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Reluctant Readers: How to Motivate Them

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RELUCTANT READERS: HOW TO MOTIVATE THEM

**A Project Report
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The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Education**

**by
Linda Adell Thomson
July, 1992**

RELUCTANT READERS: HOW TO MOTIVATE THEM

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Linda A. Thomson

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Elementary age children without a desire to read may be reluctant readers. Many factors may contribute to this condition, and research indicates that parents and teachers need to provide ideas and activities to motivate the reluctant reader to enjoy pleasure reading. Reading activities and ideas are compiled to be used by parents and teachers to spark an interest in books in the reluctant reader.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

Many readers in a classroom may fall under the category of reluctant reader. Reluctant readers are the students who can read but choose not to read. In order to reach these students, motivation becomes very important. According to Butler (1982), nothing will happen unless a strong interest is produced first, and then the reluctant reader will be motivated to read. Interest is the key to reaching the reluctant reader. According to Gross (1986), the more interested children become, the more they read.

Research by Casteel (1989) and Winograd and Paris (1989) states that children must enjoy reading on their own in order to become lifelong readers. Teachers who are overly concerned about teaching the mechanics of reading may give little attention to promoting reading as a pleasurable activity. Children who come from homes where parents do not model reading and/or have few reading materials available are often not motivated to read. Both teachers and parents play key roles in sparking the interest needed to motivate the reluctant reader.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to provide reading activities and ideas for parents and teachers. These ideas can be used in motivating elementary age reluctant readers.

Importance of the Project

Trelease (1985) suggests that children come to school ready to read but somewhere along the way some children find that reading is not an enjoyable activity. According to Rasinski (1989), "many young readers make the decision to avoid reading when reading fails to satisfy any inner need in their lives" (p. 85). The Commission on Reading states, "parents play roles of inestimable importance in laying the foundation for their children's continued growth as readers" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). The ideas and activities on how to motivate the reluctant reader, identified in the literature reviewed, are compiled into a pamphlet for elementary teachers and parents.

Scope of the Project

Through a review of the pertinent literature, reading ideas and activities were gathered on how to motivate the elementary age reluctant reader. The reading ideas and activities identified from the reviewed literature were selected to interest children in reading for pleasure. These reading ideas were put into a pamphlet divided into reading activities for the elementary grade teachers and reading ideas for parents.

The pamphlet will be given to parents at the scheduled conferencing time mandated by Tacoma Public Schools. The pamphlet will also be available to elementary grade teachers.

Limitations of the Project

It was beyond the scope of this project to review all the available literature on motivating the elementary age reluctant reader. An additional limitation was the review of all the literature for motivational reading activities and ideas for the elementary age reluctant reader.

Definitions of Terms

Motivation. The process involved in arousing, directing, and sustaining behavior (Casteel, 1989).

Paired Reading. A parent and child reading together technique (Topping, 1987).

Parallel Reading. Two or more readers, often parent and child, read books on their own and at their own pace, from which easy parallels are drawn (Hurst, 1991).

Reluctant Reader. A student not very interested in reading and seldom will engage in such activities, in or out of the classroom (Casteel, 1989).

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). A given amount of time to read on the reader's own without interruptions (Casteel, 1989).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide reading activities and ideas for teachers and parents. These ideas can be used in motivating elementary age reluctant readers.

The following review of literature is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on characteristics common to reluctant readers. The second section discusses reasons students become reluctant readers. The final section presents possible ideas available to teachers and parents for motivating reluctant readers.

Identifying The Reluctant Reader

Children in general come to school eager to read. According to Estes and Johnstone (1977), "most children come to school with high enthusiasm for reading" (p. 891). Yet somewhere along the way, some children's eagerness begins to fade. In a study of fifth graders, Fielding (1981) finds 50% of the children read books for an average of four minutes or less per day, and 10% report never reading any book on any day. Lancy and Hayes (1988) report that most children spend only 1% of their free time reading books. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress report, Who Reads Best? (1988), as children progress through school, books become less and less important, until

finally by high school only a minute portion engage in recreational reading. Thus, a large segment of the high school population can be considered reluctant readers.

A reluctant reader is of average intelligence with a reading ability at or above grade level. The reader has the necessary skills to read but chooses not to read beyond the minimum requirements. According to Rasinski (1989), reading is neither functional nor enjoyable to them. They cannot see a purpose for reading other than to do worksheets and answer comprehension questions at the end of a story. He further states, "reading does not fill any internal need in their lives" (p. 84).

These students enjoy a variety of leisure activities but reading is not among them. They seldom use the library voluntarily. These students can be found in most classrooms, and teachers are challenged to find ways to make reading one of their leisure activities.

Reasons Some Students Are Reluctant Readers

Classroom Factors

There are several factors within a classroom that may create reluctant readers. Some students need more individual help in selecting reading material that interests them. According to Johns (1978), the reluctant reader may be denied the individual help he/she needs because of larger class sizes.

Many teachers, according to Winograd and Paris (1989), "have had progressively less time and fewer opportunities for the creative teaching of

reading" (p.31). Students must conform to a time schedule that may allow little opportunity for individual pleasure reading. Often the reading done in the classroom is teacher-selected reading material that may not be important or interesting to students.

A basal series may be used that has few elements or activities to promote voluntary reading and interest in books. Basal reading programs are designed to provide a systematic, instructional teaching approach which emphasizes skills. Teachers may overemphasize these skills and fail to link them to literature. Morrow (1987) states, "although voluntary reading is generally accepted as an important goal, it is not usually given high programmatic priority. It is typically ranked lower in importance than comprehension, word recognition, and study skills" (p.273). If independent reading "is not widely promoted through regularly scheduled activities with literature and well designed classroom library corners, it is not surprising that many children choose not to read" (Hall, 1971, p.273). This lack of priority in most basal programs to promote independent reading has a direct effect on the level of independent reading done by some children.

Children may also become unmotivated and discouraged when they must read in a homogeneous reading group in which members show little enthusiasm for reading. Madden (1988) states, "teachers have used homogeneous, instructional groups to teach reading for many years" (p.196). According to Madden (1988), this type of homogeneous grouping does not allow students who are internally motivated to read and who enjoy reading to be placed with the reluctant reader. Thus, "the reluctant reader becomes unmotivated, trapped, and discouraged" (p.196).

Teachers may contribute to an environment that does not promote reading as a pleasurable activity. According to Casteel (1989), a teacher's attitude and understanding concerning reading can often be the difference between success and failure in classrooms. If a teacher's view of reading is skills orientated then according to Johns (1978), "the pressure to learn the many skills of reading, and failure to make reading purposeful may all contribute to an unsuitable learning environment for reading instruction" (p. 70). As a result, the reluctant reader may be skilled and drilled without ample attention to their purpose for reading. In some classrooms, students may come to associate books and reading with ditto sheets, workbooks, tests, and homework. There may be little opportunity to spend class time in recreational reading. According to Trelease (1985), students do not have the opportunity to see reading as a "form of recreation" (p. 109). These students associate reading as work and may never be aware of the pleasure of reading just for fun.

A competitive environment may be created by the amount of testing done in the reading program. In many classrooms students are tested repeatedly. Some of these tests include end-of-unit basal tests, standardized achievement tests, and a variety of assessments mandated by the school district. These tests do nothing to encourage an enjoyment of reading. They often lead to frustration, and in many reluctant readers, a passive approach to reading. According to Winograd and Paris (1989), these students learn to believe that failure is inevitable in such a competitive environment. Wiesendanger and Bader (1989) surveyed 189 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students on things teachers do to encourage reading. The results indicate that teachers should not create a competitive atmosphere with grades or public displays of amounts read.

Also students do not like to be tested, and they are more likely to read for pleasure if they are not held accountable.

Classrooms void of a variety of reading materials may provide little to encourage individual reading interests. Morrow (1987) states, "students need the opportunity to select books during independent reading" (p. 267). The classroom needs a library corner containing a variety of reading materials with a wide range of reading levels and interests to increase student interest and use of the books. Estes and Johnstone (1977) assert, "the clearest factor responsible for positive attitude change in reluctant readers' minds is prominently displayed books" (p. 896).

The classroom environment needs to encourage children to read. The children need enthusiastic teachers who provide opportunities for them to read and the reading materials.

Home Factors

Within the home, there may be conditions that cause some children to become reluctant readers. As Eskin (1989) states, "parents play a vital role in their child's reading development" (p. 53). Many parents do not spend educationally related time with their children. According to Bosh (1989), this is time spent reading to them, talking to them, explaining things to them, listening to them read, and talking about things they have read. Thus, the reluctant reader may not have a role model who encourages reading or reads aloud and introduces them to literature. Hiebert (1991) cites studies that estimate "85% of children come to school 'book-naive' because they are seldom or never read to" (p. 48).

There are homes where the parents may be indifferent to reading. These are the homes, according to Johns (1978), with few newspapers,

magazines, or books lying around. There may also be an over-use of the television. According to Trelease (1985), 98% of the homes in America have a television set and the average set is on for 6¼ hours a day. Howell (1983) states, "the television industry estimates that 2 million children under the age of 11 are still watching T.V. at midnight each night and the average kindergarten graduate has more than 5,000 hours of television watching in his young life" (p. 4). Thus, time that could be spent reading is often spent in front of the television.

According to Rasinski and Fredericks (1988), a parent's time given on a regular basis can help children begin a lifelong reading habit. Trelease (1985) points out this precious time may be used by parents to read to their child, post their child's drawings on the refrigerator door and ask questions about them, or to point out signs along the highway. However, in today's society both parents may work and do not have extra time for encouraging reading in their children. For the single parent, time is also limited, which contributes to a lack of parent involvement in reading. Since adult modeling of reading is important for a child, this may fall to the daycare supervisor or the baby sitter. In Becoming a Nation of Readers, the Commission on Reading concludes, "parents play roles of inestimable importance in laying the foundation for learning to read and parents have an obligation to support their children's continued growth as readers" (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 23). In the case of the reluctant reader, this support is immeasurable.

Motivating the Reluctant Reader

Motivation flows from interest. "Without interest there is usually no will to do, no drive to learn" (Dechant, 1970, p. 94). According to Johns (1978), interest is the most important factor to motivate the reluctant reader. Without internal motivation, the reluctant reader may not develop into a lifelong reader. These children may not develop this interest by themselves, and so need help from teachers and parents. According to Clary (1989), parents and teachers need to be involved in teaching their children to enjoy reading.

School Environment

Teachers can increase the opportunity for reluctant readers to choose reading as a lifetime habit. The teacher's basic roles include encouraging books either by attractively displaying them or by using posters and bulletin boards to advertise books, using a wide variety of materials, reading aloud, and being enthusiastic about reading.

Teachers need to transform every available surface in the classroom into billboards that publicize books and reading. Teachers may even need to put posters on the ceiling if there are not more walls available. These classrooms also should have well designed library corners where children feel free to explore books on their own. Bissett (1970) states, "children in classrooms with self contained library collections read 50% more than children in classrooms without such collections" (cited in Morrow, 1987, p. 267). In order for children to read books, teachers should put the books within easy reach and keep the classroom library well stocked.

According to Butler (1982), children who have found literature to be enjoyable will seek out reading during their free time.

Many teachers discover that a child's motivation for reading depends on having the appropriate materials available. These materials need to appeal to the child's "interests, curiosity, reading ability and mood all at the right time" (Reasoner, 1968, p. IX). There needs to be a variety of books available for independent reading to encourage reluctant readers to develop an interest in reading. In order to promote this interest, states Iarusso (1989), "there must be a combination of good books with relevant stories or information which will fire enthusiasm for reading and an approach in the classroom which will constantly underscore the usefulness and satisfaction of reading" (p. 215).

Teachers need to immerse children in literature by surrounding them with exciting and challenging books and help them choose what they want to read. According to Iarusso (1989), teachers have a responsibility to children to "help them connect with books which fit their needs and dreams" (p. 213). The teacher can send the message that developing reading as a lifetime activity is very important.

Along with creating an environment that encourages the reluctant reader to explore books, teachers should read daily to their students. Iarusso (1989) states, "reading aloud is probably the most important thing a teacher can do to interest children in books" (p. 216). Teachers who read daily as an essential part of the total reading program give students an opportunity to enjoy reading. According to Minderman (1990), the best times to draw students into the wonderful world of books is when

they're relaxed and accountable only for listening. "By choosing well loved stories and making them accessible to listeners, a teacher takes the first step toward having students seek out books of their own" (Iarusso, 1989, p. 216).

In a survey by Bruckerhoff (1977), "101 high school students most often mentioned the activity of being read aloud to as one which initiated positive attitudes toward reading" (cited in Frick, 1986, p. 301). Oral reading shows a teacher's interest in a book as well as interest in reading itself. Teachers should read aloud from a variety of reading materials that include fiction, nonfiction, picture books and photo essays, poetry, jokes and riddle books, as well as from magazines, newspaper articles, children's books and adult books. It does not matter if the children understand all the words; they need to hear the fluency and literate language.

Research suggests children need to be allowed to read the reading materials in a classroom atmosphere which approves and supports the values of reading. It is important to allow time to read in each reading lesson. According to Iarusso (1989), "studies show that less than 10% of reading time is spent in the act of reading" (p. 213). Andersen and Simons (1988) state, "the single most important element of an effective reading lesson is for kids to read" (p. 18).

In addition to reading in a reading lesson, students need to be given sustained periods of silent reading on their own. Hunt (1970) labels this type of activity Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). According to Hunt, elementary grade children should be engaged in SSR for 25 to 30

minutes every day. This allows students and teacher the pleasure of being alone with something good to read without interruption. SSR provides the chance to reread favorite stories, listen to books recorded on audio tape, or to read something new. "SSR is unsuccessful unless children are allowed to read books of their own choosing" (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989, p. 476). During SSR there is no communication except between author and reader. "As the SSR period is maintained from day to day, students perceive that the teacher values reading and they begin to value it too" (Johns, 1978, p. 72). "Most people who love to read and read a lot by choice do not remember their test score or what they learned from reading workbooks. They remember being read to by loving adults, reading and sharing many books in pleasant ways, and schools and parents that encourage both of these endeavors" (Clary, 1988, p. 7).

Dechant (1970) states that the teacher can create an environment at school to promote an interest in reading in numerous ways:

1. Read to children.
2. Develop charts containing pupil-made jokes, riddles and stories.
3. Provide a wide selection of easy reading materials -- materials which pupils may read, not must read.
4. Guide each pupil to books he can read independently.
5. Help each child to find materials of appropriate content and difficulty.
6. Provide books to fit children's immediate interests.

7. Give children an opportunity to share their reading experiences.
8. Develop a book club or hobby club.
9. Give an introduction to a book to create interest.
10. Provide class time for library reading.
11. Stay in the background.
12. Recommend the sports page, magazines, or even the comics to children who do not read.
13. Let each student keep a personal record of what they have read.
14. Help the student to look upon himself as a reader.
15. Have reading materials parallel the student's interests. (p. 95)

Home Environment

The home can promote an interest in reading by creating an encouraging environment. Wendelin and Danielson (1988) state that a parent's role is "to motivate their children and to provide a home environment that stimulates reading" (p. 268). The home environment should have: "(a) positive attitudes of parents toward reading; (b) availability of books and magazines of suitable level of difficulty and relevant to the child's interests; (c) conversations about books, magazines, and newspaper articles; (d) storytelling and reading aloud" (Tinker & McCullough, 1968, p. 306). According to Casteel (1989), parents should express an interest in what their children read. A positive attitude toward reading at home results in a higher interest in reading at school.

Role modeling is very important in encouraging reading in the home. Parents are their children's first role models and when their children see them involved with books "experience shows that they will likely wish to do the same" (Trelease, 1985, p. 32). Modeling reading will make children want to read. If parents want their children to read, they must read around them and they must read to them. According to Glazer (1990), if parents make reading a part of their life, their children will too.

Conclusion

Students who are reluctant readers present an enormous challenge to teachers and parents. Since most reluctant readers can read but choose not to read, teachers and parents must use strategies and techniques to help them to become naturally motivated to read. "They must come to see reading as something they do, rather than as a task imposed on them" (Estes & Johnstone, 1977, p. 897). Unless this love of reading is fostered in students in the elementary, middle, and high schools, Rasinski (1989) asserts that more children will become adults who know how to read but choose not to. To prevent this, children need to enjoy reading as a "pleasurable and functional activity" (p. 85). When these students begin to move toward reading on their own, they are starting on a lifelong adventure in books. As Bamberger (1968) states, "he who has been taught to read has mastered a skill; he who has become a reader is a different person" (p. 129).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Purpose

The purpose of this project was to provide reading activities and ideas for elementary teachers and parents. These ideas can be used to motivate the elementary age reluctant reader.

Procedures

Before any reading activities or ideas were selected, a thorough review of related literature was completed. Research identifying possible reasons students become reluctant readers, as well as solutions available to teachers and parents, were included in the review. Reading activities and ideas were selected based upon their potential for promoting interest in pleasure reading.

The reading activities are to be used by teachers in the classroom, and the ideas selected from the literature reviewed target elementary age children. The reading ideas were selected to be used by elementary parents to create a reading environment in the home. The ideas were also selected to encourage parents and children to share the joy of reading together. Both the reading activities and ideas were compiled in a pamphlet made available to parents at the mandated Tacoma School District conferences and also to other elementary teachers.

Selection of Reading Activities and Ideas

The evidence from research indicates that reluctant readers need to be motivated to read. This motivation must come from both parents and teachers (Trelease, 1985). Children need to think of reading as "intrinsically valuable" (Gross, 1986, p. 8). Teachers need to provide activities in the classroom to spark this internal interest. At home, parents need to encourage reading as a lifelong activity by promoting the love of reading in their children. Reading activities and ideas were selected that would lend themselves to sparking an interest in reading.

Criteria Used

1. Teacher Preparation Time

The reading activities were selected based on minimal teacher preparation time needed to complete them. An activity is more likely used if a large amount of time is not needed for preparation.

2. Ease of Use

The reading activities were selected which require few supplies in preparation. Most of the activities require no extra supplies to complete the activity.

3. High Interest

The reading activities were selected that had the potential to attract reluctant readers.

4. Teacher Tested

The reading activities were selected based on the suggestions by teachers who had found them successful in encouraging reluctant readers to read.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROJECT: RELUCTANT READERS -- HOW TO MOTIVATE THEM

The Teacher's Role

The teacher's basic role includes encouraging the use of literature, using a variety of materials, reading aloud, providing time for SSR, helping students select materials, and avoiding conditions that discourage reading. A teacher should present a model of a lifelong reader who the children will want to imitate. Teachers need to share their delight in reading by doing some of that reading in a mutual setting during a time period set aside for that purpose. Through the following reading activities and ideas, the message to all students will be that reading is a pleasurable activity and can become a lifelong habit.

Reading Aloud to Your Students

Reading aloud to children gives them the opportunity to hear language at its best, in many of its varieties of form and rhythm (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

For children who never read for pleasure, a teacher's reading may open the door to the recognition that reading can be enjoyable. By choosing well-loved stories and making them accessible to listeners, a teacher takes the first step toward having the students seek out books of their own to read (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

Reading aloud says the teacher cares about the students, cares enough to take time out of a busy day to offer treasures (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

Select books you, the teacher, will enjoy. Students will respond to the teacher's enthusiasm. Don't be afraid to reread favorites. Hearing a favorite again is part of the treat. Read chapters of a children's classic over a period of a few weeks. Then read poems and short stories before going on to the next classic (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

Read in a way that feels comfortable and natural. Teachers need to be expressive in their reading, by changing their voices when a different character speaks and remembering to use facial expressions. Don't stop to explain vocabulary while reading unless the children need to know the meaning to understand the story. Children will get the general sense of most words from context, and interrupting a story ruins it (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

Have discussions to help children formulate responses to reading and to learn that personal responses are appropriate (Eskin, 1989, p. 46).

Series Books

When teachers read aloud to their students, choose one book in a series. Once children become interested in that one book in the series, they may want to read other books in the same series. Soon children will be looking for books by their favorite authors and will be well on the way to developing a love of leisure reading (Fox, 1989, p. 8).

Storytelling

Storytelling can motivate children to read when possibly reading aloud may not. Storytelling allows the teacher to establish direct eye contact with the class. Though storytelling is considered an art, it can be mastered by everyone. It is not necessary to memorize a story but the teacher needs to know the story well and be able to use all the catch phrases and quotes that are important to the story. Children will be eager to read the original book when the presentation is done (Morrow, 1989, p. 94).

Book Talks

The main purpose of a book talk is to make a book sound so inviting that everyone will want to read it immediately. Every time a teacher recommends a book to a child, he/she is giving a book talk. When a teacher gives a book talk, the students hear just enough of the story to be motivated to

read the rest. For example, to introduce a book, just discuss the characters in the story, or talk about an episode in the story, or an unusual setting. When giving a book talk always have the books available that are being discussed for the children to read on their own. Also book talks are a way to interest children in books that tie into other areas of the curriculum such as science and social studies. These talks may enhance children's interest in working in these areas and develop a climate of discovery in the classroom (Kimball, 1983, pp. 31-2).

Helping Children Select Books

Match children with their reading interest. Beginning readers prefer books that have one or two sentences on each page, are short and have large, colorful illustrations. Third and fourth-graders prefer adventure stories, realistic animal stories, books about sports, humorous books, fables, and series about the same character. Older children like to read adventure stories, humorous books, biographies, historical fiction, mysteries, books about the supernatural, and sports and animal stories.

Match children with their reading ability. Have the child read a sample page from the book and hold up a finger for every problem word. When a few fingers are up, the book

is too hard. Trying to read books that are too hard is frustrating and offers little pleasure (Fox, 1989, pp. 18-32).

Literature Across the Curriculum

Use literature throughout the day. The curriculum can revolve around a theme and that theme could be related to books.

SSR, Sustained Silent Reading

When teachers use SSR, they put recreational reading into the curriculum alongside basic skill instruction. The purpose of SSR is to allow a certain amount of time, for example 30 minutes a day, for reading or looking at books that children choose themselves. The teacher reads at this time also, providing a model for the children. The only requirement for SSR is that the time allotted be quiet and uninterrupted (Lamme, 1981, p. 34).

Creating A Motivational Reading Classroom

Classrooms that have inviting reading corners and stimulating reading activities will increase student interest and encourage reading. The activities and reading ideas in this section will help to create a reading atmosphere in the classroom.

Creating A Library/Reading Corner

The library/reading corner is an important part of the classroom. The area need not be elaborate but it should be immediately visible and inviting to children entering the classroom and provide many materials for reading. It should be large enough for five or six children to read comfortably. The corner can be made cheerful by possibly including bean bag chairs, sofas, pillows, and throw rugs. A discarded old rowboat or bathtub filled with pillows makes a comfortable place to read. Along with a place to read, library/reading corners need bookshelves that house and display books.

There should be at least five to eight books per child in a classroom library. The books and materials selected for the library/reading corner should appeal to a variety of interests and reading levels. These books and materials should be shelved by category, for example, fiction and nonfiction, and color coded by type such as mystery or adventure. Along with book shelves, the library/reading corner needs attractive posters that encourage reading. These posters might also introduce an author with a display of the author's books made available to read. Children should be encouraged to borrow books from the library corner to take home and read. A simple checkout system may be used (Strickland & Morrow, 1989, pp. 126-8).

Creative Library/Reading Corner Ideas

Royal Readers

Create a reading kingdom by cutting and painting two large pieces of corrugated cardboard to resemble the facade of a fairy tale castle. Prop the structure up against a bookcase for support. A construction paper banner, labeled "Enter the kingdom of reading" hangs across the front. The reading corner is changed into a medieval castle where students are enchanted with reading (Warren, 1982, p. 27).

Reading Tree

Secure a tree branch and mount it in an old coffee can containing sand. Tie several paperback books on the twigs of the branch. This will capture the interest of kids, who can pick a book from the tree (Hoover, 1981, p. 35).

Book Catalog

Basal readers often contain lists of trade books with themes similar to the themes of the stories in the basals. Too often these book suggestions are overlooked by teachers. In order to sustain reading interest, some teachers use these books as well as other trade books for enrichment and enjoyment.

A good way to promote trade books is to have youngsters draw pictures of the major event in a variety of books and

write synopses of their contents. These are then compiled into an attractively covered book catalog that is placed in the classroom's interest center or reading corner so that pupils can "shop around" for a good book to read (Criscuolo, 1979, p. 544).

Prescriptions for Reading

Keep a supply of large construction paper "medicine bottles" on a shelf in the library corner. When a student finishes a book, they print the title and author on one of the bottles, along with their name (preceded by the title, "Dr." of course) and a brief prescription, such as "Read to relieve boredom" or, "Read to quench thirst for adventure." All bottles are tacked to a paper "medicine chest" on the bulletin board next to books to read (Bivona, 1982, p. 27).

Around the World

Obtain the titles of books that deal with events in other countries. Print the titles of these books on small cards and arrange the cards around the perimeter of a world map. Attach colored string from the names of the books to the corresponding geographic locations. Pupils interested in various areas of the world can easily find books that deal with these areas and will be encouraged to check them out of the library to skim or read (Hoover, 1981, p. 40).

Cast of Characters

Prepare a bulletin board entitled "Cast of Characters." Every time a child reads a book ask him or her to draw a picture of the major character. At the bottom of the picture have the child write the character's name and a few lines about the character. Post on the bulletin board in the library corner. Be sure the child includes the name of the book (Hoover, 1981, p. 41).

Television and Books

A bulletin board featuring books connected to a TV program can be very motivating. The display could be changed with different posters and books. This display might be on top of a bookshelf where the books could be checked out. There are many types of programs that can be correlated with books. Displays of books can be prepared about animals to be featured on "National Geographic Specials." The display should be put up before and left up after the program. Most students will check out books after they have seen the program and their curiosity has been aroused (Paulin, 1982, p. 85).

Fortune Cookies

Fill a large jar with fortune cookies made of folded brown paper and place on a book shelf in the library corner.

Before taping each cookie shut, place a prediction inside, telling what will happen when a certain book is read. Children may even wish to help make the cookies and the predictions (Hoover, 1981, p. 41).

Reading Tablecloth

Take a sheet or other large piece of white cloth and plenty of felt-tip markers. Divide the cloth into boxes of various sizes and place it on the reading table. As students complete a book have them draw a scene or character from the book in one of the boxes. They should include the title of the book and their own initials.

While students continue reading and recording books they have read, the tablecloth will become an exciting addition to the reading corner. When every square is filled, share the tablecloth with the school library to help promote even more independent reading. It's a great conversation piece -- and the talk is all about books (Hoover, 1981, p. 122).

All Sewn Up

Everyone in class reads and summarizes one book. The students then print their summaries on squares of fabric, using waterproof marking pens. Next, they draw pictures illustrating the summaries on separate squares. Have someone sew the whole thing up and add mattress padding

for a comfy quilt that hangs in the classroom and promotes reading all year long. At the end of the year, students could donate the quilt to a retired teacher (Ketterer, 1982, p. 27).

Book Kite

Draw a kite with a long string. Display books recently read. Ask students to draw small pictures of major events from one of the books. Those pictures will comprise the bows of the kite's tail. A large picture of a class favorite, drawn by a group of youngsters, can comprise the body. This kite could hang above the reading corner (Hoover, 1981, p. 34).

Collage Posters

Add a creative spark to reading by making collage posters. Ask each student to select a recently read book and make a list of main ideas, characters, and other important story elements. Bring in old magazines from which the children can cut letters, words, phrases, pictures, or parts of pictures that illustrate or spell out items on their lists. Remind them to include cutouts of titles and authors. Next, have students select brightly colored pieces of construction paper and arrange and paste the cutouts on them. Add these colorful posters to the walls surrounding the library corner (Hoover, 1981, p. 37).

Motivational Book Sharing Activities

Once a book is read, children need to share this book with others. This section gives activities children can use to share their books.

Advertising Billboard

Students create an eye-catching 12" x 18" billboard, advertising their book. They should be encouraged to use a wide variety of media: paint, yarn, cloth, different kinds of paper -- to entice other students to read their book (Hoover, 1981, p. 37).

Mobile About the Story

The mobile the students design should include five items: pertinent information such as title of the book, author, publisher, copyright date; cartoon or drawing of main characters in the setting; one event from the beginning, one event from the middle, and one event from the end of the story. The mobile should be large enough to read from the floor and interesting enough to encourage other children to want to read the book (Hoover, 1981, p. 37).

Book Jacket

The students make a book jacket out of paper folded like the actual cover of a book. It should have an eye-catching

front cover with the title of the book and author. On the back cover, a summary of the book is included.

Diorama

The diorama or shadow box decorated by the students is the size of a shoe box. The outside of the box is completely covered to give the appearance of a small stage. The most important event of the story is shown three dimensionally.

Shadow Panels

Shadow panels add a dramatic effect to the telling of a story. Students use colored construction paper to cut silhouettes of characters and scenes and mount them on sheets of white tissue paper. When the students tell their stories, they display their characters and scenes by holding them against a light source so silhouettes stand out (Hoover, 1981, p. 37).

Design a T-Shirt

Students design a T-shirt for the main character in the book. The finished product should look like a T-shirt and the design should reflect the interests of the character (Hoover, 1981, p. 37).

School Wide Reading Activities

When the whole school population participates in reading, this stresses the importance of reading in the school and makes it fun for students. This section gives reading activities that can be done by all students.

Reading Banners

Students design banners that depict favorite books. They can decorate the banners with slogans that promote reading. These banners can be displayed throughout the school (Miller, 1985, pp. 79-80).

Window Characters

Students decorate windows throughout the school with drawings of their favorite characters from books or stories (Miller, 1985, pp. 79-80).

Creative Bookmarks

Students design their own bookmarks and wear them as reading badges. They can attach the bookmarks to lengths of yarn and wear them around their necks. Later they can remove the yarn and use the bookmarks whenever they read (Miller, 1985, pp. 79-80).

Read With a Friend Day

Students can choose a classmate as a partner for various reading activities (Miller, 1985, pp. 79-80).

Book It

"Book It" is a national reading incentive program that is sponsored by Pizza Hut, Inc. Students are rewarded for their reading accomplishments with free pizza. Teachers and parents encourage and guide children toward reaching their reading goals. Some children need this external incentive to start them reading for pleasure. There is no cost to the schools or the students. Information packets are usually made available to schools in the early fall of each year. (California State Department of Education, 1989, p. 40).

Friday Night Prime Time

The creation of lifelong readers is the primary reason for "Friday Night Prime Time." The plan is designed to bring adults and children together to celebrate the love of reading. "Friday Night Prime Time" begins in the early evening on Friday and ends on Saturday morning. Students talk, eat, sing, play, snack, see movies, listen to stories and read. Two variations of "Prime Time" are (a) a sleep-over, and (b) an evening program that ends around 11 p.m. (California State Department of Education, 1989, p. 39).

I Love To Wear Things I Can Read

This is a week-long celebration of reading that could be done in a classroom or as a school-wide program. On Monday: Reading Jogs the Mind -- children wear jogging clothes with words on them. On Tuesday: Button Day -- children wear buttons with words on them and/or design their own buttons with words. On Wednesday: T-shirt or Sweatshirt Day -- children wear T-shirts or sweatshirts with writing on them. They may also wear shirts with the names of faraway places on them, locate the places on the map, and talk about them. On Thursday: Hat and Headband Day -- children wear hats or headbands with names, insignia, or sayings on them; modify hats to make them represent characters in books; and/or design logos or insignia for hats and headbands. On Friday: Book Day -- children identify favorite books, write the titles and names of the authors on cards, and then "wear" their favorite books pinning the cards on the children's clothes (California State Department of Education, 1989, p. 28).

The Parents' Role

Parents need to provide an environment that encourages their child to read. It is important to make reading a part of a parent's daily life

so their child will, too. The reading ideas in this section will help build a positive home reading environment.

Read to Your Children

Start reading to children at a very early age -- basically, as soon as they are able to sit in your lap. When reading to small children, it is important to be flexible. Children may not be interested in reading a book in an orderly fashion or they may wish to stay on one page and study it intently (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Never Stop Reading

Even when children are proficient and eager readers, keep reading to them. After a while, reading together gets to be a habit that no one wants to give up (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Companion Reading

This reading incentive program captivates even the most reluctant reader by providing them with a reading companion. Reading with someone else, especially with a parent, seems less burdensome when the reading is divided into manageable pieces (Fox, 1989, p. 5).

Children's Story Hour

Take advantage of story hours at children's bookshops or local library. This reinforces the feeling that reading is fun. Bookstore owners and librarians are also valuable resources for suggesting age-appropriate books. Both stores and libraries also often have reading clubs that reward children for the number of books they have completed. Reading should be its own reward, but sometimes a little outside recognition helps (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Quiet Times

Establish quiet times and places at home for reading. A comfortable chair and good light is all that's necessary (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Teach by Example

Instead of watching TV, curl up with a good book and show that reading is an enjoyable activity (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Limit TV

Start a program at home where the TV is turned off for a certain amount of time every night and everyone reads.

Don't Stop With Books

There are wonderful children's magazines available on such specialized topics as sports, nature, science and history (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

A Reason To Read

Provide a variety of reading material. Children are more motivated to read material they are interested in (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Not Everyone's Alike

Not all children will take to reading in the same way. One may be the type who reads the classics under the covers at night with a flashlight; another may limit their recreational reading to the Sunday comics. It is impossible to enforce taste standards as children get older. It is important to remember that they are reading something and make sure that other reading material is available (Kantrowitz, 1990, p. 14).

Comic Book Reading

Many children find comic books exciting but resist reading books. Comic books provide children with much needed reading practice. They also can be a powerful reading

incentive to possibly draw children away from the television (Fox, 1989, p. 5).

Book-of-the-Month Collection

Children may be enthusiastic about reading when they are taken to the bookstore and allowed to choose any book they want. Their names are put in their books and put in a special place at home for their book-of-the-month collection. Building a personal library for children at home allows them ample opportunities to read (Fox, 1989, p. 9).

Reading Incentive Program

Some children need to have rewards in order to start or continue reading for pleasure. Parent and child decide in advance how many books the child needs to read before a certain reward is earned. It is best to start low to be sure each successive reward is within reach. Children may read many books along the way to achieving their reward and acquire an enthusiasm for reading that may last long after the incentive program is completed (Fox, 1989, p. 12).

The Reading Jar

This is an incentive program that will tempt the most reluctant reader to join in the fun of reading. Children read to a member of the family a certain amount of time and

then they are invited to take a treat from the jar that contains small wrapped treats such as bubble gum, peanuts, popcorn, and toys or for older children, special privileges. Some children need an incentive to begin reading for pleasure on their own (California State Department of Education, 1989, p. 23).

Parallel Reading

Parent and child read books on their own, and at their own pace, from which easy parallels are drawn; books by the same author, books about the same event, books set in the same time, and books of the same genre, to name a few. Both the parent and child discuss their book and share the ideas they have gained and the joy in reading together (Hurst, 1991, p. 88).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In order for reluctant readers to become lifelong readers, they must want to read. Research states (Morrow, 1989; Trelease, 1985) that children enter school eager to read. Yet, somewhere along the way, some children lose their interest in reading. These children may not have the motivation or desire to read for pleasure. Both the teachers and parents must entice these children to read during their elementary years so the reading habit will become a lifelong involvement.

The purpose of this project was to compile motivational reading activities and ideas to be used with children who are reluctant readers. The research literature reveals that both parents and teachers must use techniques to spark a desire in children to want to read. Therefore, motivational reading activities and ideas were compiled for both parents and teachers to be used with elementary children who may be reluctant readers.

Conclusions

As indicated by research pertaining to reluctant readers, both parents and teachers cannot assume that students who learn to read will continue to want to read. The reluctant reader lacks this desire to

read. In order for children to develop into lifelong readers, parents and teachers must keep them reading. Children's reading habits develop early in life. If parents and teachers do not deliberately encourage children to read during their early years, the desire to develop the reading habit may never occur.

Parents and teachers have an obligation to provide children with daily opportunities to experience literature pleurably. They need to focus on activities and ideas that develop a positive attitude toward reading. One good experience builds on another until reading is a positive and an integral part of a child's life.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in response to the findings in this project:

1. Teachers should be required to read to their students daily.
2. Money should be allocated to teachers to set up classroom libraries.
3. School-wide reading incentive programs should be included in every school.
4. Parents should allocate time each night to read to or with their child.
5. Parents and teachers should model reading daily.
6. Motivational reading activities should be integrated across the curriculum and throughout all grade levels.

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