THE EFFECT OF EXTRINSIC REWARDS AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION ON STUDENT READING AND LEARNING
by
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Student motivation is a root problem in education today. Since reading is a core skill for any student to be successful in an academic environment, librarians and teachers have found that motivating students to read is an important task. This review of literature reports on studies and theories held by researchers and educators on motivation techniques including using extrinsic rewards as motivation, specifically in reading incentive programs. This research also provides a discussion on ways educators can provide students with opportunities to be intrinsically motivated to read.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One of an educator’s goals is to provide students with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom. Both teachers and school librarians are tasked with encouraging students to read. Studies have found a correlation between reading behaviors, like competence and frequency, and accomplishments in other academic environments (Corcoran and Mamalakis 137; Wang and Guthrie 165-166; Krashen 20; National Endowment for the Arts 14).

Reading is one of the skills taught to students so they may be successful, but it is up to them to use this skill to thrive in the academic environment. Librarians, teachers, and administrators search for ways to motivate students to read more, which leads to improved learning in other areas (Koskinen, et al. 176; Gambrell 15). Studies note that interest in independent reading declines as students age (Edmunds and Tancock 18; Chance and Lesesne 26). Therefore, researchers attempt to discover how students are motivated and what librarians and teachers can do to nurture positive reading behaviors.

This review of literature provides educators with information on common motivational practices that are used in schools today and their effects. Motivation is discussed in two major categories: using extrinsic rewards to motivate students to read and practices that foster an intrinsic motivation. This research leads to some conclusions, or best practices, with each motivational type.

The purpose of giving extrinsic rewards for reading in the classroom, library, or within a reading incentive program is to encourage students to read more. Rewards can be tangible (prizes, stickers, food) or intangible (grades, praise, “points”) (Hilden and Jones 6).
Consequences, like poor grades or loss of recess, given for not completing the task is are also a type of extrinsic incentive (Covington and Mueller 158-159, 169).

Although some studies find positive results from extrinsic motivation, especially if it is used correctly (Covington and Mueller 166; Fawson and Moore 320-321; Bowling 12; Mader 147), many researchers have theories that lean towards the negative (Edmunds and Tancock 19). For example, students may question the desirability of any task that requires a payment to complete (Johnson 96). Also, there may be no motivation to continue when the task is completed. Students may ask themselves: why would I continue since I have already been paid (Hilden and Jones 6; Covington 23)?

When students are intrinsically motivated, they read for their personal interest or for pleasure. When they are reading for pleasure, students can be seen lost in a book or losing track of time while reading (Hilden and Jones 6). With intrinsic motivation, the students themselves make the choice to practice positive reading behaviors. Techniques teachers can use to encourage such practices are also explored in this paper.

**Statement of the problem**

Librarians and educators have found that motivation is a root problem in education. Students must be motivated to read and learn to truly be successful. As reading is an important foundation in many academic and life skills, encouraging students to become life-long readers and learners is a goal of many educators. The problem this research explores is how librarians and educators can motivate students to read more, read better, and read for pleasure.
Reading incentive programs are popular among schools, and many use extrinsic rewards as the basis of student motivation. Yet there are multiple studies that show most extrinsic rewards, especially those that are not related to reading, do not provide positive results for students in the long term. Other solutions, including fostering intrinsically motivated reading, create positive, life-long reading habits.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to review literature and studies on motivation and reading, looking at the differences intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards (tangible or intangible) have on student reading and learning. This research will also explore common practices in extrinsic rewards, specifically how they are used in schools, and discuss the positive and negative effects of such practices. Lastly, the research will discuss different techniques teachers can use foster in their students an intrinsic motivation to read.

**Questions Guiding the Study**

The following questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of motivation on student reading?
2. How are students motivated?
3. How are extrinsic rewards used in the academic environment, and what are their effects?
4. How does a librarian or educator foster an intrinsic motivation to read?
Limitations

Limitations to this study include the limited time to conduct research and review the plethora of literature available on this topic. Some of the research is slightly dated, or is current but refers to these same studies. There are also few current studies available that specifically and objectively support either extrinsic rewards or intrinsic motivation that also measure long-term reading benefits, instead of only one semester or year duration of the study. The data presented are reflections of a variety of articles, and the conclusions have been drawn by the author.

Definition of Terms

Key terms of this study have been defined to clarify their meaning for the reader. These terms are defined by the researcher and are related to motivation in reading and education:

Extrinsic motivation: Motivation to complete a task because of an outside force beyond oneself. Intangible rewards: Extrinsic rewards that are not in a physical form. Praise, grades, or extra time to read are examples.

Intrinsic motivation: Motivation to complete a task because one wishes to do so for oneself. An example is when a student reads simply because he or she enjoys the task.

Motivational constructs: How students can be motivated, broken into categories

Reading incentive programs: Programs, professionally created or locally made, in which the purpose is to motivate students to read more or better.

Tangible rewards: Extrinsic rewards that is physical in form. Toys, pizza, books, pencils, and candy are examples.
Design of the Study

This research study is a collection of previously published literature on the topic of motivation of students in reading and learning. There was no effort to create new research or to examine data that is not held publically or that would need any type of permission to access.

Articles were retrieved from the following databases: *Library Literature and Information Science, ERIC, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Elite, JSTOR, Education Research Complete, Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts,* and *PsycArticles.* Some articles were found online at sites such as *National Endowment for the Arts, Accelerated Reader (Renaissance Learning),* and *Pearson Assessments.* Search terms include, but are not limited to: motivation, reading, extrinsic, intrinsic, Accelerated Reader, reading incentive programs, motivation, and library. Many articles were found by reviewing articles’ bibliographies or the subject terms that were assigned to the article by the database.

This study includes three chapters that explain and describe how students are motivated to read, and what the best practices are to achieve that goal. Chapter one is this overview of the study. Chapter two is the review of literature gathered. Lastly, chapter three answers the questions posed in this chapter with conclusions drawn from the research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The goal of librarians and educators is to create life-long readers and learners, as well as students who are successful in an academic environment. However, educators also want students to not only read, but to love reading. The difference between a librarian and a reading specialist’s primary job is that reading specialists teach reading as a skill. A library media specialist’s job is help students to read for enjoyment (Johnson 96). This research provides library media specialists and other educators with information on why motivation is important, and the differences intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards used as motivation, have on students in reading and learning. This paper will also explore common practices in the use of extrinsic rewards, specifically how they are used in schools, and discuss the positive and negative effects of such practices. Lastly, the research will discuss different practices teachers can use to foster an intrinsic motivation to read within their students.

Introduction to Motivation

According to The American Heritage College Dictionary, to motivate means to “provide with an incentive; move into action; impel” (908). Ugah describes motivation as an internal drive to satisfy unmet needs. Motivated behavior is driven by urges and aspirations to achieve a goal or expectation. Ugah also reports that motivation is intentional and multi-faceted. It is not a group effect, but a personal behavior (2). Motivated individuals tend to attain goals if they value them and believe them to be achievable (Koskinen et al. 176).

Motivation and Reading in Education

Teachers often report student motivation as a root problem in education. Ideally, learning should be permanent and internalized, but, unfortunately, educators often see
shallow, superficial learning of skills and facts. Motivation can make the difference in fostering students’ academic achievement in a deep, sustaining way (Gambrell 15). This may be because the most motivated students spend more time and effort on a task, leading to continued success (Corcoran and Mamalakis 137).

Literacy, specifically, is highly correlated to many types of academic achievement. Corcoran and Mamalakis report that a goal of teaching is to provide students with the tools to become prosperous in any academic environment, and competence in reading is that link to reaching the goal (137). The 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that the more children read, the more they will comprehend other texts (qtd. in Wang and Guthrie 166). Other studies, Wang reports, agree with the NAEP; the studies show that the amount of reading, both school assigned and for pleasure, predicted the level of children’s text comprehension (165).

Reading provides students with opportunities to succeed in other subjects. Studies have proven that the more a person reads, the better he or she will be in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and more (Krashen 20). Avid readers also score better on writing tests (National Endowment for the Arts 14). Therefore, it is an educator’s responsibility to provide the best opportunities to motivate students to read.

Motivating students to read leads to successes outside of the classroom. Students who are life-long readers are more likely to become productive, well-rounded adults. According to a 2007 report, American young adults are not only reading less, but have declining literacy skills. Avid readers will have life-long personal, professional, and social advantages over those who are not motivated to read for personal interest (National Endowment for the Arts 16).
Motivated readers tend to be high school graduates, to have more financially rewarding jobs, and have better career growth. Plus, fluent reading skills allow for one to live a more well-informed and culturally-rich life, including being better citizens and participating in charity work (National Endowment for the Arts 16-20). Students who are motivated to become life-long readers and learners from a young age will become better citizens and adults.

The lack of motivation for reading and learning in students has been a concern for many years. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2005, 73% of United States children do not read for pleasure. Additionally, the US was placed 33rd out of 35 countries that were surveyed about reading motivation (qtd. in Froiland et al. 93).

In the early 1990s, teachers reported a strong interest in learning how to effectively motivate students to engage them in reading, according to a U.S. poll conducted by the National Reading Research Center (Koskinen, Palmer, and Codling 176). Out of 84 reading topics in which to choose, teachers identified “creating interest in reading” as the primary topic they wish to be researched. The poll also showed that teachers desire to increase the amount of reading, increase the desire of children to read for personal interest, and explore the roles others play in increasing children’s motivation to read (Gambrell 15).

Many researchers find that it important to start fostering motivation to read from a young age. It is reported that motivation in children predicts their future behaviors. For example, researcher Gottfried reported that seven and eight-year-olds that are highly motivated continue to be in subsequent years (qtd. in Lai 14).

Although the importance of starting early is still evident, other researchers believe that work is required for educators to maintain the motivation young students already have.
Edmunds and Tancock report that the greatest decrease in motivation to read appears to be during the first through fourth grades. This common result seems to be because students are beginning to be aware of their own performance in comparison to their classmates. Additionally, reading instruction emphasizes competition and often does not allow input of children’s interests (18). Middle and high school students’ reading habits decline even further. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports this fact; teens spend less time reading than elementary students (Chance and Lesesne 26). An international survey of fifteen countries reported that most teens spend more time watching television than reading (Chua 180).

Motivational Constructs

According to researcher Daniel Pink, there are three types of motivation. First, humans have a biological drive, which is the need to complete a task to satisfy our basic human needs like food or security. The second type of motivation is for external reward or aversion to punishment. Lastly, humans have the “drive to learn, to create, and to better the world,” which is intrinsic motivation (qtd. in Fullen 6). To understand the different ways students can be motivated to read, Wigfield and Guthrie describe motivational in four main areas: reading efficacy, social motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation (420).

Reading efficacy is the student’s belief in his or her ability to read competently. If a child is efficacious, or at least believes he or she is so, then his or her choice in reading materials and behaviors will improve. Competent children are likely to read more (Wigfield and Guthrie 420-421). Reading efficacy also includes the “reading challenge” construct; students feel satisfaction for mastering complex ideas in a text.
Wigfield and Guthrie say the “social” construct for motivation is stimulated by family, friends, and peers. The authors referred to a study that reported that most low achieving students prioritize social behaviors over academic ones, so providing social interactions with reading might be motivational for these students (421). Social reading will be discussed in this paper as a way to foster an intrinsic motivation to read.

There are three intrinsic motivational constructs to describe why students are either motivated to read for its own sake or not. “Reading curiosity” is the desire for students to learn about a personal interest. “Reading Involvement” describes the enjoyment a student may have when reading a variety of different types of well-written fiction or nonfiction books, articles, or other types of text on a topic of interest. Lastly, “Reading Work Avoidance” is a type of motivation that pulls students away from reading. Work avoidance is when the student notes why he or she does not like to read (422).

Extrinsic motivational constructs deal with outside goals or forces motivating students to read. “Competition in reading” is popular when students are trying to outperform friends or classmates. “Recognition for reading” is when the student is praised for his or her successes in some tangible or intangible reward. Next, “reading for grades” is when the student is working towards being positively evaluated by teachers through grades or other marks (422).

Another motivational idea, “compliance” is reported by Wigfield and Guthrie as a social construct which can also be seen as intrinsic or extrinsic. Compliance is the act of reading because there is an outside goal or requirement. If the goal is set by the students themselves, it is intrinsic. If it is set by their peers, it could very well be social. However, in many examples
presented in this research, the goal students are working toward is set and evaluated by the
teacher, making this an extrinsic motivation.

**Extrinsic Reward as Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person participates in a desired activity because of
“external values and demands” (Wang and Guthrie 165). This can be when a student’s purpose
for reading or learning is to receive some type of reward or desired object (Fawson and Moore
326). The use of tangible rewards like prizes of tokens, stickers, certificates, and food are often
utilized to increase reading. Extrinsic motivators may also be intangible like verbal praise or
grades (Hilden and Jones 6).

Positive reinforcements can be viewed as a different type of extrinsic motivation where
students work to avoid negative consequences. If a student desired to avoid punishment from
not meeting expectations or receiving negative feedback, he or she is extrinsically motivated to
complete the task (Covington and Mueller 169). For example, receiving a grade for reading is a
very common extrinsic reward, both positive and negative. Since grades are the score given by
educators for judging how successful one is on a task, a student will work to either gain a
successful grade, or work to not fail (Covington and Mueller 158-159).

Competition between students can be another extrinsic, intangible reward because a
student wants to beat other classmates in a task. In reading competitions, for example,
students want to read for the best score and not for the act of reading itself. Although students
may intrinsically want to achieve the satisfaction of positive marks, their performance is rooted
on receiving a score from someone outside of themselves (Wigfield and Guthrie 421).
The question on whether extrinsic motivation works is a controversial topic. Edmunds and Tancock report that some studies do show positive effects from external rewards. While other studies show that extrinsic motivation was short-lived, ineffective, or that the studies that supported use of extrinsic rewards did not control for other variables that may have accounted for the results (19). Still, others think that it is not the extrinsic reward itself that is the problem, but how it is being used. “Extrinsic payoffs can either advance a love of learning—if they serve positive, task-oriented reasons—or interfere with caring if they are sought after for self-aggrandizing purposes” (Covington and Mueller 166). Either way, extrinsic rewards are used widely and with the best of intentions.

Using extrinsic rewards, many believe, help students realize their own reading potential. In a survey of teachers who participated in reading incentive programs which use extrinsic rewards, it was reported that most teachers wanted students to both read more and have a more positive attitude toward reading (Fawson and Moore 320-321). Educators work to determine whether the reward is actually a help or hindrance in the process. It is through research and experimentation that educators determine what kind, if any, of extrinsic rewards are appropriate for their students and their classrooms.

**Reading Incentive Programs**

Reading incentive programs are popular and are most often designed to promote extrinsic motivation. In 1999 it was reported in a survey of five large urban school districts in the southwestern United States that one hundred percent of principals said there were reading incentive programs used in their school. Additionally, ninety-five percent of classroom teachers answered that they use some sort of reading incentive program in their classroom; some
indicated it was a part of a school-wide project. This study defined a reading incentive program as “reading for pay” when prizes were given of food and toys, indicating that the above statistics are a result of programs that emphasize extrinsic rewards (Fawson and Moore 328-329).

There are many examples of extrinsic reward programs that are used in classrooms. Some are locally created, while others are professional programs that promise reading achievement. Each program has its advantages and disadvantages, but they all share one common aspect: extrinsic rewards, both tangible and intangible, are used as motivation.

The Fawson and Moore study reported on locally created criteria used for reading incentive programs where students who met a goal received an extrinsic reward (food, pencils, toys, etc.). Some schools or classrooms kept track of the number of minutes or days a student would read. The authors suggested this would be, in the very least, fair between all students and ability levels. However, another achievement indicator classrooms used was the number of books read. This is more troublesome as ability levels and student choice can affect the outcome. A student could choose small or non-challenging material to meet his or her quota. High achieving students would be put at a disadvantage when reading longer novels instead of easy readers (Fawson and Moore 329).

In addition to ways schools could create reading incentive programs, there are a great many professionally created programs to choose from, and each has some aspect of earning an external reward. Pizza Hut’s “Book It!” program is an example of this. Doug Johnson speaks about this reward program where students are rewarded with a free personal pan pizza from the restaurant when they read a certain number of books. Johnson agrees with author Alfie
Kohn that this will lead to “chubby kids” who don’t like to read. If they have to be “paid” to read, students might think reading must not be fun (Kohn qtd. in Johnson 96).

Accelerated Reading (AR) is one of the most widely used programs in schools today. In 2006, Wanda Hedrick reports that it is estimated that half of the school districts in the United States use Accelerated Reader. AR is a program that determines a student’s reading level after giving a test that is based on a reading passage. Then students are encouraged to read books within their level, both fiction and nonfiction. After each book a student reads, he or she will answer some basic recall questions about the book. If questions are answered correctly, the student earns “points.” In many schools, these points can be exchanged for extrinsic rewards (like toys), and some schools use points to determine the students’ grades (Hedrick 77).

The nature of the AR program often leads educators to encourage competition between grade levels, classrooms, and even individual students. This practice, which is not limited to AR, can come with some issues. When reading achievement is broken down into a number and displayed, the struggling readers are constantly reminded of the lack of points or rewards and feel they cannot catch up to students who are excelling (Fawson and Moore 335-336). Therefore, reading incentive programs could very well be discouraging low-level readers from becoming life-long readers and learners (Hedrick 78). Even a document published by Accelerated Reader discourages competition because students will cheat the system, choose inappropriate books, and it will leave struggling students behind. Instead, AR suggests using goals to be set for each individual student (“Getting Results” 9).
Effects of Extrinsic Rewards and Programs

As mentioned, there are some studies that found positive behaviors resulting from extrinsic reward systems. For example, high school librarian Barbra Bowling’s goal was to help students make visits to the library a habit. She mentions that her personal research has found her students highly motivated by money and food, and these extrinsic rewards provide the spark needed to make visiting the library, and ultimately reading, a habit (12). Others say that having a reward is preparing students for the world; employees will be rewarded for doing a job satisfactorily, or else they will not get paid. Students work hard for those extra points, just as they will later work hard for a bonus check (Mader 147).

However, much research leans heavily on the negative. A repeating theory is that if one is to assign a “price” for reading or any task, then it will appear to students to be undesirable (Johnson 96). Another prevailing idea is that when a task has a reward, then the student will tend to do the activity until the prize is reached. After a student has read his or her quota and was paid for it, for example, there is no motivation to continue the task, and the student will stop reading altogether (Hilden and Jones 6; Covington 23). In other words, teachers may not be fostering intrinsic motivation as they had hoped when using rewards. Rather, teachers could be discouraging it (Fawson and Moore 327).

Extrinsic rewards and incentive programs, some researchers say, may also have negative effects on more than just intrinsic motivation to read. Wang and Guthrie say that research reveals that students who read with extrinsic motivation will more likely read at the surface level and are more likely to report illogical ideas, inaccurate inferences, and guesses instead of understanding the complexities of the text (180). During the research study by Fawson and
Moore, almost all of the reading incentive programs explored were successful on students completing the task (reading more), but not about task competence (327). Both Wang and Guthrie, and Fawson and Moore report students are focusing more on receiving the reward than learning or reading.

Lastly, with purely-extrinsic rewards, the programs themselves might be demotivating for teachers. One author believes that a prevailing danger of extrinsically reward-laden incentive programs is that they may lead teachers to let the program do all of the work. This can lull them into not looking for other, more effective ways to motivate students through intrinsic motivation (Hedrick 78).

**Best Practices Using Extrinsic Rewards**

As previously mentioned, many studies show that extrinsic rewards may undermine any intrinsic motivation students may already have. A 2004 study by researcher Marinak found that prizes hindered students who were already intrinsically motivated to read (qtd. in Hedrick 77). By providing students with rewards, they may begin to question their own intrinsic desire to read for its own sake. When those rewards have no natural connection to reading and learning, like pizza or toys, then these rewards are giving power to the idea that students truly are being paid to read, and this can be ineffective (Fawson and Moore 335).

Gambrell suggested a “reward-proximity hypothesis” that basically states that the type of reward will be more or less affective because of its proximity to the desired behavior (23). In a study with elementary students, Gambrell found that giving a reward for reading was best when the reward itself was a book, bookmark, or was reading-related (Hilden and Jones 6). Other less tangible, reading related, and free rewards are a personally-customized booklist or
more time to read (Crow and Small 6). If these rewards are the incentive for reading, then the prize or “payment” for reading is, consequently, more reading. The use of the prize would, possibly, be for an intrinsic purpose, reading for personal enjoyment (Hilden and Jones 6).

However, Edmunds and Tancock’s study of fourth graders found little evidence to support this theory, although the authors state other researchers believe it to be successful (27).

During a study of a reading incentive program, The Running Start, by the Reading is Fundamental organization, children kept track of their individual goal of reading twenty-one books. Bookmarks were given to the first graders as reminders and incentives, but the ultimate prize for reading their quota was to choose a book to take home. The research in this study found that a reward in general was desirable for students. However, when a book was the reward, children learned to value books and reading (Gambrell 23). A study by Hilden and Jones also found that students who were given a book as a reward were found more likely to continue reading after being given the prize than those who received rewards like food or toys (7).

A high school librarian, Bowling, offered the incentive of a gift card to a local bookstore as a reward for visiting and checking out books in the school library during Teen Read Week. Any student who visited the library for books was allowed to put his or her name into a drawing for the gift card; the winning students’ teachers also received the same reading-related extrinsic reward. Although there was increased circulation, Bowling provided no evidence that reading increased. Still students were motivated to take that step to become readers (12).

In addition to the reward-proximity hypothesis, one researcher suggests that any reward is to be given unexpectedly. The positive reward, verbal praise preferably, needs to be
received for effort and not for completion or competence in the task. If the student does not know of the reward at beginning the activity, the negative results tend to be few. The author did note that this works better with older readers than elementary students (Lai 23). Verbal praise may also be used, sparingly, to keep students motivated during long or complicated tasks; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic reward might work together to keep students engaged when they feel frustrated with a reading goal (Lai 24).

Reading incentive programs that encourage the use of tangible or intangible rewards are a trend in public schools today. Although most research leads educators away from such rewards, there are conflicting results. If students are to receive a tangible prize for positive reading behavior, it seems the best thing to do is to give them a reward that leads to more opportunities to read.

**Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is the internal desire to do something; it comes from within the individual (Hilden and Jones 6). The competent completion of a task is often the desired end. The students are in control of their behavior, so the tasks will be to their liking. They do not need a reward to propel them forward; the enjoyment of the task itself is the reward (Fawson and Moore 326).

In reading, intrinsic motivation can be seen when students become “lost” in a book, engrossed in the story or facts. An intrinsically motivated reader will often lose track of time while being immersed in the text (Hilden and Jones 6). As explained in the introduction, the more a person spends time on a task, the more capable reader he or she becomes. As students become more capable, they show higher reading efficacy, thus growing their self-esteem. In
turn they are likely to return to the bookshelf for more. This translates to higher achievement in reading and academics (Wang 165; Corcoran and Mamalakis 137).

Research demonstrates that more intrinsically motivated readers are linked to higher achievement and better future reading behaviors. Wang and Guthrie report on studies that show that children who were intrinsically motivated as young elementary students continued to be successful readers in the following years. A study on tenth grade students demonstrated that intrinsic motivation to read for pleasure also determined the variance of their text comprehension (165).

Intrinsic motivation for reading is an individual process. The student decides on his or her own reading behaviors. There are, however, practices that foster the positive reading behaviors educators would like to see in their students. These practices include modeling a personal love of reading, making reading a social activity, reading aloud to students, marketing good books, giving students a choice of a reading materials, providing uninterrupted time to read, and providing a comfortable and well-organized space for reading.

**Teachers Model a Love of Reading**

During a study of third and fifth graders, students were asked about who gets them excited about reading. While some classrooms never mentioned the teacher, other classrooms overwhelmingly gave credit to their educator (Gambrell 20). This shows that the teachers’ actions can play a role in students’ motivation to read. Other research has suggested that teachers who are avid readers themselves have more high achieving students than non-reading teachers. This could be because these teachers model these behaviors (Gambrell 20-21).
Teachers who demonstrate their own love of reading encourage their students to become readers as well (Corcoran and Mamalakis 139).

There are many ways educators can model a love of reading. Teachers can carry on discussions of reading habits, share reading experiences that have affected their lives, or even carry on personal discussions between individual students through journaling (Corcoran and Mamalakis 139). Educators, principals included, also model a personal love of reading by joining students during silent reading times, or a time set aside during the school day that is dedicated to sustained reading. By reading while students are, it shows that teachers value reading. It might also open a dialogue with students about what the teacher is reading (Mariam 337). Additionally, it could give the chance for the teacher to catch up on reading books that are popular among their students, giving more opportunities for discussion. Some schools are making goals of improving the reading habits of teachers in their school improvement plans (Mariam 338).

Make Reading Social

“When we have ‘Read and Respond Time’ the teacher should let us read our own books and tell about them in a group” exclaimed an elementary student who wished that reading could be more of a social practice (qtd. in Gambrell 14). Some studies have shown that social collaboration, where students can read, write, and share with others, has become an intrinsic motivation for students to read more. To simply talk about books in book clubs or book “lunches” with a librarian, teacher, or principal can bring the excitement found in the social aspect of reading. Students appear to be more motivated to read when sharing, possibly because reading and discussing the text reduces the feeling of isolation; students can feel alone
when trying to tackle difficult materials (Williams, Hedrick, and Tuschinski 136). Working in groups will also allow for peer encouragement to read and respond to their reading, as well as peer-to-peer modeling of successful reading behaviors (Lai 26).

Another way to make reading social is to allow older students to be reading role models for younger students. Older students would read to the younger ones and also take a turn being the listener (Gambrell 18). This gives both students a sense of self-worth and reading efficacy, leading to a personal love of reading.

**Read Aloud**

Building a positive reading environment to engage students is to create a literature-rich atmosphere. One way educators can introduce students to new reading experiences is to read aloud to them. Reading aloud allows students to engage in literature that may be above their level, giving them experience in books with higher vocabulary, and syntax (Corcoran and Mamalakis 139). It also gives students the opportunity to engage in literature they may not have chosen on their own, such as a different author, genre, or series. Good books market themselves (“Getting Results” 51).

Reading aloud also provides an opportunity for the teacher to model positive reading and comprehension behaviors to his or her students. For example, the teacher could show students how he or she makes predictions, creates questions, or summarizes. It could also lead to students’ discussion of plot, literary elements, and other commonly tested language arts skills (“Getting Results” 51).
Market Good Books

Popular books are popular for a reason. They are often well written, engaging, and, in many cases, well publicized by their respected publishers. To engage students to read, many educators find quality, attractive literature and advertise it. The chief purpose is to help students find books they will enjoy. However, it also builds that social aspect of reading by building relationships between students and adults, while simultaneously modeling the educator’s personal love of reading. Financially this is not a burden; marketing books to students, like other intrinsic motivators, can be absolutely free (Chance and Lesesne 27).

The most common type of marketing done in the library is booktalks, which are brief advertisements for a book. The presenter will usually introduce the characters, basic setting and the premise of the plot, providing only enough information to entice the student without giving away the ending (Chance and Lesesne 27). Posters, slideshow applications, or other multi-media presentations are ways to add visual aids. A book trailer is a popular alternative to a booktalk. A book trailer is a booktalk in the format of a video, similar to a movie trailer; still images and text set to music and sound effects are the most popular formats for book trailers (Chance and Lesesne 27). Book trailers, shows, and other media presentations allow booktalks to be shared electronically.

Students, themselves, can be involved in creating booktalks as a class or book club project. This gives them a personal outlet to share their enthusiasm for reading. It creates a social environment in reading and allows students to work with the text in a deeper way than just reading alone; leading to higher-order thinking, a goal in any educational setting (Fawson and Moore 336).
Student Choice of a Variety of Materials

“Make sure there are lots of books. There are not a lot of books in our classroom,” exclaims a disappointed elementary student (qtd. in Gambrell 14). Studies have shown that reading achievement, specifically comprehension, is predictable from the amount of literature to which a student has been exposed (Wang and Guthrie 165). Krashen reports that students who are in poverty have a strong chance of low reading ability, and that is partly true because they have little access to reading material. Access to more books results in more reading (21).

Having access to books is the first step. Krashen recommends teachers to provide students with reading-level appropriate, interesting, and compelling materials (25). Educators can include materials that are appropriate to students’ ethical and cognitive development as well (Schaps and Lewis 81). Students search for ways to connect with a book in some personal way, so providing materials that are relevant to their own cultures and lives is important. Reading for pleasure is hard to achieve when the variety is limited to someone else’s point of view of “great books” (136).

There is much evidence that having engaging books available to students improves reading ability (Krashen 20). Moreover, low-achieving students will also benefit from these books. It is proposed that struggling readers would read more if the books were not only at their reading level, but were engaging and on topics that interest them (Williams, Hedrick, and Tuschinski 136).

It is important to provide an array of materials that support the interests and needs of the students (Cole 335). It may take that one book, author, or genre to grab the student and motivate him or her to become life-long reader; some students just need to find their reading
niche (Bowling 14). So a successful classroom or library will often provide books of all genres, including nonfiction books of all sorts. Other types of reading materials like magazines, game manuals, online reading, and cookbooks will provide a well-rounded collection (Hilden and Jones 7). Graphic novels have been found to motivate readers, especially boys and special needs students. The visual and print combination helps readers to achieve successful reading comprehension (Gavigan 20-21).

Providing a variety of works, but not letting students freely choose their reading materials, would be a disservice to students. Self-selected reading allows students to have power in their reading experiences; when they feel empowered, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to continue (Williams, Hedrick and Tuschinski 136). Additionally, students will display more persistence, personal goal setting, and can self-regulate their own learning behaviors (Lai 25). With choice, they are given a sense of ownership that they could not find elsewhere (Hilden and Jones 7).

Gambrell completed a study of elementary students’ reading habits, and the results support the concept that giving students choice allows for a more positive reading experience. Children were interviewed about their reading behaviors and asked about the books they most enjoyed reading. Only ten percent of the students in the study were motivated by assigned reading, while eighty percent spoke of self-selected books (21). Allowing for student choice, when the students have a variety of appropriate materials to choose from, provides for a positive environment for intrinsic motivation.
Provide for Uninterrupted Time to Read

“Let us read more... about 10 more minutes.” “Do not let DEAR time end so soon!”

“Please make sure you don’t interrupt us while we’re reading” (students qtd. in Gambrell 14).

To foster a love of any hobby, time is needed to not only become adept, but to truly become engrossed in the activity. To help encourage self-motivated reading, many schools have adopted programs that allow for students to have the time to do so. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT), and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time are found in schools across the country. All of these programs allow for students to read, often with a book of their own choice, without interruption during the school day (Chua 180).

Chua describes the SSR program that was a part of her twelve-month study in a secondary school. At the beginning of each day, students were to read a self-selected book for twenty minutes; the staff was required to read, too. Teachers encouraged students to reflect on their reading in journals or notes. As a result, research on SSR showed positive effects on attitudes and reading habits of many students (181).

Provide a Positive Physical Space for Reading

A poor design of any room can have a negative impact on learning and reading. Materials in the room can be arranged in a way that is not only engaging, but practical. In a well-organized reading center, books are to be displayed where students can see, read, and reach them easily. Books are also organized in a way that will build a network for students to discover and explore (Roskos and Neuman 112). For example, placing similar books together by
relating topics, genres, or authors will allow students to discover new and exciting books they might not find otherwise.

A positive physical space has a comfortable place for students to sit and is also well-lit. Natural light and sound-absorbing materials help keep the room quiet and ready for student concentration. With no distractions, students will be able to bury themselves in their books completely (Roskos and Neuman 113). Creating a positive reading environment is a way to foster students to read intrinsically.

What works for one student, will not necessarily work for another. The recommended way to nurture intrinsic motivation is to use the variety of reading experiences like those mentioned above. An educator can never know which reading practice will motivate that student to become a life-long reader (Cole 334).

Conclusion

The type of motivation behind a student’s reading habits, either extrinsic or intrinsic, changes the way students read. The difference between the two lies in the source of the behavior, which could affect whether students become life-long readers. A child who reads for a prize is reading for a different reason than the one who simply enjoys the act.

Extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivations do not have to mutually exclusive. Every student is different. Some may need that extra “push” of an extrinsic reward to get started, but the ultimate goal is for the student to read on his or her own volition. Educators can then support those reading habits by creating a positive environment. Modeling a love of reading, giving students choices of materials and marketing them to students, making reading a social experience, and allowing for a comfortable physical space for sustained reading are some
endeavors that can be used in any classroom or library to promote reading. Used in the correct way and in the correct balance, a mix of a small, reading-related extrinsic rewards and a carefully planned positive reading environment could create that intrinsically-motivated reader.
CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS

The goal of educators and library media specialists is to have students become successful readers and life-long learners. Motivation to read is one key to having deep and sustained learning. This research explores the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, how they are used in academic settings, and the effects of such practices. The issue of motivation has led to several questions that are addressed in this document: “Why is reading motivation important in education?”; “How are students motivated?”; “How are extrinsic rewards used in the academic environment, and what are its effects?”; and “How does a librarian or educator foster an intrinsic motivation to read?”

Reading Motivation in Education

Competent students in any academic subject are children who can internalize and permanently retain the content. However, teachers often see superficial learning of the skills or facts. Research has found a high correlation between literacy and competency in other types of academic achievement, lifelong learning, and creating well-rounded adults. This is because literate students score better in spelling, vocabulary, and writing tests, which are tools needed to be successful.

Studies show that students become literate and gain the ability for high text comprehension by reading. To become adept at reading and learning, quality time must be spent reading and building the skills and confidence necessary to continue. Schools are seeing students turning away from assigned reading and even reading for pleasure.

Even though many students show interest in reading early, evidence has shown that there is a lack of motivation to read as students progress through elementary grades, and it
grows worse at the secondary level. The lack of motivation to read has been a concern for many educators, and teachers have shown interest in ways to help their students become motivated to read. Educators are also concerned about maintaining the intrinsic desire to read that is already ingrained in the youngest students.

**Motivating Students**

There are a variety of ways researchers have categorized motivation. Motivation for reading and learning will focus on two basic types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Additionally, researchers often separate out social motivation but, for the purposes of this research, it will be considered as an intrinsic motivation.

The intrinsic desire to read is a motivation that is derived from nothing but the student and the act of reading, itself. For example, a student reads because he or she enjoys the feeling of accomplishment, especially when dealing with difficult text. A student will also read to learn about something of interest to them. Lastly, students pick up a book so they may interact with other readers, creating a social reading environment.

Extrinsic motivation is seen when students read because of outside goals or forces that are put upon them. Educators often create competitions or set personal goals to motivate students to read. Those competitions and goals often provide rewards for reading with grades, verbal praise or tangible prizes.

**Extrinsic Rewards**

Positive or negative reinforcements used to encourage children to read are extrinsic rewards that are used as motivation. When evaluating the success of using extrinsic rewards, research studies conflict with one another. Even though much research leans heavily to the
negative, many of these researchers concede to the idea some certain types of rewards may work if given at the appropriate time and to the appropriate student. Reading incentive programs are used widely in schools and most often aim to reward students for their reading through giving prizes, praise, and even grades. Librarians and teachers set reading goals (number of pages, books, or time read) and competitions, and then reward students who succeed.

In addition to local programs, there is a variety of reading incentive programs that are professionally created; many of these programs must be purchased for the school’s participation. Pizza Hut’s Book it program and Accelerated Reading are examples of programs that pay students, by pizza or points, to read. With Accelerated Reading, these rewards are often translated into a grade for the student’s reading behavior.

When students are rewarded, some educators believe it could create the spark needed for students to continue and become intrinsically motivated readers. However, other research suggests that a student will not be motivated to read after the task is completed and he or she is paid; using this method may discourage reading. It might also encourage students to read quickly, only reading at the surface level. Reading incentive programs may temporarily show more student reading, but not reading with competence. Additionally, teachers will often not include other techniques to entice students into reading, and allow the programs to do all of the work.

Studies show that some rewards can prove successful if they are proximate to the task. The reward-proximity hypothesis states that if the goal is for students to read, then the reward is to promote more reading; bookmarks, books, or additional time to read are examples of this
type of reward. Random praises or small reading-related rewards may also be helpful to keep struggling students motivated with complicated reading tasks.

**Fostering Intrinsic Motivation**

The more intrinsically motivated a student is to read for pleasure, the higher achievement and better reading behaviors will be displayed. Intrinsic motivation to read, by definition, comes from the children themselves. The internal desire to read and learn cannot be forced upon a student, but it can be fostered. Studies say that teachers strongly influence their students’ reading behaviors; there are some techniques teachers and educators can use to help students to help themselves.

Overall, teachers can show students their own love of reading, providing students with reading role models. Discussions over recently read books, reading at the times students are required to, and talking about reading with students individually through journaling are a few examples of how this can be done. Discussion between students and educators is the first step to making reading a social activity. Book clubs, lunches, or peer to peer reading partners are other ways to foster students’ desire to read.

Taking the time to read aloud to students also shows students a love of reading. Reading aloud to students gives them the opportunity to experience different books they would not have chosen themselves because of reading level or interest. They are exposed to new vocabulary and other comprehension skills when the educator models them. Additionally, students could find themselves interested in a new author, genre, or series because it was marketed to them through a read aloud.
There are other ways to market good books; the most common types are book talks or book trailers. Teachers or librarians offer a teaser to the plot, characters, and conflict in the story. Just like a movie trailer, the students must read the story to satisfy their curiosity!

Students will read books that they find interesting, so another practice successful librarians and educators do is to provide students with a wide variety of materials. An assortment of authors, genres, text types (cookbooks, fiction, graphic novel, magazines, etc.) will allow for plenty of selection for students. A range of reading levels gives classes that have struggling and excelling students opportunities to find a book that suits them.

Reading programs that do not allow for student choice may very well be doing a disservice to the children. Studies show that students are more likely to enjoy a reading if it is self-selected than if it was assigned to them. Therefore, it is recommended that librarians and educators give students a variety of materials, and then allow students to choose freely among them.

Once students have found a book that is of interest to them, they need the time to read uninterrupted. The more time students spend reading, the better they become. Some schools have initiated programs, like “Silent Sustained Reading” that allow a time for uninterrupted reading, and teachers are often join their students during these periods. Research shows that providing uninterrupted reading has positive effects on attitudes and reading habits in students.

Lastly, educators who have a positive physical reading space will enhance the reading experiences of their students. Book organization allows students to explore new materials for
future reading. Rooms that are quiet, comfortable and well-lit provide students with little distraction during reading times.

All of these techniques work together to foster students to read for pleasure. What motivates one student will not work for every student. Even though students cannot be forced into being intrinsically motivated to read, educators can provide an environment where reading is valued and nurtured. One can never know what might reach that unmotivated child.
Works Cited


Publication Agreement

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