



Literacy Links

April, 2007
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Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First

Spotlight on...

Motivation and Engagement

Can you identify a student in your classroom who is highly motivated to read? Do you have students who are passionately engaged and engrossed in the texts they read? Are you familiar with students who frequently report their dislike for reading regardless of the texts offered to them?

Motivation and engagement are critical elements which influence students' development as successful and independent literacy learners (as well as successful learners in all content areas). The relationship of motivation and engagement to successful reading performance is sometimes overlooked.

Think of a book you have read recently which you were motivated and engaged to read. Would you characterize this book as captivating and one you couldn't put down? What made this book so captivating for you? Now consider a text in which you were not interested and found challenging just trying to plod through. What made this text uninteresting and challenging to read?

The terms motivation and engagement tend to be used in combination, but students (and adults) can demonstrate one element without the other. Students can be motivated to read although not be highly engaged. (As an adult reader, you may be highly motivated to read the latest New York Times bestselling book yet your busy schedule prevents you from being engaged in reading it.) Students can also be engaged while reading, but not be highly motivated. (As an adult reader, you may have recently been engaged in reading the tax manual in order to fulfill the April 15 deadline, although your motivation to read this cumbersome manual may not have been very strong.)

Unfortunately, some students exhibit both—they are both unmotivated and disengaged. Keith Stanovich coined the phrase, "The Matthew Effect," in 1986 to describe the unfortunate cycle which tends to develop with these students. This phenomenon is sometimes referenced as "the rich get richer while the poor get poorer". Students who are motivated and engaged in reading are inclined to frequently read on their own because they enjoy reading and as a result, their reading ability improves. Students who are unmotivated to read tend not to enjoy reading and therefore do not read independently. This translates into limited growth of their reading ability.

What are some of the underlying factors which can influence motivation or engagement that teachers can actually attend to in the classroom? The types of text students read or instruction which accompanies these texts may affect student's motivation and engagement for literacy learning. Some questions to consider when analyzing and addressing limited motivation or engagement include:

- Is the text at a level that is too difficult for the student?
- Is the language and/or vocabulary of the text accessible or familiar for the student?



"To read is to empower
To empower is to write
To write is to influence
To influence is to
change
To change is to live."

Jane Evershed



Upcoming Events

May 30 (Portland) and June 1 (Bangor) ~

Jo Robinson is returning to Maine! She will present two conferences on maximizing classroom instruction and implementing independent learning centers; registration information for these conferences will be emailed to all recipients of *Literacy Links* in the next few weeks

June 27 -28, 2007 ~

4th Annual Maine Reading First Summer Institute to be held at Sunday River; more details and registration information will be included in the May edition of *Literacy Links*

August 6-8, 2007 ~

Annual Seamless Transitions Conference; University of Maine, Orono

- Is the student uninterested in the content of the text?
- Does the student have limited background knowledge on the content of the text?
- Does the instruction target the challenging features of the text prior to student's reading?
- Is there enough support and feedback for the student while the text is read?

All of these factors could negatively impact students' engagement with reading.

Description of Instructional Idea...

Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional technique for comprehension which was originally developed by Palincsar and Brown in 1986. Research conducted on reciprocal teaching reveals that this technique is effective in improving students' comprehension and the effects tend to be long-lasting.

The process of reciprocal teaching involves the use of four key comprehension strategies: summarizing, questioning, predicting, and clarifying. Students practice these strategies as they read texts which have been chunked into smaller sections. The teacher assumes the role as a highly supportive facilitator when reciprocal teaching is first introduced and then gradually releases this role to the students so they accept and share this responsibility. When students become the facilitators for reciprocal teaching, their ownership and independent use of these comprehension strategies are enhanced.

The effectiveness of reciprocal teaching is dependent on explicit explanation and modeling of each of the strategies with multiple opportunities for guided practice. Students do not need to use the four comprehension strategies in a specific sequence as the order will vary depending on the student and the text. The process of varying the sequence of using these comprehension strategies matches the seamless integration and application of strategies which proficient readers display.

For more detailed information about the technique of reciprocal teaching, refer to Reciprocal Teaching at Work: Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension by Lori Oczkus, published by International Reading Association. The ISBN for this professional literacy text is 0872075141.

Summary of Professional Literacy Text...

Motivating Primary-Grade Students

Michael Pressley and his colleagues have developed a practical resource for teachers on how to create classroom environments where students are excited and motivated to learn. This text includes research-based strategies and techniques interwoven with descriptive case studies from three classrooms.

Motivating Primary-Grade Students by Michael Pressley, Sara Dolezal, Lisa Raphael, Lindsey Mohan, Alysia Roehrig, and Kristen Bogner was published in 2003 by The Guildford Press and the ISBN is 1572309148.

Organizers of this conference are excited to announce that Dr. Susan Bennett-Armistead, University of Maine Literacy Faculty Member, will offer a full-day institute on preK Literacy on August 9; Contact Amy Cates at 581-2438 for more information.

August 14-15, 2007 ~

Maine Reading First will host "All About DIBELS" training session at the Maine Principal's Association Conference Center in Augusta; see 'News from Maine Reading First' in this edition of *Literacy Links* for more information

September 27-28, 2007 ~

59th Annual New England Reading Association (NERA) Conference, "Literacy Learning: What Matters", will be held at the Augusta Civic Center; registration brochure for this conference is now available at <http://www.nereading.org>

Children's Literature Title...

Max's Words

Written by Kate Banks and illustrated by Boris Kulikov

Max is envious of his brothers for the stamps and coins they collect so he decides to begin his own collection...of words. Max searches for words in magazines and newspapers—small words, big words, words of foods he likes to eat, and words he does not know. Max's brothers are skeptical of his desire to collect words until he begins combining the words to create a story. Readers and writers alike will be motivated by Max's love of words and how he crafts a story that leaves his brothers begging for more.

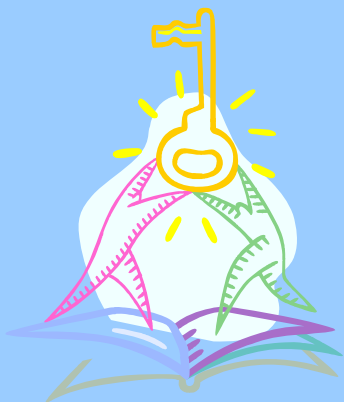
Max's Words was published in 2006 by Frances Foster Books and the ISBN is 0374399492.

News from Maine Reading First...

- Maine Reading First is currently accepting requests from Districts interested in offering the Maine Reading First Statewide Course during the 2007-2008 school year. The Maine Reading First Statewide Course is offered as part of the federal Reading First Initiative. It provides educators with an overview of the scientifically-based reading research behind literacy development and instruction. There is a focus on research, instructional strategies, and assessments related to the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. The outline for this course is posted on the Maine Reading First website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm> If you are interested in learning more about offering this professional development opportunity in your District or if you would like to submit a request to have the Maine Reading First course offered at a site in your District, please contact janet.trembly@maine.gov
- Maine Reading First will host a 1½ day DIBELS training session in August. "All About DIBELS: How to Administer, Score, Monitor Progress, and Support the Planning of Classroom Instruction and Interventions" will be held on August 14 and 15 at the Maine Principal's Association Conference Center in Augusta. Participants in this workshop will learn how to administer and score the DIBELS subtests and then examine how the data can be organized and used effectively to plan instruction. A focus on linking DIBELS data to a three-tiered instructional model with a review of the key components of an effective reading program will be shared. It is recommended that teams of teachers and administrators attend as the importance of a school-wide model in implementing data-driven core and intervention supports for struggling readers will be emphasized. The registration fee for this session will be \$75 and participation will be limited to 30. Registration will be emailed to all recipients of *Literacy Links* in the next few weeks and registration forms will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

Check it out...

The Florida Center for Reading Research begun publishing a quarterly electronic newsletter, "Intervention News: Information and Ideas for the



“Good children’s literature appeals not only to the child in the adult, but to the adult in the child.”

Anonymous

Support of Struggling Readers.” Each issue includes the following sections: research corner, school profile, instructional tips, and what’s new. The information and ideas included in the first editions of this newsletter are helpful for teachers, coaches, interventionists, and administrators in designing instruction to best meet the needs of struggling readers. “Intervention News” has been published 3 times this year: October, December, and February. The April edition will be forthcoming and a fifth edition will be published near the end of the school year. The editions of this newsletter can be located on the website for The Florida Center for Reading Research at the following address <http://www.fcrr.org/Interventions/index.htm>

Newsletter Archives

There are several earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available on the Maine Reading First website at <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

Edition	Spotlight Topic
March, 2005	Maine Reading First
April, 2005	Maine Reading First Course
May, 2005	Reading Fluency
June, 2005	Vocabulary
September, 2005	Phonemic Awareness
October, 2005	Phonics
November, 2005	Comprehension
December, 2005/January, 2006	DIBELS
February, 2006	Literacy Centers
March, 2006	Interactive Read Aloud
April, 2006	Nonfiction
May, 2006	Word Walls
June, 2006	Classroom Design
September, 2006	Shared Reading
October, 2006	Automaticity
November, 2006	Using Assessment to Guide Instruction
December, 2006	Deepening Comprehension
January, 2007	Selecting Quality Children’s Books (part 1)
February, 2007	Selecting Quality Children’s Books (part 2)
March, 2007	Making Instruction Explicit



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email janet.trembly@maine.gov

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

The professional development opportunities and materials are listed in *Literacy Links* for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Maine Department of Education’s Maine Reading First Initiative.