

# ME AND MY READING PROFILE

## A Tool for Assessing Early Reading Motivation

Barbara A. Marinak ■ Jacquelynn B. Malloy ■ Linda B. Gambrell ■ Susan A. Mazzoni

*An early reading motivation instrument is presented, along with methods teachers may use to address findings. The instrument assesses Self-Concept, Value of Reading, and a newly identified construct: Literacy Out Loud.*

Research clearly indicates that motivation plays a central role in literacy development and that reading preferences begin to develop right along with other foundational reading skills, such as decoding, word recognition, and comprehension (Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). Young children readily, frequently, and passionately share their likes and dislikes about books and reading. It is not unusual to hear them declaring their preferences, such as “I love Henry and Mudge” or “I didn’t like that story.”

Motivation to read is a critical consideration for educators because literacy learning requires an interaction between cognitive and affective factors. Motivation is associated with several important correlates, such as higher reading achievement, greater conceptual understanding, and a willingness to persevere when reading tasks become challenging (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). Without attention to reading motivation, some students may never reach their full literacy potential (Gambrell, 1996).

Although findings from several decades of research underscore the importance of motivation to the literacy development of students in grades 3 and beyond (Guthrie et al., 1996; Wang, Willett, & Eccles, 2011), relatively little attention has been devoted to the role

of motivation for students in kindergarten through second grade. It is clear that young children who enjoy reading choose to engage in literacy tasks more often than children who do not. As a result, motivated readers become more skilled (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007).

While these studies clearly suggest that motivation matters, the paucity of comprehensive investigation related to young children’s reading motivation raises important questions: What is our role in nurturing young readers who *can read* and who *choose to read*? What data do we need to plan engaging literacy instruction? How should we gain insights into the reading motivation of young children?

Recognizing that reading motivation is important implies that it can and should be assessed; therefore, there is a need for a developmentally appropriate reading motivation tool for kindergarten through grade 2. It is only by asking students to share their likes and dislikes, their comforts and discomforts,

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**Barbara A. Marinak** is an associate professor in the School of Education and Human Services, Mount St. Mary’s University, Emmitsburg, Maryland, USA; e-mail [marinak@msmary.edu](mailto:marinak@msmary.edu).

**Jacquelynn B. Malloy** is an assistant professor in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education, Clemson University, South Carolina, USA; e-mail [malloy2@clemson.edu](mailto:malloy2@clemson.edu).

**Linda B. Gambrell** is a distinguished professor in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education, Clemson University; e-mail [lgamb@clemson.edu](mailto:lgamb@clemson.edu).

**Susan A. Mazzoni** is an independent literacy consultant in Elkridge, Maryland, USA; e-mail [suemazzoni@gmail.com](mailto:suemazzoni@gmail.com).

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that literacy instruction can be designed with motivation in mind. This article shares the development and validation of the Me and My Reading Profile (MMRP) as well as important findings related to ways the profile may help to inform our understanding of how young children develop their reading motivations.

### Theoretical Framework

Several issues emerge when providing a theoretical justification that motivation can and should be assessed in young readers. These include the importance of motivation as an achievement construct, the ability of young children to discriminate motivation motives, and the importance of assessing motivation in young children using theoretically sound principles.

### Are Motivation and Achievement Related?

The relationship between motivation and academic success has been long

established with older children and adults (Eccles, 1983; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999; Wang, Willett, & Eccles, 2011). However, recent investigations clearly suggest that motivation is a critical variable in the achievement (or lack thereof) in young children as well. For example, Broussard and Garrison (2004) found that *mastery* (curiosity, independent mastery, preference for challenge) and *judgment* (independent judgment and criteria for success or failure) were related to higher math and reading grades in third graders, but only mastery was found to be related to higher math and reading grades in first graders. This finding suggests that achievement motivations are developmental in nature and may change as children progress through the primary grades.

In a seminal study, Gottfried (1985) demonstrated that academic intrinsic motivation is a reliable, valid, and significant construct. She found motivation to be positively related to achievement, IQ, and perception of competence in young children. Lepper, Corpus, and Iyengar (2005) examined the relationship of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to academic outcomes. These researchers found that intrinsic motivation was positively correlated with grades and standardized test scores in children as young as third grade.

### Can Young Children Self-Report Motivation?

Considering the creation of a motivation assessment for young children raises the following question: Can young children reliably discriminate motivation from other constructs? Research indicates that children in kindergarten through second grade are indeed able to discriminate discrete factors of motivation. For example, Wilson and Trainin (2007) examined factors affecting motivation for reading, writing, and spelling in primary students

*“Without attention to reading motivation, some students may never reach their full literacy potential.”*

using the Early Literacy Motivation Survey (ELMS). They found that first graders were able to discriminate items related to self-efficacy and perceived competence. Though the ELMS demonstrated that young children can reliably discriminate motivation factors such as self-efficacy and perceived competence, students' responses were tied directly to specific literacy skills such as decoding. The survey did not assess reading motivation outside of the designated tasks and did not include items related to value of reading.

Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, and Blumenfeld (1993) demonstrated that domain-specific competence and task values could be reliably assessed for mathematics, reading, sports, and music by first, second, and fourth grade students. And Patrick, Mantzicopoulos, and Samarapungavan (2009) found that kindergarten students were able to discriminate competence about science and “liking” (valuing) science.

### Why Should We Assess Reading Motivation in Young Children?

A number of researchers (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, & Perenevich, 2006; Jacobs & Eccles, 2000) suggest that reading motivation may be situational and influenced by grade-level expectations and teacher actions. For example, recent investigations have revealed a disturbing trend in young readers. Reading motivation begins to erode as early as second grade (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009),

### Pause and Ponder

- Consider how reading activities occur in your classroom. Are all of the activities teacher-selected, or is there room for students to choose what they read and how they respond?
- What are ways that you can know your students' interests better? Knowing your students well will assist you in matching texts to readers and in creating a community of readers in your classroom. Sharing and discussing favorite books increases value for reading and validates students' self-concepts as readers.
- How can taking the motivational temperature of your students, both individually and classwide, help you to design engaging instruction?

and by third grade, the self-concept of struggling readers begins to decline significantly (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009). In addition, third-grade boys with average reading achievement report valuing reading less than girls with average reading achievement (Marinak & Gambrell, 2010).

Given the findings that various factors related to reading motivation (self-concept and value) begin to erode as early as grade 2 in certain groups of students, such as struggling readers and boys, this study sought to design and validate a developmentally appropriate tool for assessing the reading motivation of students in grades K–2. The MMRP is based on expectancy-value theory, which argues that individuals' choice, persistence, and performance can be explained by their perceived ability to complete the task successfully and the extent to which they value the activity (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Ability beliefs (expectancies) are defined as an individual's perception of his or her current competence at a given task (Eccles, 1983). Achievement values are described as the importance of doing well on a given task, leading to a willingness to spend time and effort to engage in that task regularly or in the future (Eccles, 1983).

The MMRP can be used by primary teachers to assess early reading motivation before significant declines can occur. With data from the MMRP, teachers of young readers can plan and deliver instruction that supports both self-concept for reading and an appreciation of the value of reading.

### Development of the MMRP

Informed by expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 1983) and earlier work on the Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, 1996) and Motivation to Read Profile-Revised (Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell,

& Mazzoni, 2013), we developed the MMRP, a 20-item multiple-choice instrument designed for classroom teachers to use with their kindergarten through second-grade students. Like the MRP and MRP-R, the MMRP draws on work suggesting that motivation can be assessed based on self-perceived competence and task value. Hence, two subscales were created, and an initial pool of items were developed based on the the subconstructs of self-concept and value. Ten items were related to self-concept as a reader, and 10 were related to value of reading. A panel of literacy educators then carefully vetted the items. Experienced classroom teachers, reading specialists, and graduate education students critiqued the items for construct validity. They were asked to sort the items into three categories: (1) self-concept as a reader, (2) value of reading, and (3) not sure or questionable. All the items received 100% trait agreement and were included in the final instrument.

Being sensitive to the developmental needs of young readers, the Likert response scale on the MMRP consisted of three choices (rather than four or five), ranging from most positive to least positive (Rea & Parker, 2005). In addition, the items were not numbered; rather, each item was paired with an animal icon, thereby allowing the teacher to read the MMRP aloud, guiding children to move from item to item by placing their finger or pencil on the animal icon in the left-hand column.

### Field-Testing the MMRP

The MMRP was administered to 899 students in kindergarten through second grade in three East Coast states. In all, there were 286 kindergarteners, 409 first graders, and 204 second graders; 457 were boys and 442 were girls. Teachers received packets that contained copies of the MMRP as well as the

administration procedures and scoring guidelines. Student scores were loaded into an Excel spreadsheet, and validity and reliability testing was conducted using NCSS statistical software.

### Reliability and Validity

Reliability analyses (Cronbach, 1951) indicated scale alphas ranging from .86 to .87 with all items contributing to the overall scale reliability. To determine validity, exploratory factor analysis using a varimax orthogonal rotation was used to examine the inter-factor correlations. Interestingly, and perhaps predictably given that our population of children was under eight years old, the factor analysis revealed that the 20 items contributed to the two subscales anticipated (self-concept as a reader and value of reading) as well as a third subscale. Five items clustered around the self-concept factor and 10 items clustered around the value of reading factor. The final 5 items revealed a third factor for these young readers. All 5 items on this newly revealed subscale related to interactions about literacy, such as listening, speaking, and reading aloud to others. We call this subscale *literacy out loud* because these items reflect the social aspects of literacy commonly seen and heard in primary classrooms. Table 1 displays the internal consistency reliabilities for each scale. Considering the ordinal nature of the survey scale, reliability and validity estimates are judged to be well within acceptable ranges for both classroom use and research purposes.

Table 1 Number of Items and Internal Consistency Reliabilities for Each Scale ( $n = 899$ )

Scale	Number of Items	Alpha Reliabilities
Self-Concept	5	.86
Value	10	.87
Literacy Out Loud	5	.87

*“Recognizing that reading motivation is important implies that it can and should be assessed.”*

### The Final MMRP

Following validation, the final MMRP contains 20 items comprised of three subscales: one that assesses the child’s self-concept as a reader (5 items), one that assesses the child’s appreciation of the value of reading (10 items), and one that assesses literacy out loud (5 items). Two practice items are provided to acquaint children with the format of the instrument.

### Administering the MMRP

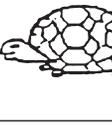
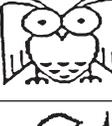
The MMRP (Figure 1) can be administered to a whole class, to small groups, or individually using the administration guidelines found in Figure 2. It is designed to be read aloud to students. The teacher should allow 15–20 minutes to give the entire survey. Students should be made aware that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should circle the answer that best describes their feelings.

### Scoring and Interpreting the MMRP

In order to increase the reliability of student responses, the items are variably scaled. Some items have the responses listed in order from least motivated to most motivated (scored 1–3) and others have responses that are listed in order from most motivated to least motivated

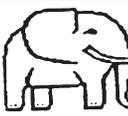
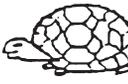
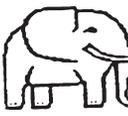
Figure 1 Me and My Reading Profile

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

	What grade are you in? 1. Kindergarten 2. First grade 3. Second grade
	I am a _____. 1. Boy 2. Girl
	Do you like to read books all by yourself? 1. Yes 2. It's OK 3. No
	Learning to read is _____. 1. Not very important 2. Sort of important 3. Very important
	What kind of reader are you? 1. I am not a good reader 2. I am an OK reader 3. I am a very good reader
	My friends think reading is _____. 1. Really fun 2. OK to do 3. No fun
	How do you feel when you read out loud to someone? 1. Happy 2. OK 3. Sad
	Do you tell your friends about books you read? 1. Never 2. Sometimes 3. A lot
	For me, learning to read is _____. 1. Easy 2. Sort of hard 3. Really hard
	When someone reads books out loud to me, I think it is _____. 1. Great 2. OK 3. Boring
	Do you like to read books out loud to someone else? 1. No 2. It's OK 3. Yes

(Continued)

Figure 1 (Continued)

	I think libraries are _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	A great place to spend time	An OK place to spend time	A boring place to spend time
	How do you feel about reading?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I don't like it	It's OK	I like it a lot
	I spend _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	None of my time reading books	Some of my time reading books	A lot of my time reading books
	How do you feel when you are in a group talking about books?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I do not like to talk about my ideas	I sometimes like to talk about my ideas	I always like to talk about my ideas
	How would you feel if someone gave you a book for a present?		
	1.	2.	3.
	Mad	OK	Happy
	How do you feel about learning to read?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I like it a lot	It's OK	I don't like it
	Do you like to read when you have free time?		
	1.	2.	3.
	No	It's OK	Yes
	How do you feel about reading with others?		
	1.	2.	3.
	I really like it	It's OK	I don't like it at all
	Do you have "favorite" books?		
	1.	2.	3.
	Lots	Some	None
	For me, reading is _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	Really hard	Sort of hard	Easy
	I think becoming a good reader is _____.		
	1.	2.	3.
	Very important	Sort of important	Not very important

(scored 3–1). To help teachers with the variability of responding, a scoring table is provided in Figure 3. The scoring table allows teachers to calculate a total motivation score as well as scores for each of the subscales. The item number and corresponding animal icon are also provided. In order to provide developmentally appropriate support for young readers, we encourage teachers to examine the MMRP results and engage students in one-to-one conversations about the responses. Invite children to discuss why, for example, they like spending a lot of time reading books or why they do not like libraries. The tool can be used to open up conversations about this critical aspect of early literacy development. In addition, the MMRP can be used to assess and monitor group or whole-class reading motivation across the school year.

## Classroom and Research Implications

There are several important classroom implications related to the development and validation of the MMRP. First, consistent with the work of Wilson and Trainin (2007) in achievement motivation and Patrick, Mantzicopoulos, and Samarapungavan's (2009) research related to science motivation, our work confirms that reading motivation is a valid construct to examine in the primary grades and that it can be reliably assessed. And, by virtue of the strong internal consistency correlations obtained, we suggest that the MMRP is developmentally appropriate for young readers.

In addition to the importance of assessing reading motivation in the primary grades and the validity of the tool, the MMRP also supports that expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 1983) is an appropriate framework for understanding how young children perceive reading motivation. In other words, like

### Figure 2 Directions for Administration of the MMRP

The MMRP is designed for classroom teachers to use with their kindergarten through second-grade students. It is a 20-item multiple-choice instrument comprised of three subscales: one that assesses the child's self-concept as a reader (5 items), one that assesses the child's appreciation of the value of reading (10 items), and one that assess literacy out loud (5 items). Two practice items are provided to acquaint children with the format of the instrument. The MMRP is designed to be read aloud to the students by the teacher.

The MMRP is designed for whole-class administration; however, teachers should consider the age and attention span of students when deciding how and when to administer the instrument. The MMRP may be most effectively administered to small groups rather than the entire class. The first 10 items could be administered on one day, and the remaining 10 items could be administered the next day. The entire survey takes approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

#### Teacher directions to students before the MMRP is distributed:

Today, I'm going to ask you some questions about you and your reading.  
I want to know how you feel about reading.  
There are no right or wrong answers.  
You will not be graded on this.  
Your answers will help me make reading more interesting for you.  
The important thing is to think about what is right for you.  
Think about each question, and then give your most honest answer to each question.  
Think about and circle the answer that is most honest for you.

#### Pass out the MMRP and say:

I will read each sentence to you twice.  
Do not mark your answer until I tell you to.  
The first time I read the sentence, I want you to **think** about the best answer for you.  
The second time I read the sentence, I want you to **circle** the best answer for you.  
Remember, do not circle your answer until I tell you to.  
OK, let's begin.

#### Read the first sample item (fish) and say:

Put your pencil on the picture of the fish.  
The sentence beside the fish says "I am in..." (pause).  
Now, put your pencil on number 1.  
Below number 1, it says "Kindergarten" (pause).  
Put your pencil on number 2.  
Below number 2, it says "First grade" (pause).  
Put your pencil on number 3.  
Below number 3, it says "Second grade" (pause).  
Now, I'll read it again.  
I want you to circle the answer that is right for you.  
Put your pencil on the fish.  
"I am in..." (pause).  
Now, you circle the answer that is right for you.  
Number 1, Kindergarten (pause).  
Number 2, First grade (pause).  
Number 3, Second grade (pause).

#### Read the second sample item (parrot) and say:

Now we are ready for the next one.  
Put your pencil on the parrot.  
The sentence beside the parrot says "I am a..." (pause).  
Now, put your pencil on number 1.  
Below number 1, it says "Boy" (pause).  
Put your pencil on number 2.  
Below number 2, it says "Girl" (pause).  
Now, I'll read it again.  
I want you to circle the answer that is right for you.  
Put your pencil on the parrot.  
"I am a..." (pause).  
Now, you circle the answer that is right for you.  
Number 1, "Boy" (pause).  
Number 2, "Girl" (pause).

**Read the remaining items in the same way. Be sure to pause to provide ample time for students to mark their responses.**

*“This new subscale involved more than how children felt when reading out loud.”*

children in grades 3 and up, primary readers are self-reporting differences in their self-concepts as readers and values of reading. However, unlike their older peers, young children indicated a third motivation construct. As illustrated in Figure 4, items related to literacy out loud proved to be a statistically significant factor related to the development of reading motivation of young children.

It is important to note that the items comprising this new subscale involved more than how children felt when reading out loud. Affirming what many other literacy researchers have found, these additional activities were socially mediated and closely tied to specific relationships and contexts (Neuman & Roskos, 1997; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). For example, on the MMRP, literacy out loud included being read to and talking about books. Therefore, an important classroom implication gained from validation of the MMRP is that our efforts to plan engaging literacy instruction in grades K–2 must include practices sensitive to self-concept of reading, value of reading, and literacy out loud.

Another interesting facet of the factor analysis is that the 10 items that were constructed to tap students’ self-concept as a reader factored into two groups (self-concept as a reader and literacy out loud), which might be an indicator of how self-concept develops in young children. As a consequence of being an emergent reader, many activities involve

**Figure 3 MMRP Scoring Guidelines**

In order to increase the reliability of student responses, the items are variably scaled. Some items have the responses listed in order from *least motivated* to *most motivated* (scored 1–3), and others have responses that are listed in order from *most motivated* to *least motivated* (scored 3–1).

To support you in scoring items correctly for calculating the Self-Concept (SC), Value (V), and Literacy Out Loud (LO) subscales, please use the following table to guide you.

Compare the student’s response (first through third response selected) with the item numbers below to determine the score for that item.

Total MMRP \_\_\_\_\_ /60  
 Total SC \_\_\_\_\_ /15      Total V \_\_\_\_\_ /30      Total LO \_\_\_\_\_ /15

Total Instrument

Item Number and Subscale	Icon	First Response	Second Response	Third Response
1 SC	Bear	3	2	1
2 V	Elephant	1	2	3
3 SC	Turtle	1	2	3
4 V	Owl	3	2	1
5 LO	Fish	3	2	1
6 LO	Parrot	1	2	3
7 SC	Bear	3	2	1
8 LO	Elephant	3	2	1
9 LO	Turtle	1	2	3
10 V	Owl	3	2	1
11 SC	Fish	1	2	3
12 V	Parrot	1	2	3
13 LO	Bear	1	2	3
14 V	Elephant	1	2	3
15 V	Turtle	3	2	1
16 V	Owl	1	2	3
17 V	Fish	3	2	1
18 V	Parrot	3	2	1
19 SC	Bear	1	2	3
20 V	Elephant	3	2	1

Self-Concept Items

Item Number	First Response	Second Response	Third Response
1 SC	3	2	1
3 SC	1	2	3
7 SC	3	2	1
11 SC	1	2	3
19 SC	1	2	3

(Continued)

Figure 3 (Continued)

## Value Items

Item Number		First Response	Second Response	Third Response
2 V		1	2	3
4 V		3	2	1
10 V		3	2	1
12 V		1	2	3
14 V		1	2	3
15 V		3	2	1
16 V		1	2	3
17 V		3	2	1
18 V		3	2	1
20 V		3	2	1

## Literacy Out Loud Items

Item Number		First Response	Second Response	Third Response
5 LO		3	2	1
6 LO		1	2	3
8 LO		3	2	1
9 LO		1	2	3
13 LO		1	2	3

reading aloud, either in being read to or in reading to others. Young readers, who have not yet developed skill in reading silently, require mumble reading or reading out loud in order to negotiate the more laborious decoding of the beginning reader, before automaticity permits the inner reader to emerge. This aspect of reading out loud may be a precursor to aspects of young readers' self-concept as a reader.

These aspects of the development and validation of the MMRP have important implications for researchers. Our findings suggest that not only is reading motivation a critical affective construct in the literacy lives of young children but that it is perhaps more complex than suggested in earlier research. The identification of three motivation constructs—self-concept as a reader, value

of reading, and literacy out loud, is only the beginning of much-needed research in the primary grades. With literacy out loud as a potentially influencing variable, developmental investigations are warranted to shed light on the practices that impact each of these three constructs independently as well as the conditions where they interact with each other. We suggest the MMRP can be a helpful tool as researchers continue identifying the motivational trajectories of young readers and the factors that impact such development.

### Nurturing Intrinsic Reading Motivation

We conclude this exploration of primary reading motivation with suggestions for nurturing intrinsic reading motivation in kindergarten through second grade.

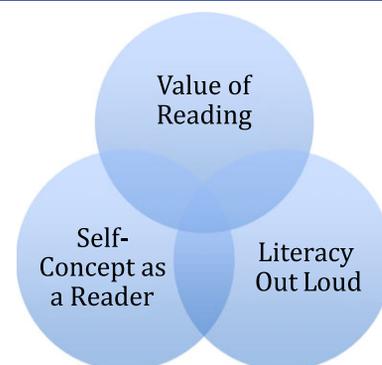
Though children can be motivated for both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons, researchers suggest that intrinsic motivation is more beneficial to long-term learning. As Gambrell (1996) noted, "Intrinsic motivation makes the difference between learning that is superficial and shallow and learning that is deep and internalized." In other words, intrinsic reading motivation is the likelihood that children will choose to read for pleasure or interest versus being extrinsically motivated and reading to receive some type of reward.

Based on the validation of the MMRP, the following research-based suggestions for nurturing intrinsic reading motivation are aligned to the tool's three subscales. In order to create engaging classroom contexts for young readers, we believe it is helpful to consider practices that cultivate self-concept as reader, promote the value reading, and support literacy out loud.

### Cultivating Self-Concept as a Reader

Self-concept as a reader refers to the degree to which students perceive themselves to be competent readers. The sources children use to develop self-concept include their perceived reading success, comparing themselves

Figure 4 The Three Subscales of the MMRP



to others while reading, and literacy feedback from teachers and peers (Bandura, 1994).

It is also important to remember that self-concept can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, children who think of themselves as good readers tend to read more, thereby improving their reading performance through practice. On the other hand, children who perceive themselves as struggling readers tend to shy away from reading, which minimizes their reading practice and limits their reading achievement. A self-fulfilling prophecy for both! What can we do?

One approach is to offer specific praise. Avoid generalized responses such as “good job” or “nice work.” Instead, identify and share with individual children what they *can do*. Be specific and descriptive so that positive comments are not only true but are perceived by the student as honest and true (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2012). For example, “Matthew, I love that you used a word family to figure out that new word” is more instructionally supportive and motivating than “Nice job, Matthew.” This technique not only nurtures the reading self-concept of struggling or reluctant readers but can also help maintain self-concept for children who perceive themselves as competent readers by highlighting the specific skill being developed.

### **Promoting the Value of Reading**

The degree to which we value a task plays a significant role in whether we choose to participate and fully engage in the task (Eccles, 1983). It is important to note that even when a child expects to do well (i.e., demonstrates a strong self-concept), motivation can be in jeopardy when the child does not value the activity. When children value reading, either as an activity or as a goal, they look

**Figure 5 Sarah's Life in Books**

Book Title	What Was Happening in My Life?	Did I Find a Copy of the Book to Share?
<i>The Runaway Bunny</i> Margaret Wise Brown	My dad read this book to me every night when I was little.	yes
<i>The Cat in the Hat</i> Dr. Seuss	I read this book all by myself in kindergarten.	yes
<i>Ralph S. Mouse</i> Beverly Cleary	I loved how my teacher read this out loud to us.	yes
<i>Biggest, Fastest, Strongest</i> Steve Jenkins	I read this in the car on the way to the beach last summer. I learned lots of cool facts!	yes

for opportunities to engage with print. They read for pleasure and are willing to try new and more difficult topics and texts. Value is an especially important attribute of motivation when tasks become challenging. In other words, children who value reading are willing to persist when extra effort is required to construct meaning.

Promoting the value of reading requires deliberate actions, not just words. Simply telling students “Reading is valuable, and here’s why” isn’t enough. Instead, children need peer and adult role models who don’t just “talk the talk” but are “walking the walk” (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2012). Research has shown that authenticity nurtures value. For example, as students learn and use their oral language, they do it for a real reason or purpose (Halliday, 1975). So, too, learning to read must be meaningful and authentic. Young children should be invited into literacy activities that mirror the experiences they have in life, like reading for fun and to share, reading to find out how to make or do something, and writing a letter to a friend telling about a great new book (Cullinan, 1992). By having many opportunities to hear and read authentic literature and to respond to that literature in a wide variety of ways, children begin to value books and reading.

Constructing a *Wall of Fame* is a great way to promote the value of reading (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2012). The wall, a bulletin board in or outside of the classroom, invites teachers and students to make their reading public by posting reviews of books or captioned pictures that entice others to read. In doing so, experiences, interests, and enthusiasm are authentically communicated with the classroom and school community (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2012).

Another method for promoting the value of reading is called *Your Life in Books* (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2012). This technique allows children to share the books they remember or books that were special in their lives. Once again, in a public space, invite children to draw and write about their lives, guided by the books they have shared, heard, or read. Figure 5 is an example of Sarah’s life in books. Teachers can begin this activity by sharing their own lives in books!

And lastly, desperate measures might be needed for the most reluctant readers. Some children require a personal invitation to read. After completing the MMRP, holding a one-to-one conversation, and observing a reluctant reader, select a book you are quite certain he or she will enjoy. Then, issue a personal invitation to read. Do

so in a way the child cannot possibly ignore. We have issued personal invitations in lots of wildly creative ways, ranging from gift-wrapping the book in appropriate paper (e.g., jungle paper for an article about snakes, comics for a joke book) to placing the title inside a baseball glove with a “just for you” note. Personally inviting a child into a text reminds them that you are paying attention to their interests—an important first step in prompting the value of reading.

### ***Supporting Literacy Out Loud***

Validation of the MMRP clearly indicates that literacy out loud is an important component of intrinsic reading motivation for primary-grade children. Reading out loud, talking about books, and being read to appear to influence the development of reading motivation in kindergarten through second-grade children more so than in grades 3 and beyond. Because this finding reflects the highly verbal and social nature of early literacy instruction, it is therefore important to carefully consider our “out loud” practices. If teachers are not deliberate in their planning, literacy out loud could contribute to the erosion of developing reading motivation.

Understand that young children are often exuberant during reading instruction; therefore, it is important for the teacher to practice pausing. Research has clearly shown that teachers should afford more wait time while children are whisper reading (Pressley et al.,

1992; Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003). And, despite possessing the best intentions, young children often jump in to help others. Both behaviors are interruptions that can make reading aloud stressful and uncomfortable.

It is also important to avoid “bad buddies.” Pairing a proficient oral reader with a child who is struggling may, once again, make literacy out loud uncomfortable for the student who is developing his or her oral reading fluency. When engaging in paired reading, creating partners of similar ability may afford more comfortable supports for reading aloud.

Using alternatives to round-robin reading is another practice that supports literacy out loud. Engaging children in Reader’s Theater is an authentic way to practice oral reading fluency (Liu, 2000). In fact, we would encourage primary teachers to consider any reading out loud a performance. In other words, before children read out loud, they should be afforded the opportunity to practice and prepare. Repeated reading of independent-level text is another option for growing both fluency and motivation (Opitz, Rasinski, & Bird, 1998).

And lastly, providing choice related to literacy out loud nurtures intrinsic reading motivation. Examples include allowing children to vote for the teacher read-aloud selection and to lead “book blessings” (Gambrell, 1996). In a number of our investigations (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni,

2012), children often ask, “Why does the teacher always get to pick the read-aloud?” Clearly, it is important for teachers to choose some of the read-aloud text. Books, articles, and poems are used to model critical features, grow vocabulary, or introduce a new topic. However, this important aspect of literacy out loud can be shared. Our research has shown that allowing students to help select the teacher read-aloud is very motivating. For example, after blessing six to eight pieces of text with a short “teaser,” encourage children to spend a day or two browsing the titles in the basket. After pondering the choices, students complete a paper ballot, voting for their first and second choices. In addition to creating excitement about the teacher read-aloud, the remaining books in the basket often disappear for independent reading.

To vary a traditional teacher book talk, invite children to conduct book blessings. With choices proudly displayed on the dry erase board ledge, children explain why they love their book, article, or poem. In addition to talking, young children can also write or draw about the book or read a short passage, all with a focus on why their choice deserves to be blessed. To summarize, perhaps the most important aspect of supporting literacy out loud is not pushing children beyond their comfort or capacity.

### **Conclusion**

It is time for more investigations exploring the role of motivation in early literacy development. Though it is important for scholars to conduct such studies, we also value the action research conducted by educators in their classrooms every day. Our hope is that the MMRP can support these efforts. For example, at

*“Validation of the MMRP clearly indicates that literacy out loud is an important component of intrinsic reading motivation for primary-grade children.”*

*“It is hoped that the MMRP will prove useful to teachers.”*

the beginning of the school year, the MMRP can be used to assess young children’s motivation to read. Using the profile later in the school year and comparing the results with earlier scores can then detect changes in motivation. It is hoped that the MMRP will prove useful to teachers who are working hard to create supportive and engaging classroom cultures that nurture motivation to read.

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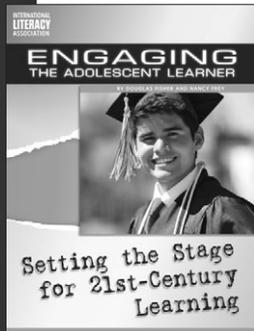
## TAKE ACTION!

- At the beginning of each school year, assess your students’ reading motivation, and follow up with each student to discover more about their perceptions of reading. Use this information to tailor your whole-class and small-group instruction so that you are supporting students in developing as engaged and enthusiastic readers.
- At the midpoint of the year, reassess to determine whether your instructional choices are moving students in a positive direction in terms of developing strong motivations for reading or whether adjustments should be made.
- Share your challenges and successes with your colleagues so that we all learn more about developing productive and enthusiastic literacy communities.

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