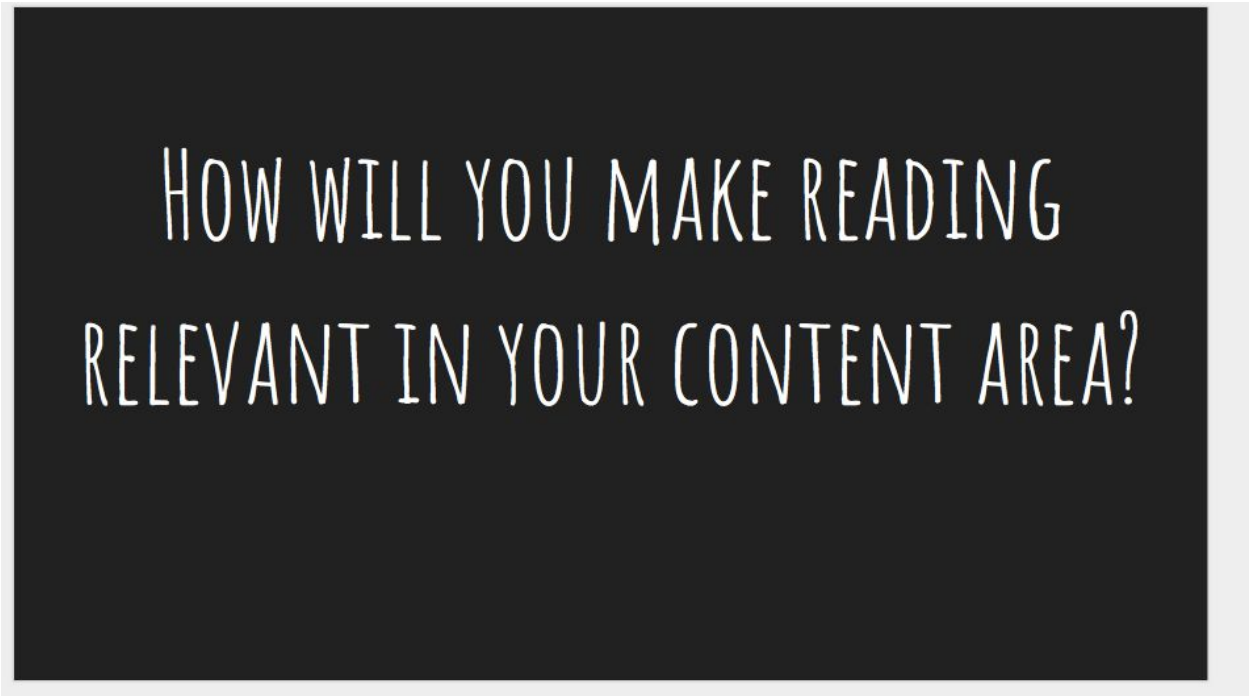
Strategy #2: Relevant Reading

- Give authentic reading tasks (Behizadeh and Fink, 2015).

-Researching a topic student is interest in

-Reading to learn how to complete a task, learn a new skill, etc.


How I Make reading relevant
Have students fill out a reading survey to collect data about their areas of interest, preferred types of books, and reading habits.
Preview several books with class prior to teaching it and allow them to vote on which one they would prefer to read
Give students green post it notes to use whenever they come across a part of a book they can relate with
choose books that incorporate their cultures and backgrounds


How will you make reading relevant in your content area?

Strategy #3: Talk It Out

- **Discussion augments reading instruction (McKoeown et al., 2009).**

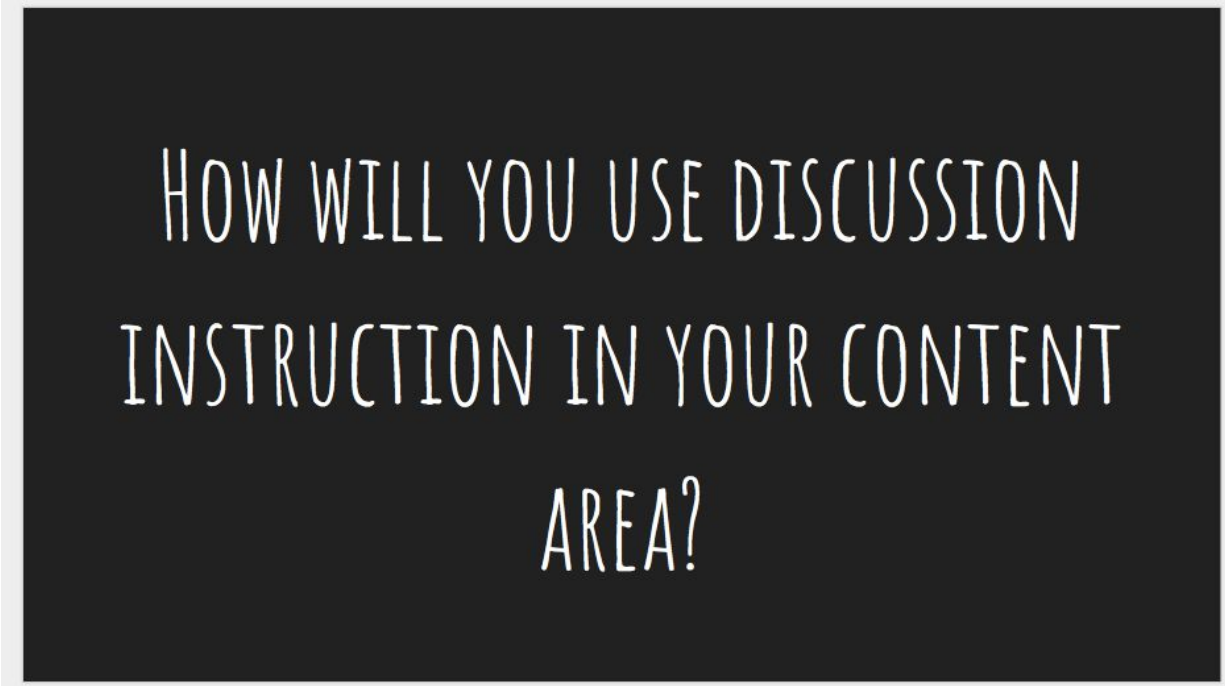
- **Knowledge-based competency is best developed through discussion instruction (Lesaux, 2012).**

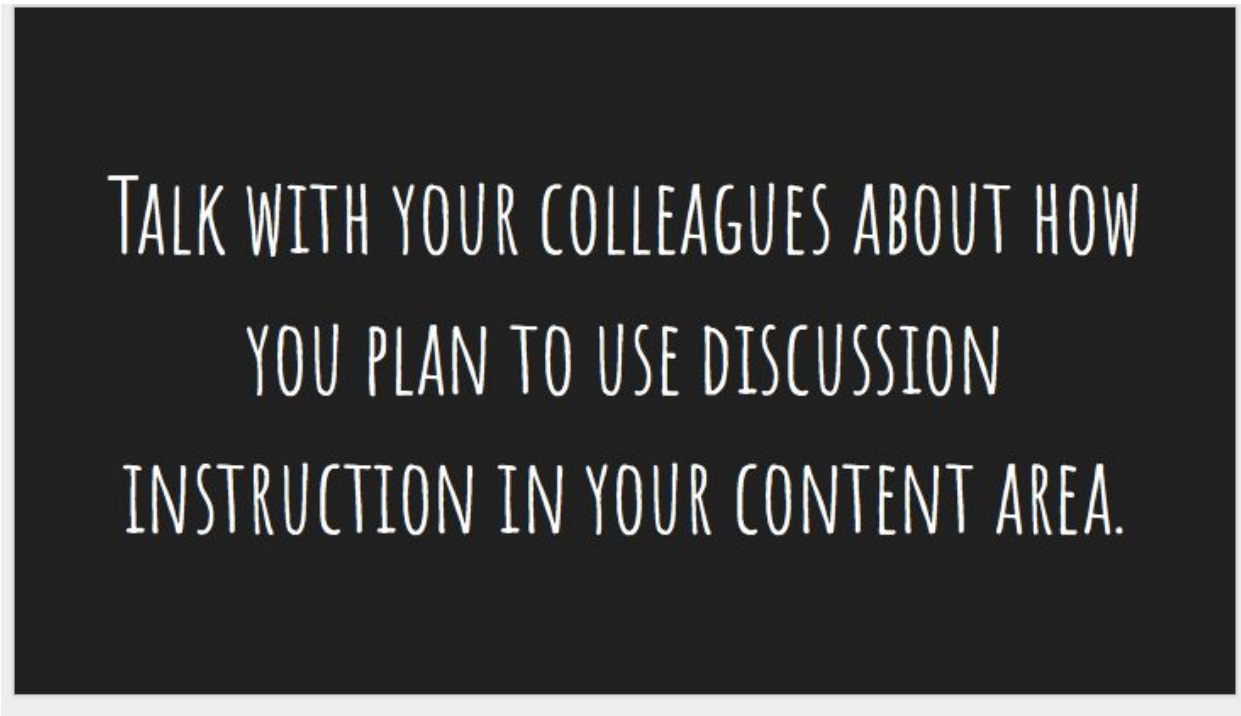
-literacy circles

-book discussions

How I Use Discussion Instruction

- Assign each student a literacy circle job to complete in class Monday-Thursday. On Friday, we have a literacy circle meeting in which each student presents their work for the week.
- Have students write questions relating to the reading on index cards. Shuffle them and use them to talk about what the students just read.
- Explicitly teach students how to have a discussion about what they read and have them practice each skill for several days before moving on to another skill.


How will you use discussion instruction in your content area?


Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to use discussion instruction in your content area.

Strategy #4: Involve the Parents

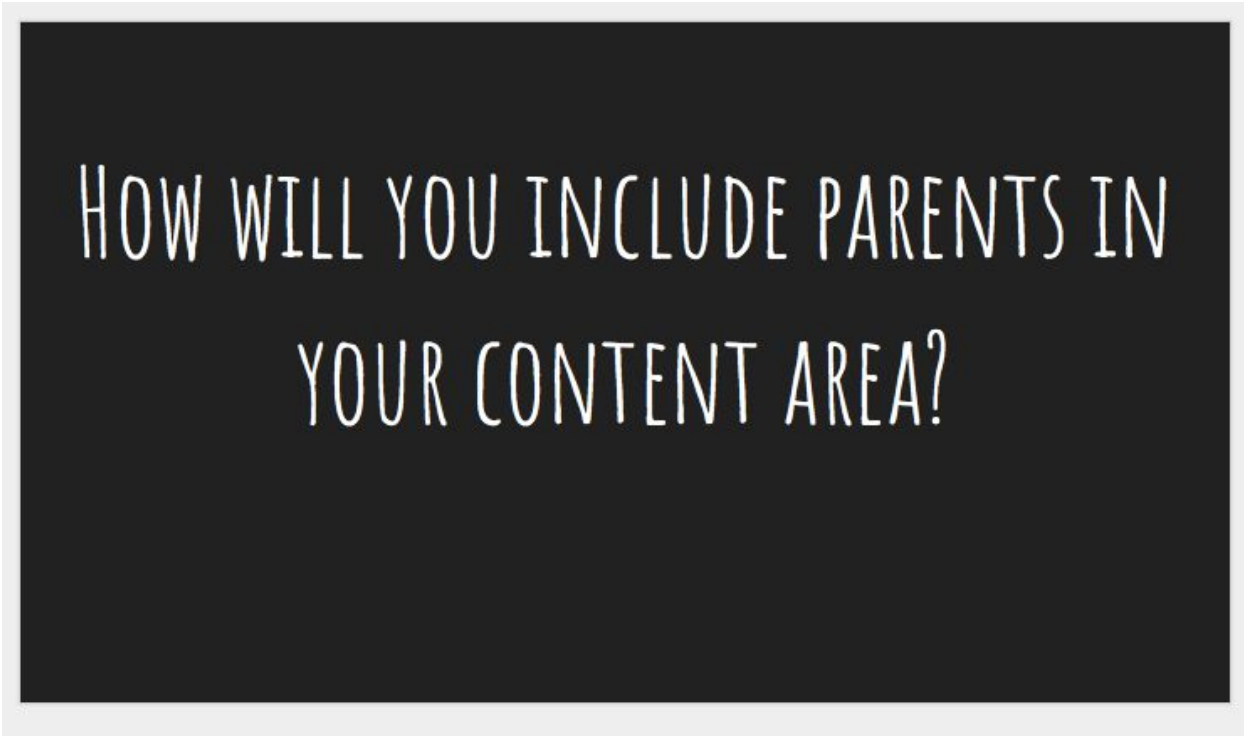
- Positive Relationships with parents is one of the most effective strategies at the school level to increase student success in reading (Taylor et al., 2000).

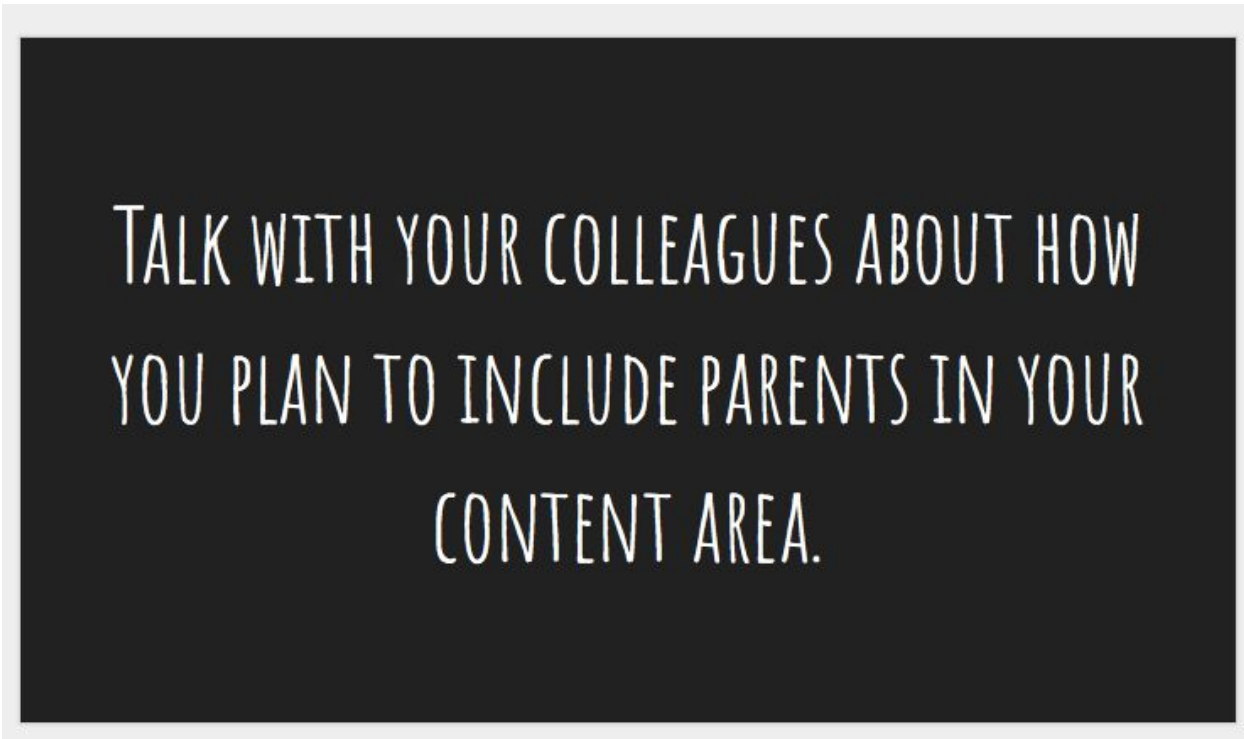
Strategy #4: Involve the Parents

1. **Explain how parents can be helping their students at home with reading skills**
2. **Invite parents into classroom to help with reading**
3. **Have parents come in and read a book to the class**

How I incorporate parents

- Send home weekly newsletters to update reading progress along with specific skills to practice
- Invite parents in to read to class
- Create detailed report cards highlighting what the students can do in reading, what skills they are improving in, and what they still can work on
- Make phone calls home to update parents on reading achievements


How will you include parents in your content area?


Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to include parents in your content area.

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Appendix B- Slides with Notes

1/28/18
Research Sa
Research S
The Plan
1. Give an overview of the strategy
2. Think about how it can be used in your content area
3. Practice and collaborate with colleagues (with FEEDBACK)
2

Strategy #1: High Level Thinking

Strategy #1: High Level Thinking

Strategy #1: High Level Thinking

How I Incorporate Higher Level Thinking Skills

- [illegible]
- Use BOK and Bloom's [illegible] to create a variety of factual, inferential, and critical questions for after reading discussion times.
- Place a variety of [illegible] questions into a bag and [illegible]

How do/will you use high level thinking questions in your

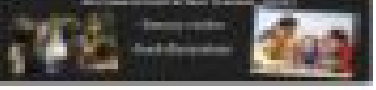
Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to use High level thinking skills in your teaching.

Strategy #2: Relevant reading
Strategy #2: Relevant reading
How I Make reading relevant

How will you make reading relevant in your content area?

Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to make reading relevant to the students you work

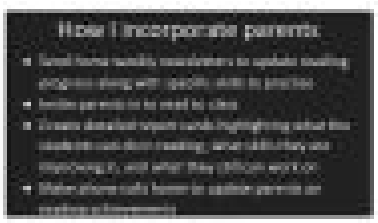
Strategy #3: Talk It Out



1/28/18
How I Use Discussion Instruction
How will you use discussion instruction in your content area?
Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to use discussion instruction in your content area.
7

Strategy #4: Involve the Parents

Strategy #4: Involve the Parents


How I incorporate parents

How will you include parents in your content area?

Talk with your colleagues about how you plan to include parents in your content area.

References

Appendix C-Resource Handout

Resources

High Level Thinking Skills:

- Bloom's Sentence Stems: https://tpri.wikispaces.com/file/view/05-2Bloom-16-17+Stems+for+Instruction.pdf
- DOK Wheel & Sentence Stems: https://croton-harmonresources.wikispaces.com/file/view/IDE%20dok_chart_and_stems.pdf/564104041/IDE%20dok_chart_and_stems.pdf

Making it Relevant:

- Hosting a Book Tasting Event: https://www.sassysavvysimpleteaching.com/2017/01/host-a-book-tasting/
- Interactive Notebooks: https://gettingnerdywithmelandgerdy.com/this-week-in-science-interactive-notebook-setup/

Discussion Instruction:

- Literacy Circles http://www.notsowimpyteacher.com/2014/10/literature-circles-made-simple.html
- Habits of Discussion https://newteachersupportcenter.com/habits-discussion-increase-rigor-lessons/

Including Parents:

- Ideas http://www.readingrockets.org/article/getting-parents-involved-schools