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ABSTRACT

The research on the effect of attitudes on reading is reviewed in this paper to support the position that the affective part of learning is as important to learning to read well as are the cognitive skills. Suggestions for improving reading attitudes are given. Activities are suggested for five forms of creative reading: (1) model imitations, in which the reader is asked to find creative ways of doing the same thing as the author; (2) idea extension, elaboration, and augmentation; (3) visualization, the process of giving concrete form to the mental images resulting from reading; (4) incorporation, where the reader is producing his or her own ideas from fragments from the reading; and (5) contradictory or supporting reading, that is both critical and productive. On the premise that effective work with questions can help reading attitudes, 18 ideas for questioning games are described. (MKM)

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PROMISING PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING READING ATTITUDES

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Background Considerations

There is no question that we should be concerned about literacy in a highly complex society such as ours. Literacy, however, often connotes mastery of a "basic" set of cognitive skills only. The competency testing movement and the "back-to-the-basics" philosophy have generated the position in the minds of many persons, both lay and professional, that we must return to a curriculum that develops these cognitive skills as its prime goal. Yet literacy is, and must be considered, more than the mastery of a selected set of cognitive skills. Affect is also basic. In addressing the literacy concept, Charlotte Huck, (1979, page 20) has aptly stated:

There is (a) group of students who are literate, who know how to read but just never do, for they have never found any pleasure in reading. In England they refer to these students as ex-literates and I have called them our "illiterate literates." Certainly we want to go beyond this kind of literacy.

Cognitive skills are important for they provide a basis for a person's being able to read. Affect is also important because it provides the desire and the will to read (Alexander and Fuller, 1976). Today, there are curricula that are devoted mainly to the development of cognitive skills, focusing on lists of competencies, skill sequences, pre- and post-tests, ditto sheets, and workbooks. At times, computer programming is also involved. Few would quarrel that skills are important. Our position is that learners (in this paper, how they feel about reading) are equally important.

Support for consideration of affect as basic has both physiological and

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theoretical bases. As noted by Robeck and Wilson (1974, Chapter 2), there is a physiological basis for considering affect as basic in the learning process. Prior to the time incoming information is processed for storage in the cortex, it passes through the limbic system in the reticular formation at the lower part of the brain where pleasure or punishment loadings are added. Thus, how a learner feels about the information being processed affects his learning and later utilization of that information.

A theoretical basis can also be cited for the role of affect as a basic factor in learning to read and in continuing to read. In his model of the function of attitude in the reading process, Mathewson (1976) focused on five components: attitude, motivation, attention, comprehension, and acceptance. He posited attitude (defined as evaluative responses to aspects of reading input such as form, content, and format) as the central construct. In this model, motivation and attitude work together to create the condition in which the child attends to and performs the cognitive processes necessary to comprehend the material. He states that if "attitude is favorable and the motivations are appropriate, comprehension works at peak efficiency. If, however, attitude is unfavorable or if motivation is inappropriate, or not present, comprehension becomes inefficient" (Mathewson, 1976, page 663).

In light of the recent interest among educators (Mathewson, 1976) in the effective domain as related to academic achievement in general and to reading achievement in particular, the findings from research on attitudes toward reading need to be readily available to persons interested in the implementation or improvement of a reading program. Patsy M. Davis conducted a study (1978), the purposes of which were to identify the research that had been conducted on student attitudes toward reading, to determine the relative merit of each study, and to draw conclusions from the best of that research. In order to set some limitations for this study she decided to include only those research studies

published in American journals from 1900 through 1977. Only original research reports were included and only those where attitudes were a major focus on the research.

Major findings based on research reports which met her standard of quality when evaluated with Suydam's Instrument for Evaluating Educational Research (1965) are as follows (Davis and Alexander, 1979):

1. Good comprehension is related to (positive) good attitudes toward reading. Poor comprehension is related to poor attitudes.
2. Attitudes affect achievement. Attitudes become more positive with improved achievement. Attitudes are more related to achievement than to ability as determined by IQ scores.
3. Intelligence is not an accurate predictor of attitudes. Teachers tend to overestimate the attitudes of good students (high IQ) and underestimate the attitudes of poor students (low IQ).
4. When researchers looked at relationships between attitudes and self-concept, it was found that positive attitudes were related to good self-concepts and negative attitudes were related to negative self-concepts. Attitudes toward reading become less positive with an increase in the age of the students. Class size does not appear to be related to attitudes toward reading.
5. Some research studies reported that girls had more positive attitudes toward reading, some studies reported that boys had more positive attitudes, and some studies reported no difference in positive/negative attitudes and the sex of the participant.
6. Socioeconomic status and race do not appear to be significantly related to student attitudes toward reading. What parents do in the home seem to affect attitudes more than do such factors as father's occupation, socioeconomic status of family, educational level of parents

or the number of books in the home. }
}

7. Content of textbooks, instructional programs (such as television and paperbacks), and classroom organization may affect attitudes toward reading and can be used to change attitudes. Attitudes may be an important supplement to a readability index.

Improving Reading Attitudes in School

Based on analysis of the research related to reading attitudes Alexander (1979) has said that:

"It is difficult to suggest particular programs and strategies that work in most situations since attitudes tend to be highly specific to given individuals. The tasks of the teacher are to try out ideas and utilize those that are most productive for given individuals or groups and to change strategies when those used are not effective."

Most children begin elementary school as non-readers. Throughout most of their early schooling they are dependent readers, that is, they need guidance, help, direction and instruction. The remainder of this paper deals with two specific practices in reading instruction that can provide exciting opportunities to help children's reading attitude.

Creative Reading and Reading Attitudes

Turner (1980) has said:

"My definition of creative reading is a very simple one. I believe that creative reading is reading with a product. Now that product may be an action or merely a thought. It may pass in a flash of time or endure for years. It may be complex or simple, incomplete or finished, huge or microscopic, sophisticated or naive, refined or in the rough. I emotionally reject the idea, but it is probably true that it may be for good or evil. But the point is that the product is not the author's. It is ours. What we read supplies the inspiration and the catalyst."

By this kind of definition creative reading implies, first of all, a positive set toward what is read. We say to ourselves, "This author that I am reading has something good for me, something I can use." The authors contend that if we can get students, at whatever level of reading they may be on, to read

creatively, any reading attitude problem they may have had is solved.

Now this does not mean that a child reading four years below his or her chronological age norms will suddenly be reading above grade level. Neither does it mean that the "feeling" is permanent. It may be lost if we do not continue to work at reading as a creative act. What it does mean is that reading will stop being useless to this child.

Creative reading may be a serendipity reaction which is unplanned, but simply inspired. Any reading material may have the power to strike a spark of imagination in the reader. But creative reading can also be an intentional act in which the reader is searching purposefully for an idea. Whether the reader has intended to get ideas from reading or simply been surprised by them, the expectation that this "kind" of thing could happen is always part of the creative reader's motivation to read. Its potential enjoyment provides one of the great satisfactions of reading to him or her.

Creative reading may be conceptualized to be at least the following five forms and combinations thereof:

1. Model imitation or finding ideas, forms and/or language that attract the reader to emulate.
2. Idea extension, elaboration, or augmentation.
3. Visualization or giving physical form to images created by reading materials.
4. Incorporation of fragments of language or thought encountered in reading material or into larger or different kinds of thought patterns that are the reader's own.
5. Development of thought usually manifested in oral or written language either contradicting or supporting ideas as they are perceived from print.

Activities can be developed which will aid students of all reading levels to become creative readers. Obviously there is almost an implied hierarchy in the five types suggested. In the following section we have focused on folk tales using the broadest definition of this story type. Folk tales were selected because they are familiar to many people, are present in some way in every difficulty level of reading material, and because they express broad human values, feelings, and aspirations. The activities described here are obviously adaptable to other types of reading materials.

1. Model Imitations

In this form of creative reading the reader is inspired to find creative ways of doing the same thing as the author. Contradictory as this may sound it can be a very creative activity. Essentially, one of the author's forms or his or her style is altered slightly or adapted. Short pithy statements such as folk sayings or simple well said statements are good models to start. In the example below a folk story cliché is the "model" with the reader trying to keep the essential mood of the story type.

Example - "Once Uponing"

Teacher Talk to Students

The most familiar beginnings for tales include, "Once upon a time..." and "Once, long, long, ago..." Look through folk tales to see if you can find several other ways in which the teller breaks into the story. Then invent some opening lines of your own that keep that magical, adventurous far-off time and place aura of the folk tale. Here are just a few examples of the kind of opening you can invent yourselves.

Chalk Board Talk or Handout

"In a forgotten land and
a forgotten time..."

"Before steel, or loom, or candle, or book..."

"Before the tallest tree
was even a seedling..."

"When dawn mists made mystery shapes..."

"In an age when a brave deed or a well told tale
meant more than gold..."

"When the forest was young and great, and no ax had yet
given the death kiss to a tree..."

"In a time when the nearest neighbor
was a day's hard ride away..."

"In a place and time that only the oldest tales remembered..."

Follow through. Discuss the "feel" of the words helping the children sense mood. Try substituting synonyms and antonyms. Talk about meaning and other ways of expressing ideas. Let the children search for other "fine and fancy" ways to begin or end stories.

2. Idea Extension, Elaboration and Augmentation

Creative reading involves a fantasy voyage for the mind. To a creative reader daydreaming is natural. They anticipate endings and outcomes and then envision added events and new situations for characters in stories. They feel unanswered questions which they would like to answer themselves. Teacher questions may help readers to do this kind of thinking. For example, the teacher might ask about other adventures that could happen for a particular tall tale hero. What would such characters be likely to do in new situations? Similarly the teacher might ask about events that could be added to the plot of "Snow White" or "Cinderella" to lengthen the stories, modernize them, or make the story more realistic. Augmenting

may be invoked by simply adding a phrase or unfinished sentence to the story. One of the simplest augmenting devices for fairy tales is to add a "because" to the familiar "they lived happily ever after" ending of the typical tale. Following is still another augmenting activity that is built on character images.

Great Character Riddles

Teacher Talk

This is your chance to write a riddle full of clues about a folk tale character. Choose a character out of a story you have read. Don't tell anyone! Keep it a secret. Pick a character who has two of the qualities below.

Board Talk or Handout

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Handsome/beautiful | 6. Ugly |
| 2. Fearful/frightening | 7. Calming |
| 3. Strange/odd | 8. Average/normal |
| 4. Clever | 9. Stupid |
| 5. Bold | 10. Timid |

Your riddle should tell more about the character than the story actually did. Follow each step slowly. You may need more than one sentence for each clue. Number your clues.

1. Find something or someone to compare the character to. Your sentence might look like this: " _____ was like Oscar the Grouch."
2. Tell why the character is like your choice of comparable objects or persons. Like this - "This was because _____
was crabby, irritable, but really a good person."
3. Tell about each of the characters facial features and then write a sentence about the whole face (or faces) of the character.

- "_____ had a huge nose and little red eyes."
4. Write a sentence about the way the character speaks. (Is it soft or loud, raspy or smooth, high or low, etc.) "_____ spoke in a gruff loud voice."
 5. Tell something which people who have known the character might say about him/her. For example: "Everyone was afraid of him and said, 'Don't go up there'."
 6. Finish your riddle with a sentence including a "string" of four or more adjectives or describing words about the character. For example: "He was vile, vain, ugly and bullying and oozed through the story without looking anyone straight in the eye."

(Answer: The Ogre in "Puss 'n Boots.")

3. Visualization

Visualization is the process of giving concrete form to the mental images resulting from reading. This is one of the easiest and earliest of creative reading activities. Because the tasks are highly motivating, they can give less active readers a chance to see purpose in reading. The activities give a personally rewarding and gratifying sense of accomplishment (by giving a product to the reader), and do not necessarily require any language production skills. The variety of teacher "creatable" as well as reader created visualization activities is infinite. Visualization requires not just that the reader recreate what an author has seen and tried to describe but that he or she include personal meanings and perceptions. Typical activities include illustrating stories and poems, building story collages and bulletin boards, making character masks, drawing and painting murals, etc. Among the ideas which may be less familiar are making pictorial maps and pictorial time lines. For both of these

the first step is to identify from the story all of the possible events and the places where they occur. These may be put on cards for convenience. In mapping the imagination is used to show each site or setting in the story with some pictorial representation and to show the geographic relationships.

The time line requires that each event be represented either symbolically or pictorially as well. Then these representations are ordered in sequence of chronology along the line. A clothes pen time-line using rope or string or a pictorial time-line may be used depending on preference.

4. Incorporation

In this form the reader's analytic and synthetic thinking abilities are called upon. The reader is producing his or her own ideas pulling only fragments from the reading. For older readers, this may mean writing full descriptions of events or adventures only mentioned in a story or "spinoffs" involving using a story character in a new adventure can also be written. Simple variations are more practical for elementary age readers. Below is an example of one variation.

Example: (Board or Handout)

Choose a folk tale of some kind where something magical happens. Use the magical event in an "if - then" sentence dreaming up another piece of magic. Here are some examples:

From "Jack and the Beanstalk"

If there were giants in the sky - then there would be tiny midgets under the ground.

If a harp could call for help, then a trumpet could see the future and warn of danger.

If a goose could lay golden eggs, a cow could give oil instead of milk

From "Sleeping Beauty"

If a girl could sleep for a hundred years, a boy might not be able to sleep at all for a hundred years.

If a kiss can waken from a magic sleep, a touch may cause the the person to sleep walk.

From the story of "Arachne" in Greek Mythology.

If a proud girl can be turned into a spider, then a shy girl might be turned into a butterfly.

After you have done two or three of your own then write a story based on your best "if - then."

5. Contradictory or Supporting

Reading in this way is more than critical. It is productive as well, creatively involving the reader in finding ideas beyond the information supplied.

"Fairy Tale Challenge"

Make up a "challenge" to the way a fairy tale represents fairness or justice. For example: "Jack," in "Jack and the Beanstalk" was a thief and should have been jailed. "Prince Charming" did nothing to deserve as fine a girl like Cinderella. "Goldilocks" deserved to be punished for going into someone's house and using their things without asking.

Now take your challenge and argue. Write three sentences which "prove" your statement is true.

On Trial

Stage a mock trial of a folk tale hero in class. Have a prosecuting attorney make up charges, a defense attorney argue for the hero's freedom, a judge, a jury, and witnesses taking the part of story characters.

In-Role Reports

Have children give story summaries book reports in-character, pretending they are one of the people in the story giving their side of what happened. If two children have read the same book have them portray two characters who see things differently or are in conflict.

Questioning and Attitudes

A question may be defined as a response demanding statement. Teachers find out what children know and think by asking questions. They also get children to participate, and to be involved by requiring them to respond to questions.

Effective work with questions by teachers can help reading attitudes. Attitude improvement is more likely if teacher questioning strategies lead the child to ask their own questions. Questions can be used for many attitude related purposes including:

1. To give a purpose for reading and help the child in predicting and anticipating - thus aid comprehension.
2. To help the student become sensitive to his/her own attitudes and preferences and the influences on them.
3. To help children express and focus curiosity and interest.
4. To heighten sensitivity to mood, expression and detail.
5. To aid thinking and to help children solve problems.

A single question used in the classroom never appears in isolation. Each one is asked in a context including other questions, individual and group experiences, classroom climate, relationships among the human beings involved, and intentions. To be effective in building improved reading attitudes, question asking or answering strategies will need to:

Make the child feel good, effective and important.

Stimulate curiosity about reading.

Involve the child mentally and emotionally with reading. Create pleasant associations that can be transferred to the reading act.

Help the child to crystalize thinking or to synthesize and focus often vague curiosities and ideas gained from reading.

It is not our purpose to discuss the many techniques and approaches to questioning. We only want to suggest some ideas that might be used to enhance reading attitudes while at the same time helping children improve comprehension. Basically we want to just share question developing techniques based on a gaming format, and then show how questioning can be used in a few activities that can help children become more aware of their own attitudes toward reading.

Question Games

Associating games with both questioning and reading serve a multitude of functions. Games are exciting, motivating and fun for children already so a technique that has motivational value and pleasant association is being used. Hopefully, the rub-off or association of a pleasant, enjoyable, high positive attitude activity will have some influence on reading attitudes. Then too, games give many children a chance to feel success they can claim legitimately as their own even when it is a friend succeeding. Still another optimistic possibility is that the external extrinsic reward of winning in the game will provide an incentive to read and work with more energy and involvement.

The games discussed here are believed to be skill building games that will improve questioning and listening skills, and provide reinforcement as aid to memory.

Television has provided a constantly growing array of imaginative models of questioning game activities. Many of these can be easily adapted for use with upper elementary and some primary age children. Game shows which teachers or children have watched on morning, afternoon or even evening television may be a starting place for children since the enjoyment of the game may carry over to reading. If the children have seen the program they usually know the rules of play. They also have seen the difference between good players and poor ones. Remember, almost all of the examples of TV games suggested for

adaptation here are question asking and answer hypothesis making rather than question answering games. The emphasis is on the child thinking about effective questions and responses.

Some Examples of TV Games

1. "Reading Hollywood Squares"

Nine panelists are chosen and seated in the pattern of a tic-tac-toe board. Each panelist has a large card with an X on one side and an O on the other to be raised at the appropriate time. For each square the moderator has a stack of cards to select from, each with a question about stories, books or poems. (These can be made up by the class.) Each panelist always tries to answer in a convincing manner. The competing contestants get an opportunity to get their X or O in a square in turn by trying to determine if the panelist is correct.

2. "I've Got a Secret Word or Secret Book"

A panel of 4 is selected. Each panelist in turn has a chance to question the "guest" for a full minute. At the end of all the questioning they try to guess the guest's secret word, book, or character.

3. "What's My Word" (modeled after the old "What's My Line" show)

The challengers each try to trap the 4 panelists into a question that has no for an answer. Ten no answers before the panel figures out their secret vocabulary word or story title and they beat the panel. Mystery book characters can also appear to have their identity guessed. Blindfolds and character costumes add to the dramatic fun.

4. "To Tell the Reading Truth"

A book report summary. Three people claim to have read that particular book

or story and written the report. Only one of them has actually read it. The panel, by questioning each claimant, tries to decide who the real reader was. Obviously the more the panel members know about the book the better they will do.

5. "Reading Jeopardy"

Each of the categories in this game is a story or book type, an author, or even a particular book. There are four levels of difficulty each with a different point value. The contestant who accumulates a given number of points first is the winner. Points are achieved by correctly identifying an appropriate question. The contestants in turn choose a category and a number of points. Only then are they allowed to see the phrase or word for that category and level. They must then ask a question which would have the word or phrase as its correct answer.

Note: An interesting variation is "Jeopardy Checkers and Chess."

A large checkerboard is made with a reading related answer on a card taped to each square. Appropriate questions are written on the back of the card. Chess or checkers may be played with the difference being that to land on a space a player must first be able to ask the right question. If this cannot be done correctly the player forfeits that turn. (Vocabulary words, and questions may also be used.)

Beyond the imagination of television a number of questioning activities varying in structure can be devised. One of the advantages of those here is that they can sometime be played with little advance preparation by teacher or pupils. This makes them more flexible.

1. Stump the Teacher

This gaming activity is most effective motivationally when the teacher has a sense of "theater" and drama. Self assurance is demanded and a delicate balance where the teacher is central to the theater but the children are central to the drama. The operation is simple. During a given brief time period every day the children are trying to find a question about stories or books read that the teacher cannot answer. For added incentive a special reward can be given to the child who asks the stumper question and a theatrical emphasis given to it (a gong, a scream, a trumpet blast, etc.) Stumping may end the game or not depending on time and content factors. If the same question stumps the teacher for two days in a row, a special reward may be given.

2. Question Bee

This one does require material preparation. The same procedure is used as in a spelling bee. Flip cards are used. On each is the name of a story or book that the children have read or a new reading vocabulary word. A card is flipped every 3-5 questions. A spinner or set of cards with question words in random order is also needed. Each child in turn gets to spin or take a card. He or she must then ask a valid question using the question word or vocabulary word or about the story or book.

3. 5 and 10

This is a guessing game in which the children are trying to guess the name of a story, book, character, or setting. Children are divided into competing groups of 3 to 5. Each group in turn gets to ask a question with a yes-no answer. Two or three groups playing at a time work best. All groups have 5 minutes to plan their strategies. Their first option is whether they want to ask 5 questions or 10 questions. If they choose

to ask only 5 questions they get a written clue before they ask their questions and another at the end of the questioning. The first group to discover the answer wins the round.

4. A Million and One

Divide the class into groups of three to five children. Each group has a secretary. Large sheets of newsprint or several chalk board areas work best so that the whole group can look at the winner's list. All the groups are then given a "mystery" from a book, poem or story. It may be a sentence a character's name, a statement about the plot, ... etc. Each group then tries within an allotted period of time to come up with as many questions as they can relating to that mystery. For skilled questioners each mystery may be limited to one particular question word (who, what, when, where, why, how

5. The Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Game

This is a timed team relay. The team is given a story or book title. The members of the team then ask questions about that story starting with a different question word. If a team member uses a question word that has already been used he or she is told immediately and must try again. The team's total time is recorded and compared against other teams. General questions (like - Who was the main character? What was the setting? How did it end?, etc.) are not allowed.

6. Question Answer Ping Pong

This is a two player game. The server names a story or book and gives a specific fact about it. The receiver counters with a specific question related to the fact. The statements and questions continue until one player cannot respond. Serves are alternated. Time limits are enforced. The winner is the first to get five points.

7. The "Where Do You Find It" Game

A panel is selected. The class then may ask the panel questions referring to books, poems, or stories. Each questioner identifies a single panel member for his or her question. The panel does not have to answer the question but they must be able to identify where the answer could be found. Anyone who can stump a member of the panel can replace that person. Guessing should be encouraged but any answer may be challenged.

Questions for Self Awareness of Reading Attitudes

Questioning activities can help students become more sensitive to and aware of their own feelings toward reading and reading materials. They can also be used to help students gain perspective about how others feel toward reading. A clear understanding of one's own attitudes is crucial to improvement. Many students cannot clearly describe how or why they feel toward reading as they do. In some cases it may be sufficient to help a child clarify his or her feelings.

The following techniques involve the student in questioning activities related to himself or herself and the reading art.

1. This Story (Book) and Me

This activity involves a series of self addressed questions through which the child asks how he/she relates to the book or story.

Typical questions could be:

How am I like a character in this story?

How is this character different from me?

Would I want to do what the main character did?

Would I have acted the same way as the character in this situation?
Questions can be provided by the teacher or brainstormed by the class.

2. What Kind of "Things" do you Read Most?

This activity is a comparison thinking response asking the child to weigh priorities.

Example:

Which do you read most? Rank order these from most read to least read.

- _____ Books
- _____ Magazines
- _____ Short Stories.
- _____ Newspapers
- _____ Comic Books
- _____ Food Boxes and Cans
- _____ Letters
- _____ Junk Mail
- _____ Billboards

Example:

Which kind of story do you like to read most? Rank order.

- _____ Mysteries
- _____ Science Fiction
- _____ Fairy Tales
- _____ Tall Tales
- _____ Funny Stories
- _____ Love Stories
- _____ Adventure Stories
- _____ Myths
- _____ Fables
- _____ Sports Stories

3. Reading Opinion Pole

This may help the children find interesting books. Have them make up a list of questions for other children and adults.

Typical question would be:

What is the book you read most recently?

When did you read it?

What was it about in a few words?

Would you recommend that someone else read it?

What did you like best about it?

Would you read it again?

Based on this pole the children can do a "Top 20" chart for a particular month.

4. The children can also give their parents or adults they know a list of Keeping up Questions. They can compile their results to see if they feel adults read to be informed.

Questions might include:

1. What was the headline on today's or yesterday's paper?
2. Why do you read/not read the paper?
3. When in the day do you usually read the paper?
4. What sections of the paper do you look at most?
5. Do you read the paper more on one particular day? If so, when?

5. Still another pole that children might take would be of people in jobs they think they might like to have. Have them identify a few such jobs and interview someone in that job to find out such things as:

Do you have to read as part of your job?

Does your reading ever make your job easier?

Did you have to read to get ready for your job?

What kinds of things do you read on the job?

A Final Statement

We have presented here a sampling of ideas and techniques which we feel will hold some promise for some teachers and some children to improve reading attitudes. We think that these ideas are at least not contradictory of any of the sound research and may be supported to at least some degree.

Through creative techniques and approaches we can improve reading attitudes and therefore reading ability when we:

1. Help students feel better about themselves, more positive about reading.
2. Help students feel a need for books and reading in their present and future lives.
3. Help students find vital and personally important purposes for reading.
4. Help students to spark their own curiosity and find important ways to "do something" with some of their reading.

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