Texas Education Agency

Motivating and Engaging Students

Participant Notes

GRADES 4 & 5

Reading to Learn

ACADEMIES

GRADE 5

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GRADES 4 & 5

READING
TO LEARN
ACADEMIES

GRADE 5

Motivating and Engaging Students
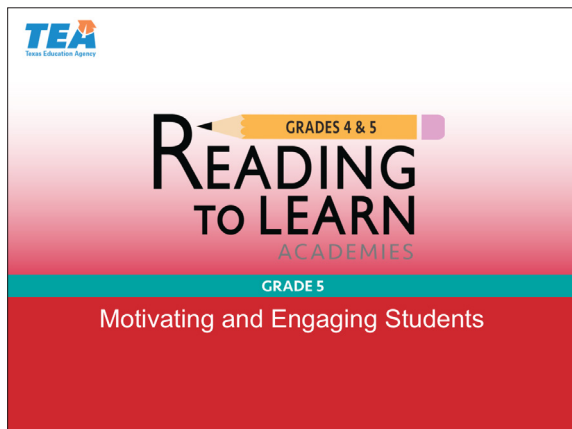
Section Objectives

This section will enhance your knowledge of methods to develop students'

- autonomy,
- internalized motivation,
- beliefs and mindsets,
- competence, and
- self-regulation.

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The Importance of Motivation

"Unless learners are seriously interested in learning, unless they want to learn and put some effort into doing so, there is almost no likelihood that significant learning will take place."

— Graves, 2004, p. 447

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Examining Our Reading Motivation

How would you describe your emotional response to reading?

Does your response differ depending on the type of reading?

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Examining Our Writing Motivation

How would you describe your emotional response to writing?

Does your response differ depending on the type of writing?

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Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Motivation

| **Intrinsic Motivation** | Engaging in a task for the sake of the task |
| **Extrinsic Motivation** | Engaging in a task as a means to an end |

These types of motivation are **not mutually exclusive**. For an activity, you can be high on both, low on both, high on one and low on the other, etc.

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Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is **contextual**—it is affected by the environment in which one acts.

Discussion Questions

- What kind of context allows your intrinsic motivation to flourish?
- What kind of context diminishes your intrinsic motivation?

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Intrinsic Motivation: Benefits

- Increased interest, excitement, and confidence
- Enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity
- Heightened vitality, self-esteem, and well-being

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Extrinsic Motivation

- Also **contextual** and can be **internalized**
- Not inherently "bad" and often even necessary for day-to-day tasks, including in the literacy classroom

Tips for Internalizing Motivation

- Avoid extreme extrinsic motivators, such as rewards, threats, or shaming.
- Set up reading and writing tasks that make students feel in control of their learning.

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Internalizing Extrinsic Motivation

Students internalize motivation when we
- build strong relationships with them,
- help them feel competent to accomplish tasks,
- provide them with choices,
- connect activities to students' interests (e.g., providing interesting texts to read), and
- allow them to set their own goals.

Supporting Student Autonomy

More than simply providing choices to students—involves giving power and control to students

"Giving students opportunities to 'self-rule' and 'self-determine' can make learning more personally meaningful and intrinsically motivating."

— Swan, 2004, p. 286

How Autonomous Do Your Students Feel?

- Who talks the most in the classroom?
- Who makes most of the decisions?
- Who evaluates and uses assessment data the most?
- Who provides the most feedback?

If the answer to each question is "the teacher," student autonomy is most likely low.

Final Thought on Student Autonomy

"Teachers who listen more, who allow for independent work, who give fewer criticisms and more praise of quality performance, who show empathy and the ability to take the students' perspective, and who have learned to recognize when their students' interest is at its peak or is waning are doing what they can to help students feel self-determined."

— Reed, Schallert, Beth, & Woodruff, 2004, p. 274

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Building Student Competence

- Support students' perceptions of themselves as competent and capable.
- Create situations that allow students to feel confident in themselves.
- Help students develop sustained competence and confidence over time by considering the following questions.

  How do I ensure that students are as successful as possible as often as possible while maintaining high expectations and academic rigor?

  How can I help students develop true competence rather than simplifying the material?

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Specific Considerations

- Provide explicit instruction with modeling.
- Build skills and strategies through effective scaffolding.
- Help students master skills and strategies through multiple practice opportunities.
- Respond to students with immediate, corrective feedback.

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Using Modeling to Build Student Competence

Modeling can be provided by

the teacher, especially when learning a new skill or strategy;

students of equal or slightly greater competence; or

students who previously struggled with a skill or strategy.

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Lesson Incorporating Effective Modeling

Examine the lesson, which uses modeling to help students learn about motivation, self-efficacy, creativity, and writing.

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What Should Be Modeled?

- Specific skills and strategies we want students to learn
- Ways that we use self-talk to help ourselves learn and stay motivated
- Effective self-regulation techniques, such as developing emotional awareness and setting goals

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Creating Self-Regulated Learners

"Students who are self-regulated are active participants in their own learning. Rather than relying solely on teachers, parents, or other external agents to impart knowledge, they take an active role in their own learning."

— Zito, Adkins, Gavins, Harris, & Graham, 2007, p. 78

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Creating Self-Regulated Learners (cont.)

"Self-regulation (or self-regulated learning) refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are systematically designed to affect one's learning of knowledge and skills."

— Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, pp. 7–8

- Self-regulation enhances learning, which builds competence that supports motivation and pushes students to achieve new goals.
- Emotional and cognitive self-regulation has been found to support students' development of reading competence.

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Creating Self-Regulated Readers and Writers

- Teach and model self-regulation strategies during instruction of reading and writing skills and strategies.
- Differentiate instruction in self-regulation strategies based on students' needs.
- Help students monitor their progress toward meeting reading and writing goals.
- Provide feedback on progress in using self-regulation techniques.

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Let's Practice!
Modeling Self-Regulation

Setting goals

Monitoring progress toward meeting goals

Using self-talk to think or feel a certain way

Rewarding yourself as you meet goals

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One Element of Self-Regulation:
Student Goals

- Help students set short-term and long-term goals that are clear, specific, and challenging but realistic.
- Allow students to assess and monitor their progress toward reaching goals.
- Help students celebrate when they achieve goals.

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Learning Goals Versus
Performance Goals

Learning Goals	• Focus on mastering a task, developing skills, or improving competence • Relate to internalized forms of motivation
Performance Goals	• Focus on ability, how ability will be judged, recognition, and avoidance of negative consequences • Relate to extrinsic forms of motivation

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Developing a Growth Mindset

"A growth mindset isn't just about effort. Certainly effort is key for students' achievement, but it's not the only thing. Students need to try new strategies and seek input from others when they're stuck. They need this repertoire of approaches—not just sheer effort—to learn and improve."

— Dweck, 2015

Growth Versus Fixed Mindset

Growth Mindset	Fixed Mindset
• Intelligence and ability can be developed over time.	• Intelligence and ability are fixed. You get what you are born with.
• Effort is powerful for any type of learning.	• If you have to expend effort, you must not be intelligent or capable.
• Challenges are a chance to develop yourself.	• Challenges are a threat to who you are and how others see you.
• Setbacks just mean you need to work that much harder.	• If you face a setback, you failed. You aren't good enough. Give up.
• Another person's success is an opportunity to learn and grow.	• If others succeed, they must be better than you. Give up.

Evaluating the Two Mindsets

- Which type of mindset would you rather promote and work with in your classroom?
- Which type of mindset do you currently promote?
- Which one do most of your students demonstrate?
- How can we change a student's mindset?

Developing a Growth Mindset

- Praise students for their effort and strategy use, not for their intelligence or ability.
- Challenge students with high standards and teach how to reach them.
- Provide a disciplined yet nurturing atmosphere.
- Genuinely care about and commit yourself to every student.
- Be honest about students' progress and provide them with tools to close the gaps.

"The great teachers believe in the growth of the intellect and talent, and they are fascinated with the process of learning."

— Dweck, 2006, p. 194

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Teach Students About the Brain

- The brain is like a muscle that changes, grows, and gets stronger when you learn.
- The more you challenge yourself, the more your brain cells grow and build connections to one another.

It is no longer about intelligent versus unintelligent. It is about **learned versus not learned yet**!

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Lesson to Promote a Growth Mindset

- Developing our abilities
- Putting in effort and working hard
- Facing and overcoming challenges
- Learning to read

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Changing Our Mindsets

"**Mindset change is not about picking up a few pointers here and there. It's about seeing things in a new way. When people...change to a growth mindset, they change from a judge-and-be-judged framework to a learn-and-help-learn framework. Their commitment is to growth, and growth takes plenty of time, effort, and mutual support.**"

— Dweck, 2006, p. 244

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Words Shape the Classroom Experience

- Shape our identities
- Position us in relation to one another
- Position us in relation to what we are doing
- Influence our reality, our beliefs, and our understanding of what it means to be human

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How We Use Our Words

- Notice and name what we notice
- Create identities
- Support autonomy and agency
- Develop the ability to generalize and make connections
- Construct knowledge
- Create a community of learners

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How Can We Start?

"We can start to change our classroom interactions by changing our words and dragging some of our beliefs along with them."

— Johnston, 2004, p. 84

- Consciously edit our speech
- Be genuinely interested in what students have to say
- Make learning meaningful to students

Developing Students' Identities as Readers and Writers

- Internalized motivation
- Autonomy
- Competence
- Self-regulation
- Beliefs and mindsets
- Power of language

The Reading Rope

How do you use teacher-student relationships, autonomy, a sense of competence, and self-regulation to engage and motivate English language learners, struggling students, and/or gifted students?
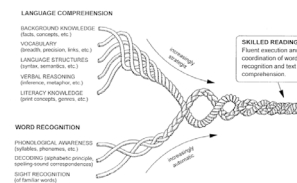
Scarborough, 2001

Remember

> "Being literate is more a role than a skill: [It is] something that one *is* rather than something one *has*."
>
> — Johnston, 1992, p. 5

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Motivating and Engaging Students

Handouts

GRADES 4 & 5

READING
TO LEARN
ACADEMIES

GRADE 5

Evaluating Student Autonomy

Three example instructional practices from literacy classrooms are described below. For each example, rate the level of student autonomy the practice provides. Then, provide suggestions for ways to build more student autonomy into the instructional practice.

Use the following scale to rate the level of student autonomy.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

Example	Student Autonomy Rating	Suggestions to Build Greater Student Autonomy
Each Monday, students are given a list of spelling words on which they will be tested on Friday. During the week, students are expected to take the words home to memorize and copy over and over. After they take the test on Friday, the teacher grades it, counting each word spelled correctly or incorrectly, and gives each student their grade on Monday. Students must then copy the words they missed again the following week.		
A teacher is planning a three-week unit on stars. She needs texts to use for read-alouds and student projects, so she asks the students to help her evaluate books, magazine articles, and the science text. Students use the Text Review sheet (pages 2–3 of this handout) to review texts in small groups and partners during workstation time. The teacher collects these reviews at the end of the week to plan which texts she will use.		
As a warm-up at the beginning of each writing class, a teacher displays unrelated sentences written incorrectly. The teacher gives students five to eight minutes to correct these sentences independently. The teacher then calls on individual students to write on the board one correction of an error. Sometimes, the teacher collects the students' corrected sentences to give students a grammar grade.		

Text Review

Title: _____

Author and/or illustrator: _____

What to Examine and Questions to Think About	Detailed Information on What You Found
Genre What type of text is it? What kind of information does it provide? What would it best be used for—for example, for research, as a teacher read-aloud, etc.? Note that the text could be used for more than one purpose.	
Organization How is the text organized—for example, does it have chapters, is it organized by specific information, etc.? Is it well organized or poorly organized? How does its organization affect your understanding or motivation? Could parts of the text be used rather than the whole thing?	
Pictures, Tables, and Other Graphics Does the text have graphics that help you understand the text? Are any graphics especially helpful? If so, provide the page numbers and explain why the graphic is helpful.	

Identify words that may need to be taught before we read the text.

What is your overall impression of the text—good, bad, interesting, not interesting, etc.? Provide specific examples to support your evaluation.

Modeling Self-Efficacy Using a Picture Book

Materials

- *ish* by Peter H. Reynolds
- Three notecards—one with *motivation* written on it, one with *confidence*, and one with *-ish*
- Chart paper for brainstorming experiences
- Copies of living "ishfully" planning document for each student (pages 5 and 6 of this handout)
- Writer's notebooks

Objective ("I Do")

"We all have experienced what it feels like **not** to be good at something—whether it is something in school, like reading or math, or something else, like playing a sport or drawing or even making friends. Such an experience can create negative feelings and cause us not to be motivated to continue.

"In this lesson, we read about a character who has just such an experience and how his little sister helps him realize his potential and become motivated again."

Preteach Vocabulary

Show students the notecard with the word *motivation* on it.

"*Motivation* means that you want to do something. If you have motivation to do something, you will probably do it. For example, if you feel motivation to read a book, you will probably read it. If you are motivated to play soccer, you will probably play soccer—unless something stops you."

Show the notecard with the word *confidence* on it.

"*Confidence* means that you feel like you can do something. For example, I have strong confidence in my ability to do math. I have always been a good math student, so when someone asks me to do math, I know I can do it. On the other hand, I do not have confidence in my ability to draw fancy pictures. I am an OK artist, but I do not think I am great. If someone asked me to draw a picture that was important for something, I would be very nervous about it."

Show the notecard the suffix *-ish* on it.

"This is the suffix *-ish*. It comes at the end of a word to say that something is like something else. For example, if I said an adult was **childish**, that would mean the adult was acting like a child. Or if I said your shirt was **blueish**, that would mean it looks like blue, but it is not exactly blue.

"In this lesson, you will learn more about these two words and this suffix."

Brainstorming and Planning ("We Do")

"Have you ever tried something and not been successful? I know I have. When I was a little girl, I wanted to learn how to be a softball pitcher. I played on a softball team, but I was one of the smallest girls on the team, and I was not very strong. I remember some of my friends even telling me I would not be able to pitch because I was not strong enough to get the ball across the plate.

"Have any of you ever felt like you could not do something—either because someone told you that or you just had a hard time doing it?"

Put up a web or brainstorm chart to list some of the experiences that your students share. Start the list with your own experience. You may have to add one or two more of your own to get students to share.

Show students the book *ish*.

"We will read this book today. In it, a little boy has an experience similar to the ones we just discussed. Let's see how he handles it and how it changes him."

Modeling ("I Do" and "We Do")

Read the book. Stop after you read these words: "Leon's laughter haunted Ramon. He kept trying to make his drawings look 'right,' but they never did."

"What do the words *look right* mean?"

Have students turn and talk to a partner about these words. Discuss with students how we sometimes think that if we are not perfect, we should stop what we are trying to do.

"Let's see what happens next with Ramon."

Read the next page.

"What has happened to Ramon?"

Again, have students turn and talk with a partner.

Then, discuss as a class how Ramon has given up. He has lost all confidence in himself. Refer to your *confidence* notecard.

Discuss with students that when you lose confidence, you often lose your motivation to keep trying. Refer to your *motivation* notecard.

"Ramon has lost his confidence, which has also made him lose his motivation.

"Let's keep reading. Ramon is at a low point right now, but that is about to change."

Continue reading. Stop after you read these words: "'Vase-ISH?' Ramon looked closer. Then he studied all the drawings on Marisol's walls and began to see them in a whole new way. 'They do look…ish,' he said."

Remind students what *-ish* means.

"What does Marisol mean when she says the picture is 'vase-ish'?"

Have students turn to their partners and talk.

"Marisol thinks Ramon's picture looks like a vase even if it is not a perfect vase. She is helping him to see that his artwork might not be perfect, but it is good enough for her to put on her wall. Maybe he now can see the good in it, just like Marisol."

Read the rest of the book.

"What do you think it means to live 'ishfully'?"

Have students turn to their partners and talk.

"We do not have to be perfect. If we keep trying, we can do things, no matter what anyone else thinks. Sometimes, we are so worried about how we will look to others or how others will judge us that we forget that what is most important is how we see ourselves."

Graphic Organizer ("I Do" and "We Do")

- Web or brainstormed list of experiences

- Living "ishfully" planning document

Shared and Guided Writing ("We Do")

"Now that we have learned about living 'ishfully,' let's apply it to ourselves to write an essay. Let me apply it first to myself wanting to be a softball pitcher. How could I use Ramon's lesson of living 'ishfully'?"

Use the living "ishfully" planning document as students help you apply this philosophy to yourself. An example of how to fill out the planning document is provided on pages 7 and 8 of this handout.

Independent Writing ("You Do")

After students work with you in the whole group on your planning and drafting, have each student or pair of students choose one of the ideas from your brainstormed list or from their own lives to plan and draft their own essay. Have students use a copy of the living "ishfully" document or have them plan and draft in their writer's notebooks.

Optional: Put students' texts together to create a collaborative book.

Reflection ("We Do")

Guide self-reflection through key questions such as the following.

> "What did this activity tell you about motivation and confidence? Why is it important to know about these concepts?"

Optional Steps: Write and Reflect Again ("We Do" and "You Do")

Have students revise their drafts for effective word choice and sentences.

Then, have students self-reflect on their writing by asking themselves questions such as the following.

> "Who might be interested in reading my essay? What is the purpose of this piece of writing?"

Living "ishfully"

What living "ishfully" means to me

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Me making the choice to live "ishfully"

Action or Thinking	**Action or Thinking**
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

What I Want

Action or Thinking	**Action or Thinking**
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

First draft of my living "ishfully" essay

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Living "ishfully" Example

What living "ishfully" means to me

Living "ishfully" means that you do not let anyone keep you from doing the things you love. You must have confidence in yourself and believe that if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish pretty much anything. I believe that having confidence in yourself is one of the most important things to helping you do whatever it is you want to do.

Me making the choice to live "ishfully"

Action or Thinking

I really want to be a softball pitcher, and I won't let what anyone says stop me.

Action or Thinking

My mom knows how to play softball, so I will ask her to teach me how to be a softball pitcher.

What I Want
To be a softball pitcher

Action or Thinking

It will take a lot of practice to be a softball pitcher, so I will plan to practice a little bit every day.

Action or Thinking

To get even better at pitching, I will try to pitch into a coffee can. Even though that is difficult, it will make me a lot better.

First draft of my living "ishfully" essay

Living "ishfully" means that you do not let anyone keep you from doing the things you love. You must have confidence in yourself and believe that if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish pretty much anything. I believe that having confidence in yourself is one of the most important things to helping you do whatever it is you want to do.

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a softball pitcher. Many of my friends told me I could not be one because I was too small and too weak, but I decided that I would not let their words stop me. My mom had been a softball player, so I asked her to help me learn how to be a pitcher. I worked hard and practiced a little bit every day. To make myself even better, I would set out a coffee can to try to pitch the softball into. It was really difficult, but it made me a better pitcher.

I eventually became a very good pitcher and pitched on teams throughout elementary and middle school. I was even the pitcher on my high school team, and I pitched on a lot of different teams when I was an adult. So, you see, if you decide to live "ishfully," you can accomplish your goals and not let others get in your way. Living "ishfully" can give you the motivation to keep going.

Planning How to Model Self-Regulation in Writing

Imagine that you want to model and have students practice the steps of the writing process within a lesson on expository writing. This lesson will be a shared writing activity.

The lesson content has already been planned for you in the left column of the table below. Think about and note different self-regulation techniques you will use as an expository text writer. You will think aloud about and model these strategies for your students.

Lesson Content	Self-Regulation Techniques to Model
Planning 1. Brainstorm ideas (think about purpose and audience). 2. Choose an idea. 3. Web support related to the idea. 4. Create an initial thesis statement. 5. Organize support using an outline.	
Drafting 1. Draft our initial thesis sentence. 2. Draft our support based on our outline. 3. Draft our concluding paragraph.	

Lesson Content	Self-Regulation Techniques to Model
Revising 1. Read the draft aloud. 2. Think about sentences. 3. Pay attention to "glue" and how text holds together. 4. Think about word choice. 5. Make sure writing works for the audience.	
Editing 1. Check and correct capitalization. 2. Check and correct usage. 3. Check and correct punctuation. 4. Check and correct spelling.	
Publishing 1. Do I want to publish? 2. Reread aloud, considering purpose. 3. Reread aloud, considering audience.	

Analyzing and Setting Literacy Goals

Analyze the following literacy goals that students have set for themselves. Circle the elements that each goal contains. If you think a goal should be rewritten, do so in the right column.

Goal	Goal Elements		Rewritten Goal (if needed)
I will get a six out of eight on the expository essay we will write tomorrow.	Specific Short-term Learning	Challenging Long-term Performance	
I will use one of the eight new vocabulary words in my personal narrative this week.	Specific Short-term Learning	Challenging Long-term Performance	
I will earn 25 points on our computerized reading program by the end of the semester.	Specific Short-term Learning	Challenging Long-term Performance	
As I read in the next week, I will find at least one sentence that has commas in a series.	Specific Short-term Learning	Challenging Long-term Performance	
I will make a 100 on my spelling test this Friday.	Specific Short-term Learning	Challenging Long-term Performance	

Promoting a Growth Mindset Using a Picture Book

Materials

- *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- Other Polacco books (e.g., *Thunder Cake*, *Pink and Say*, *The Keeping Quilt*, *Chicken Sunday*)
- Two notecards—one with the term *natural ability* written on it and one with the word *effort*
- Chart paper for brainstorming things students think they do well and things students think they don't do well
- Trisha's Beliefs About Herself chart (page 5 of this handout) on chart paper with no highlighting
- Copy of Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself sheet (pages 6 and 7 of this handout) for each student
- Writer's notebooks

Objective ("I Do")

"We often think of abilities as something we are born with. If we are not good at something, we sometimes think it is just part of who we are and there is nothing we can do about it. There is a different way to think about abilities, though. Instead of thinking of ourselves as good or bad at something, we can think of certain abilities as underdeveloped—areas in which we can work to grow and improve.

"In this lesson, we read about a character who believes herself to be an artist but not a reader. At first, she sees these aspects of herself as a permanent part of who she is, but then a teacher comes along to show her how she can work to be just as strong a reader as she is an artist."

Preteach Vocabulary

Show students the notecard with the term *natural ability* on it.

"*Natural ability* refers to being able to do something easily, or naturally. When we say that someone has a natural ability, it seems as if that person were born that way. For example, some people seem to have a natural ability to run fast. They seem like they were born that way. Other people seem to have a natural ability for singing or playing a musical instrument—it is like they were born being good at it."

Next, show them the notecard with the word *effort*.

"*Effort* refers to hard work. When you put in effort to do something, you work hard to accomplish it. I put in a lot of effort to learn how to read and write, especially when I was younger. But I still have to work hard, even now as an adult, to continue to get better in these areas.

"Some people think that you are either born with natural ability or you are not, and that if you have to put in too much effort to accomplish something, you must not be good enough at it or smart enough to accomplish it. We will read about a girl who thought this way until a teacher changed her mind."

Brainstorming and Planning ("We Do")

"Let's list some things that we think that we are good at. For example, I am a pretty good basketball player, so I will put that."

Put up a web or brainstorm chart to list some of the students' responses.

"Now, let's list some things that we think we are not good at. I think I am not good at learning to speak a new language, like Spanish, so I will put that one."

Finish brainstorming with students.

Refer to the first list.

"How did we become good at the things on this list? Talk with your partners for a minute about how you have developed these abilities."

Give students 30 to 45 seconds to discuss with their partners.

"Were you born being good at these things or did you practice them? Did you do them a lot? I worked hard to become a good basketball player. I spent hours dribbling the ball and shooting free throws so that I would get better. I put in a lot of effort. I was not born with natural ability."

Refer to the second list.

"Now, let's talk about the things on this list. Why do you think you are not as good at these things?"

Give students 30 to 45 seconds to discuss with their partners.

"Sometimes, we think that if we are not good at something, we will never be good at it—no matter how much effort we put into it. But I have a book that shows we might be wrong."

Modeling ("I Do" and "We Do")

Show students the book *Thank you, Mr. Falker*.

"The main character in this book is a girl named Trisha. Pay attention to how she thinks about herself and what she is good at and what she is not so good at."

Read the book, stopping occasionally to discuss how Trisha feels about herself as an artist and as a reader and learner. Stop after the page that ends with these words: "You are going to read—I promise you that."

Display the first section of the Trisha's Beliefs About Herself chart on chart paper.

> "Let's look at how the author shows us how Trisha views herself as an artist and as a reader and learner. Here are some direct quotes from the book so far. Let's highlight words that tell us what she believes about herself."

Have students help you highlight the key words. Suggested answers are provided on page 6 of this handout.

Then, have students turn to a partner and discuss what they notice about each column.

> "Notice that Trisha thinks she is an excellent artist. She loves to draw. On the other hand, she thinks she is a terrible reader and calls herself 'dumb' quite a bit. These feelings cause her to hate school. She thinks she was born without natural ability in reading. Let's see whether Mr. Falker can help her change her beliefs about her reading and learning."

Read the rest of the book, stopping to discuss how Mr. Falker helps Trisha. Help students to realize that this book is about the author herself.

Display the second section of the Trisha's Beliefs About Herself chart on chart paper. Have students help you highlight key words that show how Trisha's beliefs have changed about herself as a learner and about school.

Then, have students turn to a partner to discuss what they notice.

> "Here is a girl who thought she wasn't smart and thought that no matter what anyone did, she would continue not to be smart. She felt that way from first grade all the way into fifth grade. That is five years! But then, Mr. Falker showed her she was wrong. She just needed someone to teach her, really teach her, how to read.
>
> "Now look at her. She wrote this book and many others."

Show some of Patricia Polacco's other books.

> "We can see that she is still a wonderful artist, which she started practicing when she was little. But she also writes good stories, which means she has learned to be a good reader and a good writer. She worked at it, and now she is famous for something she did not think she would ever be able to do. What do you think about this?"

Have students turn to a partner and discuss this question. Then, discuss it as a whole class.

Graphic Organizer ("I Do" and "We Do")

• Web or brainstormed lists of things students think do well and things students think they do not do well

• Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself planning document

Shared and Guided Writing ("We Do")

> "Can we follow Patricia Polacco's model? Is there something that you feel like you are not good at now but that you want to work at to become better? You can use something from the list we created earlier or something else."

Use the Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself sheet as students help you make a plan for changing your beliefs and working to improve your abilities within a specific area. An example of how to fill out this planning document is provided on pages 8 and 9 of this handout.

Independent Writing ("You Do")

After students work with you in the whole group on your planning and drafting, have each student or pair of students choose one of the abilities from your brainstormed list or from their own lives to plan and draft their own essay. Have students draft on the Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself sheet or in their writer's notebooks.

Optional: Put students' texts together to create a collaborative "Improving Myself" book.

Reflection ("We Do")

Guide self-reflection through key questions such as the following.

> "What did this activity tell you about natural ability and effort? Why is it important to know about these concepts?"

Optional Steps: Write and Reflect Again ("We Do" and "You Do")

Have students revise their drafts for effective word choice and sentences.

Then, have students self-reflect on their writing by asking themselves questions such as the following.

> "Who might be interested in reading my essay? What is the purpose of this piece of writing?
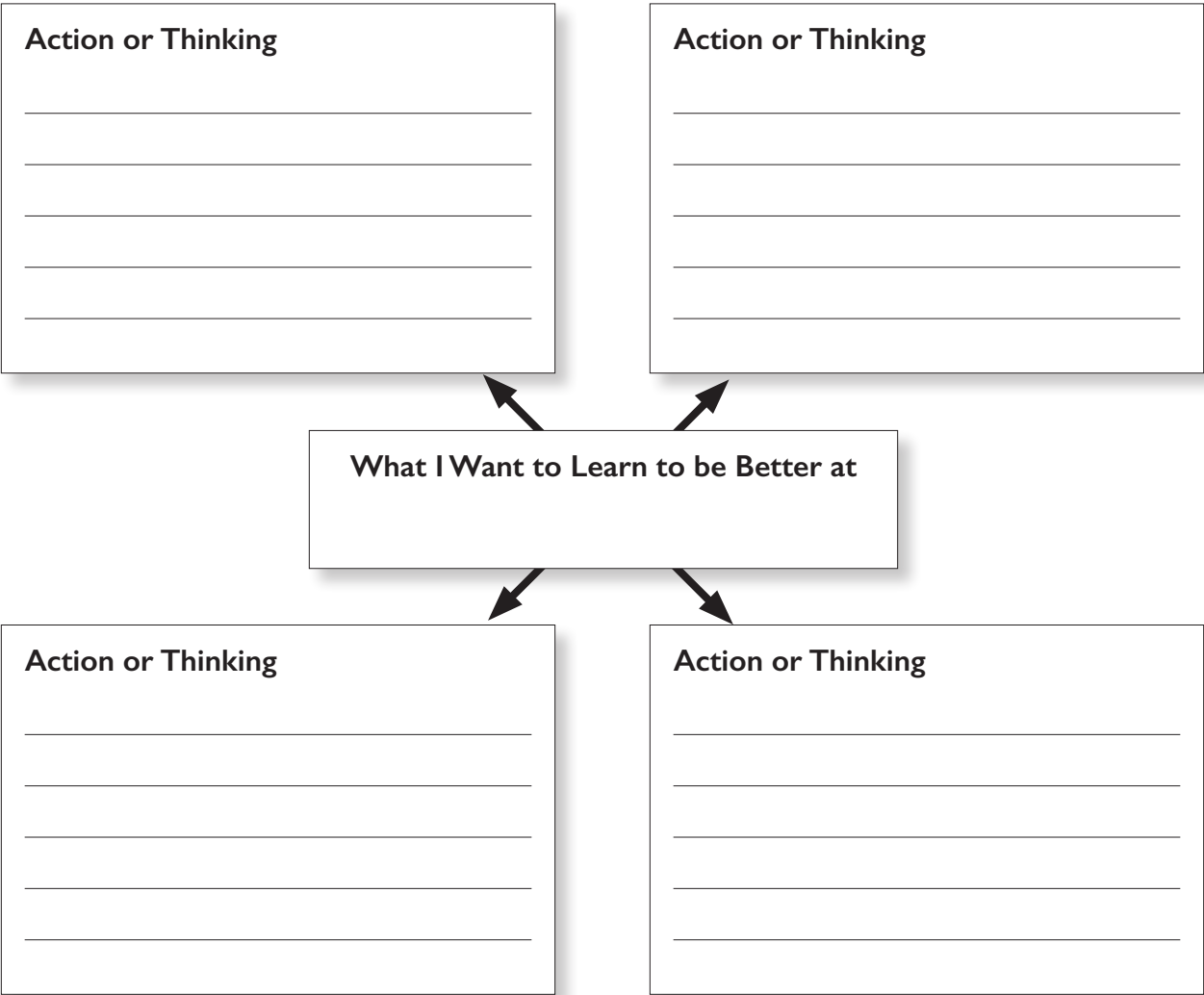
Trisha's Beliefs About Herself

Herself as an Artist	Herself as a Reader and Learner
Before Mr. Falker helps her	
"She loved being at school because she could draw. The other kids would crowd around her and watch her do her magic with the crayons." "The harder words got…the more and more time she spent drawing—how she loved to draw!" "She…drew more and more…" "Mr. Falker would stand behind Trisha whenever she was drawing and whisper, 'This is brilliant…absolutely brilliant.'"	"…she stayed alone in *Our Neighborhood*." "Trisha began to feel 'different.' She began to feel dumb." "'Gramma, do you think I'm…different?'" "'Do you think I'm smart?' Trisha didn't feel smart." "School seemed harder and harder now." "Reading was just plain torture." "She just knew she was dumb." "Maybe, though, the teachers and kids in her new school wouldn't know how dumb she was." "She was reading like a baby in the third grade!" "Now Trisha wanted to go to school less and less." "…she hated, hated, hated school." "Then, one day, she had to stand up and read, which she hated." "She felt completely alone." "'You think you're dumb, don't you? How awful for you to be so lonely and afraid.'"
After Mr. Falker helps her	
	"Always sounding them out. And that felt good." "And deep down she still felt dumb." "Almost as if it were magic, or as if light poured into her brain, the words and sentences started to take shape…" "Then, she held the book, honey and all, close to her chest." "…she was happy, so very happy." "The rest of the year became an odyssey of discovery and adventure…" "She learned to love school."

Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself

Something I think I am not good at

_____

Restating my belief about this ability

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I am willing to do to become better at it

Action or Thinking	**Action or Thinking**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What I Want to Learn to be Better at

Action or Thinking	**Action or Thinking**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

First draft of my "Improving Myself" essay

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Changing My Beliefs and Improving Myself

Something I think I am not good at

Speaking Spanish

Restating my belief about this ability

I think I have not had enough practice learning Spanish. I have practiced quite a bit with reading and writing Spanish, but I have not practiced enough with speaking it and learning new vocabulary. Those are things I want to get better at.

What I am willing to do to become better at it

Action or Thinking

I visited Honduras for 10 days. Most of the people I was around only spoke Spanish, and I started to get really good at understanding them and speaking to them, so I know if I just immerse myself in the language I will learn it.

Action or Thinking

I have a good friend who is bilingual and knows Spanish really well. When I go over to her house, I will ask her to speak to me only in Spanish for part of the time.

What I Want to Learn to be Better at
To speak Spanish with a lot of new vocabulary

Action or Thinking

I will get some children's books that are written in Spanish so that I can learn new vocabulary words. I will spend 30 minutes each night reading and saying the words.

Action or Thinking

I will have at least one conversation every day with a student in our class who speaks Spanish. I will ask the student to teach me at least one new word every day.

First draft of my "Improving Myself" essay

       For a long time, I have thought that I am not good at learning languages. I got pretty good at reading and writing Spanish, but I could not understand it well when I heard it, and I could not speak it at all. Now I know that if I work at it, I can be good at understanding and speaking Spanish. It just takes hard work and practice.

       When I was younger, I went to Honduras for 10 days. In Honduras, most of the people speak Spanish only, so I had to become good at understanding and speaking a little bit of Spanish. The longer I stayed there, the more words and phrases I picked up and spoke myself, so I know that if I just immerse myself in Spanish, I will be able to learn it.

       I know a few strategies to try to immerse myself in the language. First, I will have one of my good friends speak to me in Spanish more. When I visit her, I will ask her to speak to me only in Spanish for a little while. Next, I need to learn more vocabulary words, so I will go to the bookstore and buy a few children's books that can teach me vocabulary. I will spend at least 30 minutes each night reading and saying the new words from the books. Finally, a lot of students in this class can help me learn Spanish, so I will have at least one conversation every day with a student in Spanish. I will ask that student to teach me at least one word. That way, I will also learn new vocabulary words. I will use each of these strategies over the next six months to see whether my Spanish improves. I am definitely excited to get started!

Using Language Effectively in Literacy Classrooms

Noticing and Naming

One way we use language is to **notice what is happening around us and then name it**. The following examples show how you can model noticing and naming for your students and help your students do their own noticing and naming, which helps them to be more active, self-regulated readers and writers.

- "Did anyone notice _____?"

- "I see you know how to _____."

- "Remember the first week when we had to work really hard at _____? Now you do it automatically."

- "You know what I heard you doing just now? You may not have realized it."

- "Tell me how it went. What went well? What questions were asked?"

- "What did yo notice? Did any _____ surprise you?"

Creating Identities

This type of language helps students **discover who they are and who they can become**. This language can help students develop their identities as learners, readers, writers, etc.

- "As [writers, poets, readers, analysts, thinkers, scientists, etc.], how should we handle this?"

- In response to problematic behavior: "That is not like you."

- "I wonder if, as a [writer, poet, reader, etc.], you are ready for this."

- "I bet you are proud of yourself."

- "What are you doing as a [writer, poet, reader, etc.] today?"

- "What have you learned most recently as a [writer, poet, reader, etc.]?"

Supporting Autonomy and Agency

This type of language allows students to **take control of their learning and develop internalized motivation**.

- "How did you figure that out?"

- "What problems did you come across today?"

- "How are you planning to go about this?"

- "Where are you going with this [piece of writing, line of thinking, discussion, etc.]?"

- "You really have me interested in this [character, story, idea, etc.] because of _____, and if you _____, I will get an even stronger sense of what you are trying to accomplish."

- "It seems to me that you made a conscious choice to [use these specific words, include that detail, etc.]."

- "Why _____?"

Developing Ability to Generalize and Make Connections

The purpose of this language is to help students **stretch their current thinking**. This type of language invites students to think critically about their learning and their own use of language. It also helps students make connections between ideas, texts, experiences, knowledge, etc. One method is to play with language and its rules (use nonsense rhymes, parody, etc.). See the following examples for more ideas.

- "One thing that people do when they _____ is think of what they know. [Writers, Poets, Readers, etc.] do this, too. Let's try it."

- "How else _____?"

- "That is like _____."

- "What if _____?"

Constructing Knowledge

We want students to **contemplate, wonder, and consider what it means to know something**. Using language like in the following examples gets students thinking about their own thinking and what it means to be knowledgeable. As you can see in the last example, this type of language also can prompt students to question others' knowledge. We want students to be able to explain their thinking and provide evidence.

- "Let's see if I have this right." Then summarize what a student or group of students has said.

- "Thanks for straightening me out."

- "That is an interesting way of looking at it. I had not thought about it that way. I will have to think about it some more."

- "How did you know?"

- "How could we check?"

- "Would you agree with that?"

Creating a Community of Learners

This type of language **creates the sense of a collaborative environment** in which we support one another in learning. We look to one another as fellow readers, writers, and thinkers who can provide ideas, make suggestions, demonstrate skills, etc.

- "We _____."

- "Who else would _____?"

- "Any compliments?"

- "I wonder _____."

- "Are there other ways to think about that?"

- "What are you thinking? Stop and talk to your neighbor about it."

- "You managed to figure that out with each other's help. How did you do that?"

- "That just reminded me of something. Thank you. Let me write it down."

Adapted from Johnston, 2004.

Scenarios to Practice Language Use

Four scenarios from literacy classrooms are provided below. Imagine that you are the teacher in each of these scenarios. Using Handout 7 as a reference, write the language you would use to support students' motivation, thinking, and learning.

Scenario	Your Response
Your classroom does not seem to be functioning well. Students yell. They constantly bicker and fight with one another. They compare their performance to see who is smarter or better. How can you get the classroom working better as a community?	
Your students struggle to use text evidence. They respond to inference questions and other higher-level questions with random connections that have nothing to do with what the text says. You want to motivate students to go back to the text to find evidence for their answers.	
Your students seem to grasp what you teach related to reading, but this knowledge doesn't transfer to their own writing. How can you help students make the connection between reading and their own writing?	
Several of your students struggle with writing—even with writing a complete sentence. These students have no motivation to write and do not see themselves as capable of effective written communication. How can you get them motivated to write?	

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