

The importance of motivation to read for poor readers

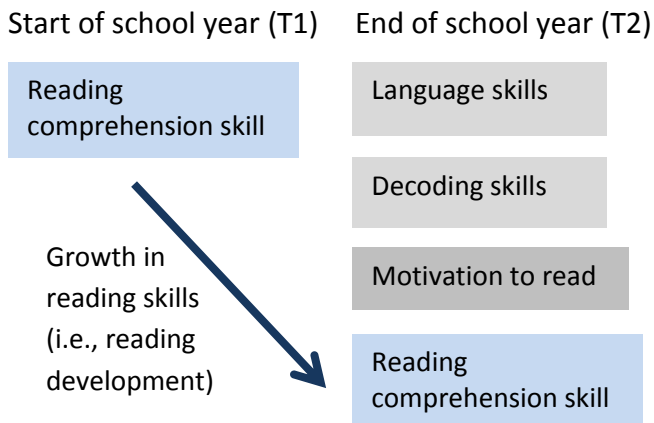
A summary for teachers

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Background: There is developing evidence that both cognitive (e.g., language skills, decoding skills) and motivational (e.g., motivation to read) factors are important for children's reading skill and reading development. However, very little research has examined whether motivation to read is particularly important for some groups of readers than others (e.g., poor readers who typically struggle more with reading). The present study examined this.

Aims: 1) To examine whether children's motivation to read predicts growth in their reading skills over a school year; 2) To examine whether children's motivation to read predicts their reading skill, after taking into account their cognitive abilities; 3) To examine whether motivation to read is particularly important for poor readers' reading skill and development.

Participants: 111 children (aged 9 – 11) completed a test of reading comprehension skill at the start of their school year. At the end of their school year, children completed assessments of reading comprehension skill, language skill, decoding skill and motivation to read. The group was split into good (n = 32) and poor (n = 37) readers.



Results:

- 1) Motivation to read predicted growth in reading skills from T1 – T2, for the whole sample and for poor readers
- 2) Motivation to read predicted reading comprehension skill, after accounting for cognitive skills, but only for poor readers.
- 3) Motivation to read appeared to be particularly important for poor readers' reading.

Discussion and implications for education:

Since motivation to read predicted growth in reading skill over the course of a school year, it is worthwhile developing reading motivation, in addition to the cognitive skills known to support reading.

Being motivated to read appears to be particularly important for the reading development of poor readers. As this group possibly experience greater difficulties and frustration when reading, it appears that their motivation plays a greater role. Indeed, motivation is an 'energiser' which influences effort and persistence; this energiser seems to be particularly important for poor readers.

Interventions focused on raising poor readers' reading skills should ensure they place sufficient emphasis on developing positive reading attitudes and enhancing reading motivation.



Academic paper: Logan, S., Medford, E., & Hughes, N. (2011). The importance of intrinsic motivation for high and low ability readers' reading comprehension performance. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 21, 124-128.