Implementing a Workshop Approach to Literacy as a Means of Building Motivation

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Abstract

Decreasing levels of motivation in students to read and write throughout elementary school is many teachers face. This challenge is especially pertinent due to the evidence found within the field of literacy education that readers learn to read by reading and writers learn to write by writing. A possible solution to such a problem is the implementation of Reading and Writing Workshop into the classroom. Several fundamental features of a workshop approach to literacy instruction overlap with fundamental features of motivation. Specifically, Reading and Writing Workshop most clearly align with motivation in the areas of choice, social engagement, and environment. Because such a strong overlap does exist, an increase in student motivation through the curriculum of Reading and Writing Workshop is likely. Ultimately, the success of Reading and Writing Workshop in promoting motivation to read and write is largely dependent on the individual personalities and experiences which make up a classroom. Thus, it is essential that teachers know their students well before introducing a workshop approach to literacy into their instruction and adapt the model as necessary. Still, the general framework of Reading and Writing Workshop offers promise for teachers who are seeking different techniques to raise levels of motivation within their students.

Introduction

"The reason that many of us care about the teaching of reading and writing is that we, too, have found that when we give the children of the world the words they need, we are giving them life and growth and refreshment." (Calkins & Harwayne, 2001, p. 24)

In the above quote, Lucy Calkins and Shelley Harwayne explicitly expose the transformative power held by literacy in the lives of students. Because literacy gives students access to ideas, thoughts, and beliefs that may not be available otherwise, teachers must be invested in their instruction of both reading and writing. Still, what happens when students are reluctant to learn? Within the realm of education, teachers have long faced challenges in motivating students to learn. Learning in general is indeed an intentional act. Students make the conscience decision to learn or not to learn immediately upon entrance into the classroom each day. The teachers and learning environments which the student encounters certainly influence his decision to learn. Yet, in recent years, it seems that teachers have fully utilized their resources and strategies with no measurable increase in student motivation. This negative correlation between teachers' use of strategies and students' motivation to learn has long been considered one of the greatest threats to the future success of the American education system (Cremin, 1961). Specifically within the domains of reading and writing, which both act as predictors of student success in all other domains, it is critical for teachers to employ new approaches to teaching that may achieve the goal of motivating students to learn. In this review of the literature, I will discuss fundamental ideas associated with both motivation as related to a workshop approach to literacy instruction. Specifically, I will investigate the curriculum and structure of Reading Workshop, a model of reading instruction developed by Nancie Atwell (Atwell, 1998),

and of Writing Workshop, a model of writing instruction developed by Lucy Calkins (Calkins, 1986). From my thorough synthesis on the motivation literature as well as the workshop literature, I argue that implementing Reading and Writing Workshop into elementary, middle, and secondary classrooms can lead to increased levels of motivation in readers and writers.

Importance of motivation in reading and writing

In order for my argument to be perceived in a logical and reasonable way, I will first clarify the importance of motivating students to read, especially in the primary grades. Motivation and reading are so closely related that some researchers imply that an understanding of one is impossible without an understanding of the other (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Within the field of reading education, although there are various models to explain how the reading process occurs, theorist have reached a nearly unanimous conclusion that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, extracting meaning from text. When a reader engages in an act of reading, it is universally expected that the reader will gain some sort of interpretation or understanding of the text once the act is complete. However, this ability to comprehend a given text does not come naturally to readers but requires effort. Guthrie and Wigfield (1997; 1999) suggest that comprehension itself is a motivational act, one that must be intentional. Therefore, if teachers aspire to have students who comprehend text, it is imperative that they use strategies which aid in building motivation.

Furthermore, from my personal experience in classrooms, I have realized that one of the biggest goals for effective teachers is to inspire their students to become lifelong learners. Within the area of reading, the likelihood that a student will develop into a lifelong reader is greatly dependent on the amount of time spent immersed in reading, an idea directly tied to the Matthew

Effect. Adapted from a sociological model originally created by Robert K. Merton (1968), the Matthew Effect as defined by the work by Keith Stanovich (1986) proposes that the more students read, the better readers they become. Under this model, it is assumed that strong readers become even stronger readers because they enjoy reading and tend to read more often than weak readers who rarely choose to read on their own accord. Thus, reading teachers have long since operated under the belief that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer in reading *(*Trelease, 1995*)*. In his review of research, Krashen (1993) echos this mentality, as he concludes that students need frequent opportunities to read rather than isolated reading drills and exercises if teachers expect them to learn to read. If students read frequently, they will most likely experience high achievement in reading and thus become intrinsically motivated to continue to read because reading is no longer a futile task for them but one in which they may attain success (Gambrell, 1996). Through this process, intrinsic motivation arises and students learn to enjoy reading for the mere sake of reading. At this point, the teacher's goal, to teach students to become lifelong readers, has been reached. Clearly, teachers value the role of motivation in students' reading achievement. The literature confirms the notion that if teachers expect to instill a genuine love of reading in their students, they must practice strategies and instructional activities that motivate students to read. Reading Workshop functions as such a model which would fulfill the purpose of motivating readers.

In explaining why writers write, researchers in the field of emergent and elementary school writing argue that writing is inherent in human nature (Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986; Lensmire, 1994). Beginning at a very young age, children recognize writing as a primary and essential form of communication. Not only do we write to inform others but we also write to

inform ourselves, to make sense of our own internal thoughts and ideas; as Calkins (1986) states, "we write because we want to understand our lives" (p. 3). Graves (1994) expands on this notion further, suggesting that writing is a way in which people can claim a sense of authority in an otherwise wide and expansive world. Both Calkins and Graves suggest that children's initial purposes for writing are natural and authentic rather than contrived. Rarely do children receive credit for their remarkable initiative in writing as they explore their capabilities as well as the world around them. Proponents of the innateness of writing, such as Graves and Calkins, view the ability to write as something that exists from birth rather than something that must be explicitly taught in a classroom. Still, the challenge for teachers is reaching students in such a way so that they will recognize their ability as writers and be inspired to produce pieces in their efforts to develop into lifelong writers. The necessity of lifelong writing is greatly visible throughout the process of seeking employment. According to a report issued by the National Commission on Writing (2004), employers truly value their potential employees' writing skills as such skills often determine not only an individual's likelihood of being offered a job initially but also his or her likelihood of promotion within a company in the future. Clearly, the benefits of good writing extend well into adulthood though a stronger focus on yielding such skills is needed in elementary classrooms if they are to be maintained.

Finally, as the call for high-achieving schools is present now more than ever before, the strong relationship between motivation and achievement must be explored. Research has found that high levels of motivation and engagement in elementary classrooms leads to high levels of achievement (Pressley, M., Allington, R.L., Wharton-McDonald, R., Black, C.C., & Morrow, L.M., 2001). It is clear that teachers in their practice must seek methods and techniques that will

be motivating as students gain skills and strategies required for academic success. From this

point forward, I will present the reasons why I believe using Reading and Writing Workshop can

increase levels of reading and writing motivation by clearly stating the connections between

motivation and Reading and Writing Workshop as found in the literature.

Motivation

To begin my discussion on motivation, I present a theoretical model explaining the

interaction between cognitive and motivational processes which lead to text comprehension

(reading) as well as text composition (writing). Guthrie and Wigfield's motivational-cognitive

model of reading (1999) supports the idea that reading is an act that is equally influenced by both

cognition and motivation. When a reader engages in an act of reading, four cognitive processes

(activating prior knowledge, forming text representation, constructing causal influences, and

integrating prior knowledge and text) combine with five motivational processes (task mastery

goals, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, personal interest, and transactional beliefs) in order for

the reader to derive meaning from the text. This model encompasses the idea that reading is not a

cognitive process that occurs in isolation. Rather, as mentioned previously, reading is a process

that requires motivation on the part of the reader. The amount of effort the reader will willingly

exert in order to comprehend the text is his choice.

Because reading like writing requires high levels of motivation at the onset of the task,

Guthrie and Wigfield's motivational-cognitive model could be applied to the act of composition

as well. The complex and difficult nature of writing has been described throughout the literature

in comparison to a type of problem-solving (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Boscolo & Gelati, 2007).

Writing mandates sufficient cognitive demand from the writer as the writer is expected to

constantly shift between multiple frames of reference, balance several goals simultaneously within one piece of writing, and persevere through potential impediments to writing such as topic, audience, and purpose of a text. Therefore, some degree of motivation is necessary if a writer is to invest the amount of cognitive focus necessary for writing to occur. Certainly, writing, like reading, is a task requiring much effort and perseverance. It is clear that neither reading nor writing happens unless some level of motivation is present.

To fully understand how teachers can foster motivation in their students, awareness of the two major types of motivation is essential. The first type of motivation, extrinsic motivation, is associated within our society with the earning of a reward for the completion of a task. When students are extrinsically motivated, they expect compensation in some manner for their effort. Students who are extrinsically motivated tend to be performance-oriented students (Ames, 1990). Often, they place value in their standardized performance and ability. They give careful attention to percentages earned on assignments and measure their own worth by comparing their ability to that of others. As they decide whether to pursue a task, extrinsically motivated students are influenced by what they may receive in return upon fulfillment of the task goal.

In contrast, intrinsic motivation is not dependent on rewards and compensation. The learning process, rather than the product, is the emphasis of intrinsic motivation. When students are intrinsically motivated to learn, they appreciate learning for the mere sake of learning (Ames, 1990). That is, they do not rely solely on incentives to influence the quality and extent of their task completion. Intrinsically motivated students are typically mastery-oriented students (Ames, 1990). They possess a genuine interest in mastering new things as well as further refining their already existing skills and abilities. Furthermore, their innate willingness and perseverance in

accomplishing the task likely lead to independent learning. Seemingly, the relationship between intrinsic motivation and the term "lifelong learning" is quite close. It is irrational for learners to expect to be rewarded each time they complete a task, a common theme of extrinsic motivation. Somewhere along the continuum of learning, a shift to intrinsic motivation is necessary if learning is to continue to happen. Gambrell (1996) further demonstrates the parallels between intrinsic motivation and lifelong learning by claiming that teachers have the potential of creating communities of lifelong learners when intrinsic motivation is appropriately used in the classroom.

Because research confirms that levels of motivation in students changes over time, it is beneficial for teachers to note these specific changes when considering their own practices. Students typically enter school at the early elementary level with high levels of reading and writing motivation; yet, these levels steadily decline as students reach late elementary school (Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986; Marsh, 1989; Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). It is common to see emergent readers and writers who are enthusiastic about the reading and writing processes but who quickly lose such enthusiasm once the processes become more difficult. Interestingly, rather than capitalizing on students' natural excitement about literacy, the institution of school in many cases represses it (Calkins, 1986). Misconceptions of "real" reading and writing also contribute to decreases in motivation in some cases. For example, if students view reading as merely sounding out words or writing as merely spelling words correctly, they may be less inclined to engage in such practices without some form of extrinsic motivation. Because intrinsically motivated literacy learners read and write more frequently than extrinsically motivated literacy learners, I propose that a shift from

extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation during the early elementary years is essential in the

development of lifelong literacy learners. If students lose motivation to read and write before

they reach a point in school where the nature of reading and writing tasks become more

challenging, their future academic success will likely suffer because their literacy development

has been halted before it could be fully completed.

Several factors have been found to influence levels of motivation within students. In this

section, I will discuss two of the greatest factors: task value and self-concept (Gambrell, L.B.,

Palmer, B.M., Codling, R.M., & Mazzoni, S.A., 1996). Task value, as related to motivation, is

the level of importance and personal meaning a student ties to a given task. During reading,

when students place a high value on the texts they read, they likely aspire to understand the texts

completely, demonstrating a high-level of motivation within the task (Meece & Miller, 1999). In

contrast, students who place a low value on the texts that they read are less likely to be

committed to fully comprehending the text because the act of reading this specific text is not

meaningful to them (Benware & Deci, 1984). Likewise, when students place a high value on the

pieces they compose during the writing process, they will be more likely to put forth more

thought and effort in their writing. In these situations, students typically view their learning

experiences as real and meaningful because they are completed for purposes that are authentic

within the context of their lives. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make explicit

connections between literacy learners and literacy tasks in such ways in which the learner will

perceive the acts of reading and writing as personally valuable to him.

In terms of developing self-concept, young students make a direct correlation between

effort and ability (Ames, 1990). If a student works hard in school, he is automatically smart.

However, as students grow older, the relationship between effort and ability diverges in the minds of students. Therefore, if a child works hard but does not experience high levels of achievement, he is likely to form a negative self-concept (Ames, 1990). When students have established poor concepts of themselves as readers, it influences their motivation to read because it affects their confidence in fulfilling the task. Guthrie and Wigfield (1999) acknowledge this strong relationship between self-concept and motivation, explaining "efficacy expectations influence the activity an individual chooses, how much energy the individual exerts on the activity, and the likelihood that he will complete the activity." If a student believes that failure is the only possible outcome of a literacy activity, the likelihood that he will initiate such an activity is extremely low. Teachers must communicate to students that they are all readers and writers. Furthermore, each student should understand that he is capable of experiencing success in reading and writing if a community of lifelong literacy learners is to be established.

In summary, motivation is a major component in the development of readers and writers. The processes of reading and writing cannot occur without motivation in some capacity. While extrinsic motivation is arguably necessary to inspire the most novice of literacy learners, a shift to intrinsic motivation is essential if students are to determine reading and writing as lifelong goals which go beyond the constraints of school. Finally, to fully motivate students to read and write, teachers must be aware of important factors affecting the levels of motivation in their students in order to instill a genuine love of reading and writing within them. In the next sections, I will explain workshop approaches to literacy learning using Writing and Reading Workshop, specifically highlighting the general structure and benefits of each workshop within the classroom setting.

Writing and Reading Workshop

In the early 1970s, researcher Donald Graves examined as part of his doctoral dissertation the writing processes of first grade students to gain insight into the strategies and behaviors they adopt while composing (Graves, 1983). From his initial work, he found great emphasis from on children's writing *products* and little emphasis on children's writing *process.* At this time, writing in school classrooms was simply assigned and corrected with little focus given to instruction (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). Graves launched a process approach to teaching writing with a purposeful intent to teach a more authentic way of writing. That is, teachers would incorporate drafting, revising, and publishing into the writing curriculum to make more explicit the stages of writing that professional writers experience in their writing lives. Thus began what has become known as the process approach to writing. The process approach was later adapted and refined by Lucy Calkins, a colleague of Graves, as she introduced a social element in the form of peer conferences to the approach, making it more student-centered. Calkins' design has transformed into what is now Writing Workshop which appears frequently in the literacy curriculum in public school districts across the United States.

As Writing Workshop gained momentum in the late 1980s, middle-school English teacher recognized the powerful potential of adapting the model to reading instruction. Atwell felt compelled to reform her literature program as the type of instruction she had been using for years simply was not effective in reaching her current population of students and instilling a love of reading in them. Her previous implementation of Writing Workshop had generated such interest in her students that she considered using a similar approach to teach reading. Thus, Reading Workshop began, starting as a weekly component of the reading curriculum but gradually

increasing in frequency due to the overwhelming popularity it gained with students. In

developing Reading Workshop, Atwell considered her own identity as a reader in devising

appropriate plans for making reading habitual for her students (Atwell, 1998). Since their initial

origins, Calkins' Writing Workshop model and Atwell's Reading Workshop model have come to

encompass three major components that I will now discuss in detail: the mini-lesson,

independent reading, and social interaction through both conferences and share time.

   Within a workshop framework, the lesson begins with the mini-lesson. Mini-lessons

should be brief, lasting between five to ten minutes, and focused on one specific topic or strategy

(Gillet & Beverly, 2001; Wood Ray, 2001). The main purpose of the mini-lesson is to expose

students to the "power and purpose of print" (Calkins, 1986, p. 173). Additionally, the mini-

lesson is meant to equip students with the tools necessary to experience success in their reading

and writing lives both during the workshop and outside of school. In this way, the mini-lesson

incorporates instruction on a specific set of skills. Yet, the skills included within the mini-lesson

curriculum ideally arise from the needs of the class. For this to occur, teachers should constantly

be aware of the challenges their students are facing within the workshop as growing readers and

writers and address such challenges directly and explicitly within the mini-lesson instruction. In

this way, the mini-lesson is responsive to what students need as readers and writers. While

instruction is direct, students are invited to view the content taught in a mini-lesson as a

suggestion rather than as a mandate (Gillet & Beverly, 2001). Within the workshop model,

students are not expected to employ every skill or strategy each time they read or write. Rather,

they are constantly adding to their repertoire through knowledge gained from mini-lessons so

that they may emerge as savvy readers and writers who employ appropriate skills when

necessary. Some teachers may embrace the mini-lesson as a time for literacy celebration. For

example, Calkins (2001) recognizes the power of the mini-lesson to excite students about

reading: "In mini-lessons, we teach children to value reading. In millions, of ways, we celebrate

reading" (p. 67). In many reading workshop models, the mini-lesson functions as a time to honor

the literary community by introducing new authors based on student interests and share what

they have been reading to show students authentic examples of reading for pleasure (Swift,

1993). With mini-lessons, teachers are capable of supporting, equipping, and exciting students

about reading and writing, depending on how they choose to structure this time based on the

needs of their students.

      The next component of the workshop, independent time spent writing or reading, has

been referred to as the heart of the workshop model (Reutzel & Cooter, 1991). The rationale for

such a time spent engrossed in independent reading and writing falls under two fundamental

assumptions central to the field of literacy: readers learn to read by reading (Gunning, 2004) and

writers learn to write by writing (Wood Ray, 2001). If students are to grow as readers and

writers, they must be allotted sufficient amounts of time to actually engage in the processes. The

literature suggests different time parameters for independent reading depending on the age of

students, although forty minutes is a common recommendation (Reutzel & Cooter, 1991). Many

teachers are often unsure about how their students will react to such independence and fear a loss

of control over the class; therefore, they either do not allow adequate time for independent work

or implement structures which reduce students' independence. Wood Ray (2001) describes the

independent work time of the workshop as an act of faith on the part of the teacher: if the teacher

trusts in the power of reading and writing to engage students, students will be focused on the task.

Within independent reading and writing time, there are many opportunities for students to exercise choice. Independent time in Reading Workshop commences with students making choices in two major areas: *what* they will read and *where* they will read it. Many classrooms have adopted the idea of "book nooks," special areas in the room where students have their own private space in which to spend their independent reading time. Before choosing a "book nook," students should understand that these areas are spaces where they can fully concentrate and focus on reading. Calkins rationalizes giving students choice in selecting where to read as she explains, "we let children know that what they are doing - finding a place in their lives for reading - is part of making a reading life" (Calkins, 2001). Although an extended period of time actually engaged in reading during independent reading time is present in every model of Reading Workshop reviewed, students may also choose to partake in other literacy activities which may act as supplements to reading during this time. Such supplements include engaging small group discussion about a common text in the form of Literature Response Groups (Reutzel & Cooter, 1991) or responding to text through dialogue journals (Swift, 1993). Using these journals as a mode of correspondence, they compose a letter to the teacher at least once every two weeks (if not more often), expressing their opinion of the book and relating it to real life. In the Reading Workshop models reviewed, choice during independent reading time always pertained to student response to text. This observation is salient as it emphasizes the necessity of providing opportunities for students to respond to text as an additive to independent reading to assure that students comprehend the books they read. Extending this sentiment, Atwell (1998) warns that

independent reading has the potential of being nothing more than a "pleasant student hall" for students if not implemented effectively when she states, "When nothing happens before or after the reading, the context doesn't support or extend readers' interests or knowledge" (p. 40). Thus, independent reading during Reading Workshop differs from traditional Sustained Silent Reading as students are kept accountable of their reading comprehension with a response component.

The independent time in Writing Workshop is viewed as a time for students to engage in activities that will allow them to prosper in their writing lives. However, this does not necessarily equate to writing. During this time, students may choose from a variety of tasks in which to engage, including free writing ideas in a writer's notebook, reading to support writing, drafting a writing project, and publishing a writing project (Wood Ray, 2001). Spending time merely thinking about one's writing is justified as well, as Wood Ray argues, "Sometimes writers just need to think" (p. 66). When considering the many options during independent writing time, it is important to think of what professional writers do in preparation to write. Because writing itself is a complex and multifaceted process, there are several additives to the compositional act of writing. By exposing students to the other components involved in real writing, teachers can expand their view of writing and illustrate the different forms which writing can take beyond the classroom as they begin to consider themselves as lifelong writers.

As mentioned previously, the social element within a workshop approach to literacy instruction is unique to such an approach, distinguishing it from other models of reading and writing instruction. Within Reading Workshop, conferences between teachers and students provide the primary element of social interaction; within Writing Workshop, time for sharing at the end of each workshop, in addition to conferences held during independent writing time,

functions as the time in which students may come together as members of the classroom literary community. Conferences in Reading Workshop allow students to voice their opinions about the texts they read. They can express what they like, what they don't like, and even what they would change if they were the author. During conferences, teachers react to students as learners by using responsive instruction, in which they first wait and listen to students and then think and reply (Avery, 2002). Certainly, the teacher engages in a dialogue with students based on their comments but she does not guide the conference. The points which the student raises about the book drives the conference. As the student explains how he or she interacted with the text to derive meaning, the teacher gains greater insight into the stance the reader takes as he or she reads. Like mini-lessons, conferences vary depending on the classroom in which they occur. Certainly, there is flexibility in the way teachers manage the conference piece of Reading Workshop. Some sources referenced imply that conferences can be held with one, two, or a small group of children (Calkins, 2001; Taberski, 2000); another source recommends devoting the last ten minutes of every workshop to conferences so that the teacher meets with two students each workshop. This source suggests that each student conference with the teacher three times per quarter (Reutzel & Cooter, 1991).

For some teachers, conferences are an appropriate time to "nudge" students to read books they have not yet tried but would likely enjoy based on already established interests (Atwell, 1998). Through conferences, teachers gain better insights into who their students are as readers. They learn of their likes, dislikes, interests, and disinterests, all of which allow teachers to assume responsibility as reading consultant. In this role, the teacher suggests books and strategies for students which will further promote their love of reading. Furthermore, conferences

demonstrate to students the potential of reading as a social act. They not only read for their own benefit but they read for the benefit of others as they share their reading experiences with their teachers and, in some cases, their peers. Typically, when students see how reading can be used as a mode for connecting with peers, they begin to understand reading as an authentic act as the communication which results between two readers mirrors that which can be found in the real world (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, and Tower, 2006).

In Writing Workshop, the element of social interaction is seen both during conferences (which occur during independent writing time) and during share time (Wood Ray, 2001). As soon as the mini-lesson is finished and students are settled into their writing time, the teacher's priority shifts to conferring as she circulates the room talking to students about their writing. For conferences to be productive, teachers must know their students as writers because the nature of conferences in the Writing Workshop is incredibly individualized. The success of a conference depends in large part on the teacher asking just the right questions at just the right time within the writing process. Wood Ray (2001) explains conferring as an act which requires assessing the student's current stage of development as a writer, determining the appropriate next steps to further development, and teaching the student what he or she needs to reach those next steps, all in a very short amount of time. Because the act of conducting a single conference is comprised of several different elements, teachers are required to be both skilled and responsive in their interactions with students.

Aside from conferences, share time during Writing Workshop is the time for students to express thoughts and exchange ideas with their teachers and their peers. While the teacher is responsible for the majority of talk during the focus lesson, students are responsible for the

majority of talk during share time. Wood Ray (2001) recognizes the important element of talk

during share time as she argues that is not only beneficial but necessary in order for her students

to maintain their momentum as writers. Without feedback from classmates on a daily basis,

students could easily become discouraged by their writing. Because of the cognitive complexity

associated with writing, as discussed previously, students need encouragement and inspiration

from others to keep from entirely abandoning the process. Wood Ray believes in the power of

social interaction within the literary classroom community so much that she requires each of her

students to participate in share time. In her work, she strives to demonstrate authentic writing to

her students by showing them that professional writers do not write in isolation. Rather, they

write as part of a greater community of writers with whom they often talk and discuss their

writing projects. Using this ideology, it can be argued that good writers do not become better

writers on their own but with the support of other writers.

     Even within its flexible and adaptable structure, there is room for assessment in the

workshop model. In fact, assessment is crucial to assure accountability. Because students spend a

vast amount of time working independently within the Writing and Reading Workshop, teachers

must devise a plan for measuring student progress and understanding. Still, it is important to

choose an assessment that is appropriate to the purpose of the workshop model. That is, an

appropriate assessment in Writing and Reading Workshop is one that aligns with the workshop's

overall goal, to develop lifelong readers and writers and instill a love for literacy within them.

Therefore, assessment in the workshop often assumes an untraditional form, such as records of

growth (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991) which include questionnaires about reader motivation and

attitude. Some proponents of the workshop model argue for the liberal use of self-evaluation as a

form of assessment as it propels students into taking ownership over their work (Calkins &

Harwayne, 1991). Like most other aspects of the workshop model, the use of assessment is

flexible and looks different in every classroom. Some teachers, such as Nancie Atwell, criticize

assessment and other forms of reader accountability during Reading Workshop as she suggests

that they actually deter readers from fully entering the reading zone as they are more concerned

about how they are being tested than they are about interacting with the text (Atwell, 2007). In

my proposal of Writing and Reading Workshop in classrooms to increase levels of motivation, I

feel that some form of accountability is essential in order to gauge students' engagement with the

task though I recognize that these forms will vary depending on the individual students in each

classroom.

       The workshop model contains several general benefits, the first of which is its simple,

predictable structure (Calkins, 2001). Within a classroom setting, students need structure in order

to reach their full learning potential (Taberski, 2000). When considering the basic and consistent

structure of the workshop, it is important to remember the complexity of the tasks of reading and

writing as discussed previously. If the tasks are complex, the environments in which the tasks are

completed should remain simple in order to produce high caliber work (Calkins, 1983). Because

the basic structure of a workshop approach to literacy instruction remains constant, its

employment within a classroom could establish the safe environment students need in order to

achieve. Katie Wood Ray (2001) compares the nature of workshops to that of lunch time as both

are designed for a specific part of the school schedule and arranged so that students know exactly

what to expect each day. Additionally, the workshop model is flexible and may be adapted

depending on the teacher who plans to use it, the classroom in which it will be used, and the

population of students it will teach. For the purposes of this paper, I examined several models of

Writing and Reading Workshop. No two were exactly alike because they were designed to best

meet the needs of a particular population of students; still, all shared the essential features of the

workshop curriculum. Finally, the workshop model to literacy instruction encompasses all

language processes in an integrated fashion. In both Writing and Reading Workshop, students not

only read texts but also write and respond (verbally and non-verbally) to text, allowing teachers

to constantly reenforce learning. These are just a few of the general benefits I found in my

review of the workshop literature, although others undoubtedly exist. Now that I have reviewed

the key elements of both motivation and Writing and Reading Workshop, I will examine the

commonalities they share in the next section.

<div align="center">**Commonalities**</div>

During my research on motivation within the field of education and the workshop

approach to literacy instruction, several shared features continually arose, justifying my

argument that using Writing and Reading Workshop as part of the literacy curriculum can

increase writer and reader motivation. Researchers have identified specific criteria that will

likely motivate readers, and these criteria are parallel to several fundamental features of the

workshop model. Surely, teachers consider how Writing and Reading Workshop could influence

motivation in their decision to use these models with students (Swift, 1993; Lause, 2004; Myers

& Pough, 2002; Jasmine & Weiner, 2007;). In this section, I will discuss three of the greatest

commonalities found between motivation and the workshop model: choice, social engagement,

and environment.

Within the field of education, there is a strong correlation between choice and intrinsic motivation (Rodin, Rennert, & Solomon, 1980; Paris & Oka, 1986; Gambrell, 1996). That is, if students are given the freedom of choice in their learning, they are more likely to be motivated to learn. In support of this theory, Sciefle (1991) found that students who are allowed and encouraged to choose their own texts put more effort towards learning and synthesizing the material. Thus, when students are interested in the books they read and the compositions they write, they are likely to process the information using thinking which would be classified as higher-order on the continuum according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Teachers constantly promote such thinking and, when students are given freedom of choice, this thinking comes almost naturally. In one study, Gambrell (1996) found that eighty percent of students interviewed classified self-selected texts as books they enjoyed reading most. At the beginning of independent reading time during Reading Workshop, students are provided opportunities to choose what they read. Likewise, writers in Writing Workshop are provided with choice in topic of composition, materials used for composition, format of composition, and ways in which to spend their independent writing time. A key focus of a workshop approach as defined by both Atwell and Calkins is choice; for this reason, neither basal readers, literature series, nor textbooks have any presence in either Writing or Reading Workshop (Swift, 1993). Teachers may offer book suggestions as students learn to choose texts that are just right according to their ability and interest, but the choice ultimately is made by the reader. Just as important as the right to choose within the workshop framework is the right to abandon (Lause, 2004). In order to promote intrinsic motivation and instill a lifelong love of reading and writing in students, teachers must allow students to explore their interests within reading and writing. Beginning at a

young age, students should accept that they will not always find satisfaction in the books they

read and the drafts they write. More importantly, students should learn how to abandon without a

sense of guilt or anxiety and begin a new reading or writing project.

As supported by research, students are more invested in their learning process when they

are given some type of ownership over it, typically in the way of choice, and, as a result,

teaching becomes more effective (Calkins, 1983; Ames, 1990; Reutzel & Cooter, 1991). When

students are engaged in workshop approaches to literacy, they are given frequent opportunities to

exercise choice as they self-select reading materials and content for their writing pieces. This

self-selection peaks their interest in reading and writing, allowing them to experience literacy

acts in an enjoyable way just as lifelong readers and writers do. The more you read and write, the

better you become at reading and writing; the better reader and writer you are, the more you

enjoying reading and writing. This is the essence of lifelong reading and writing, and it begins

with giving students choice, a cornerstone of both Reading and Writing Workshop.

In regard to reading and writing as forms of social engagement, the literature on

motivation and Reading and Writing workshops once again align. According to Gambrell (1996),

providing students with opportunities to interact socially with others during the reading process

is an important factor influencing reader motivation. In Reading Workshop, when students listen

to book reviews conducted by their peers, their reading choice is likely to be affected because

they value peer insight and recommendations, in many cases more than that of teachers.

Exposure to new books in the form of book sharing opportunities, book clubs, and discussion

groups is crucial because with greater exposure often comes increased levels of reading

(Gambrell, 1996). Share time in Writing Workshop in terms of exposure is equally motivating as

it raises awareness in students of new and interesting ideas for their writing. Once students see a

new format or technique used in the writing of their classmates, they may be inclined to

experiment with it in their own writing. Through share time, possibilities for students to grow

and develop in their writing lives become limitless.

The conference component of Reading and Writing Workshop permits social interaction

as well, engaging students and teachers in conversations surrounding either the texts they are

reading or the texts they are writing. In both Reading and Writing Workshop, conferences offer a

rich venue for discourse and challenge students to rethink their ideas about a piece of literature or

composition after hearing the ideas of their teachers and peers. Through ongoing discussion,

students' understanding is constantly transformed. In addition to verbal communication, social

engagement in the workshop model is equally present through written communication. Ongoing

written dialogue such as that involved in Learning Logs allows for readers to partake in authentic

learning experiences. Learning Logs are employed in the workshop model to encourage students

to reflect on the work they are doing in the workshop and share their insights with others.

Myriam Revel-Wood (1988) describes the importance of social interaction through written

correspondence in the literacy curriculum:

> "Learners not only need time to engage in many reading and writing experiences, but
>
> they also need time to reflect on what they are learning and the processes they have used
>
> in that learning. When learners reflect, they come to value the strategies they are
>
> developing through engaging in reading and writing and through observing the
>
> demonstrations of other readers and writers around them." (p. 286)

Thus, when students respond to literacy experiences through writing, they allow their status as a member of a reading and writing community to unconsciously influence their responses by considering the other readers and writers surrounding them. In this way, Reading and Writing Workshop build communities of literacy learners who motivate each other to excel in their reading and writing capabilities. Encompassing social interactions into the reading and writing processes makes acts of literacy both more meaningful and easier for students as tasks gradually become easier for students when they attach high levels of meaning to them (Calkins, 2001; Routman, 2003).

Finally, the literature reviewed for this paper suggests that learning environments that promote motivation share several features with learning environments that are ideal for Reading and Writing Workshop. Developing an atmosphere that invites students to easily partake in the work of reading and writing is one of the most important things teachers can do to motivate students to read and write (Revel-Wood, 1988; Gambrell, 1996; Wood Ray, 2001; Routman, 2003;). Classrooms with extensive classroom libraries often inspire students to explore the literature which surrounds them. Research supports that students are likely to read when there are interesting and attractive books in their presence (Revel-Wood, 1988) and may use such books as mentor texts to their own writing as they gather and borrow ideas. The inclusion of appropriate and accessible writing supplies is important as well in establishing an environment that is motivating to students and helps in managing distractions in the Writing Workshop (Wood Ray, 2001). If a writer has at his disposal tools that will lead to success in writing, the writer will likely be engaged and invested in the act of writing rather than thinking about what he needs in order to produce a higher quality of writing. In addition to the materials that allow for successful

reading and writing, designating specific areas of the room to encourage literacy experiences also aids in building environments that encourage lifelong reading and writing (Pressley, M. et al., 2001). Often, these areas include pillows and cushions, making the space more aesthetically pleasing than it otherwise would be. The goal in creating such spaces is to communicate to students that reading can be a pleasurable act. Here, teachers hope to encourage lifelong reading as they build intrinsic reader motivation. Reading Workshop directly supports this notion. Some proponents of Writing Workshop advocate for an Author's Chair, a designated seat for students when they are sharing a piece of their writing during share time (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). This feature of the Writing Workshop environment enables the author to feel accomplished and take pride in his or her own writing. It is the hope of workshop teachers that students will remember such feeling of pride each time he or she begins a new composition so that this feeling will provide the motivation necessary to endure the sometimes difficult process of writing. While individual students' learning preferences are certainly noted and respected, leaders in the field of literacy workshop instruction agree that at least some silence is necessary in establishing a productive workshop environment (Atwell, 2007; Wood Ray, 2001). The exact amount of silence, however, is debatable and largely dependent on not only the individual needs of students but also the tolerance of teachers. Some teachers, like Nancie Atwell, claim that the most fruitful workshops are those that are completely silent while other teachers, like Katie Wood Ray, recognize the importance of productive talk within a workshop and, thus, call for a balance between silence and talk. Like most components within the workshop model, there is not a single environment that is conducive to successful Reading and Writing Workshops in all classrooms. Rather, there are common elements that appear in workshop environments that should be adapted

and modified according to individual classes. Still, because these elements are so similar to those

of environments which promote motivation, it can be argued that, by incorporating these

common features into classroom environments, teachers will likely promote motivation as well.

Because extensive overlap exists between the key features of motivation and of Reading

and Writing Workshop, there is just cause to believe that a workshop model to literacy

instruction can build positive attitudes towards literacy within students while also encouraging

lifelong reading and writing. Essential components of Reading and Writing Workshop such as

choice, social engagement, and inviting literacy environments also align with elements that have

been identified as pillars for effective reading instruction. Now that I have described the

commonalities between motivation practices and Reading and Writing Workshop, I will describe

some of the possible implications of promoting motivation through Reading and Writing

Workshop in literacy classrooms.

Implications

Certainly, there is much evidence that suggests that a workshop approach to literacy

instruction is an effective tool for teaching reading and writing as it has been proven to raise not

only levels of motivation in readers but also levels of achievement (Myers & Pough, 2002). As

teachers plan for the inclusion of Reading and Writing Workshop into the literacy curriculum,

they should consider how their implementations align with students' current understanding of

reading and writing, their ability to apply higher level thinking and analysis to their reading and

writing, and the ways in which they integrate all language processes (Kletzien & Hushion, 1992).

Students' engagement in the Reading and Writing Workshop will likely improve each of these

skills but a strong understanding of students' current strengths and limitations in these areas

allows for teachers to plan appropriately for support and scaffolding. Along with this idea,

teachers should understand that establishing norms and routines necessary for Reading and

Writing Workshop to operate smoothly may take months in some classrooms and just weeks in

other classrooms. The amount of time needed to start the workshops depends largely upon the

ability and independence level of students, which varies from classroom to classroom.

   Teachers attempting Reading and Writing Workshop in their classrooms for the first time

may experience initial hesitation to the model due to its student-centered instructional practices.

In fact, some teachers have reported suffering from anxiety caused by fear of classroom

management prior to launching the workshops in their classrooms (Myers & Pough, 2002). Aside

from the mini-lesson, direct instruction has little presence in the workshop model, and students

spend the majority of the designated time working independently. Following this model, teachers

must relinquish control to give students ownership over their learning, an unfamiliar concept to

some teachers. Lause (2004) offers a teacher's perspective on this transformation,

acknowledging that "we may feel a sense of loss as we move from being the center of the

classroom to the periphery. But when student's reading and writing become the center of the

class, their lives - and ours as teachers - are transformed" (p. 30). Katie Wood Ray (2001) speaks

to this feeling as well as she assures teachers that it is normal to feel a sense of chaos within the

workshop model as students begin to hone their skills as literacy learners. Though some teachers

may find it a passive form of teaching, allowing for independent reading and writing time free

from explicit instruction within each school day is necessary for developing readers and writers

because research show that students do not spend enough time engaging independently in

literacy activities at home (Trelease, 1995). Still, teachers should understand that the workshop

model also encourages direct skills instruction with mini-lessons which has become a norm for many teachers within their literacy blocks. Recent research mandates a balanced literacy curriculum so that approaches to teaching reading and writing are neither solely whole language nor solely skills-based (Pressley et al., 2001). A workshop approach to literacy instruction, as seen in Reading and Writing Workshop, fits such a mandate, giving teachers opportunities to introduce and develop specific reading and writing skills while also giving students opportunities to learn to read and write by actually partaking in the processes. Thus, teachers can argue for a Reading and Writing Workshop curriculum as a means to balanced literacy as it falls in the middle of the continuum, showing evidence of both skills-based and whole language literacy instruction.

Divergences

While the literature provides much support for implementing a workshop approach to literacy instruction as a means of increasing intrinsic motivation in students, some evidence of a workshop approach as a possible hinderance to motivation does exist. In fact, the basic assumption driving the premise of the workshop approach, that students inherently want to read and write, has recently been challenged. Boscolo and Gelati (2007) question Graves' insistence that children want to write as they define students' motivation to write as the attitude they hold towards writing. Such attitude is profoundly influenced by sense of competence and the value assigned to the task, as discussed previously. Thus, some students will naturally hold positive attitudes toward reading and writing, understanding the importance of literacy in their lives and seeing themselves as capable literacy learners. However, other students will require more guidance from teachers before they come to such realizations. This is critical for teachers to

understand as they consider how their students as individuals will influence the success of the

workshop. If some students are left to read and write with little teacher support because it has

been assumed that this is what students want to do, the outcome is likely to be the opposite of

that which is desired as students are likely to become discouraged from reading and writing

altogether.

   As discussed previously, one of the tenets of a workshop approach to literacy instruction

is free choice. Within reading and writing workshop, students are urged to read and write about

subjects that they find particularly interesting and meaningful. From a teacher's perspective, it

would be naive to assume that all students will automatically thrive on (or even desire) such

freedom in choice. The notion that teachers must know their students well in order to teach them

well is fundamental to effective teaching and certainly applies to the adaption of a workshop

approach to literacy instruction in any classroom, as seen in the below example.

   In her work with African-American elementary school children, teacher-researcher Lisa

Delpit questioned the positive effects of an unstructured process approach to writing (such as

Writing Workshop) on her students' development as literacy learners. Students who come from

culturally diverse background are likely to experience academic success when they are provided

with explicit instruction (Delpit, 1986). Within writing instruction, such explicit instruction

translates into a curriculum that is based on teaching specific writing skills. Delpit argues that, by

teaching students in a clear and explicit manner, teachers are inviting them into the culture of

power which is naturally controlled by the authority within the classroom (1986). That is, when

teachers teach explicitly, they are clearly communicating their expectations for students from the

beginning in a way that shows students that their teachers are not purposefully disclosing any important information from them.

In some situations, the lack of structure within the process approach to writing has caused students to feel deceived by the educational system (Delpit, 2006). From a student's perspective, it is the teacher's responsibility to teach and the student's responsibility to learn. If the teacher does not teach directly, he or she is not fulfilling his or her duty in the role as teacher. When this occurs, students are likely to feel "cheated" (p. 32), as Delpit (2006) describes, because the reality of their education fails to align with their preconceived expectations of their education. They, as students, expect to learn and expect their teachers to teach.

Additionally, research has found that provision of choice can be motivating to some but not all cultural groups. From their work, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) claim that members of individualist societies (which include most western societies as well as North America) tend to place high values on personal choice while members of collectivist societies tend to place lower values on personal choice. These societal members would rather exhibit choice that is consistent with the desires of the entire group so as to maintain harmony within the group while avoiding conflict. Because the education system in the United States typically aligns with western individualist values, teachers often assume that students want to be given choice in every element in their learning when in fact this could actually be demotivating especially when an excessive amount of choice is provided (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000). Again, knowing students well and being responsive to the values and norms of their cultures is critical to structuring literacy instruction in a way that will build intrinsic motivation.

In my exposure of ways in which a workshop approach to literacy instruction could potentially lower intrinsic motivation in students, I do not suggest that teachers fail to implement it because of these possible risks. Rather, my intention is to heighten awareness of such risks and urge teachers to strive for balance when designing a workshop approach for their classrooms. While many refer to the independent time of the Reading and Writing Workshops as the heart, the powerful potential for developing literacy learning within the mini-lesson and conference portions must not be overlooked. These two components are especially important for populations of students who need more structure in order to meet their full academic potential. Delpit's thoughts on this issue are congruent with mine as she calls for a balance between completely skills-based and completely process-based writing instruction. If Writing Workshop is structured in a way to meet the needs of students, such balance is possible.

Although most sources reviewed found peer interaction to motivate students as they evolve into literacy learners, one source strongly suggested that relationships among peers can be a source of conflict within the workshop. In his work with Writing Workshop in a third-grade classroom, teacher researcher Timothy Lensmire (1994) challenged the idea that students naturally enjoy engaging with their peers as they read and write, an idea that had become a foundational piece of the workshop approach. Lensmire observed reoccurring patterns of negative classroom discourse such as bullying and teasing reflected in his students' writing. We encourage students to write about what they know, subjects that are relative to their lives; if what they know is insulting their peers in an attempt to gain self-satisfaction, we as teachers should expect similar hurtful language to appear in their writing. Similarly, children who are regularly bullied in school may experience difficulty trusting the other members of their literary

community. They may expect their voice to be criticized before it is even heard if their audience

members also happen to be the reigning classroom bullies. Of course, if conflicts like these do

arise, it is the responsibility of the teacher to intervene and assure that every child feels safe

being a reader and a writer in the classroom community. Still, the extent to which such teacher-

initiated interventions decrease students' anxiety about working with peers in a workshop

environment has been shown to be very limited (Lensmire, 2004). For teachers who are

preparing to launch Reading and Writing Workshop in their classrooms, it would be beneficial to

have a grasp on the social dynamics of the classroom first. If some students feel particularly

threatened by and insecure around other students, consider holding small-group share times as an

alternative to whole-group share times until all students feel comfortable with one another. This

would allow students who need support in building confidence to be placed with peers who

would offer encouraging and supportive feedback. Additionally, for teachers who fear that

bullying through writing will occur in their classrooms, it is possible to place restrictions on

students' choice of content in their writing. Here, having a conversation with all students about

how "good writing" in their classroom is writing that makes their classmates feel good about

themselves (as opposed to writing that hurts their classmates feelings) would be necessary. I add

this final suggestion with caution, as I respect students' right to choose their topics within

Writing Workshop. As a teacher, I do not wish to communicate that real writing is always writing

that causes the audience to feel good. Certainly, professional writers tackle issues in their writing

that raises discomfort among their audience members which can often be compelling to the

reader as they are challenged to think differently about the issue. Still, for the purposes of

maintaining classroom harmony in Writing and Reading Workshop, such limitations may be warranted depending on the personalities of the class.

Conclusion

Based on the literature reviewed for the purposes of this paper, I argue that there is considerable evidence that the workshop approach to literacy instruction as seen through Reading and Writing workshop is an effective method in building intrinsic motivation within readers and writers, which often results in lifelong reading and writing. Undeniable attributes to the promotion of motivation such as choice, social engagement, and positive environment are also reflected in Reading and Workshop. Additionally, studies have shown that students with negative attitudes towards reading cultivate positive attitudes towards reading and writing after using Reading and Writing Workshop (Swift, 1993; Myers & Pough, 2002; Lause, 2004; Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). Still, although the literature reviewed supports my argument, the body of literature on Reading and Writing Workshop is limited. Questions surrounding the affects of Reading and Writing Workshop on students' motivation and achievement in literacy, especially within the primary grades, certainly remain. The literature on motivation for this review was also limited in the sense that the majority of sources were published two decades ago. While I do not doubt that major findings about motivation brought to light in these sources are still applicable, I cannot ignore the fact that other major findings within this field may be yet unidentified. Thus, adaptations to Reading and Writing Workshop could be necessary to maintain the legitimacy of my argument in the future. At present, I continue to rely on the numerous commonalities between motivation and Reading and Writing Workshop as the basis of my argument and plan to use a

workshop approach to literacy instruction in my future practice as a means of promoting lifelong

reading and writing in my students.

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