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Krista Griffin begins *Listening to the Voices of Boys: Exploring the Motivation of Primary Boys to Engage in Reading* by telling about her motivation for studying the patterns of motivation in young boys. As a first grade teacher who was confident in her figurative "bag of tricks" for motivating readers, she was taken aback when at a parent-teacher conference for her own son, she was told that her son may lack reading motivation. When asking her son why he didn't tell her that what she was doing didn't motivate him, he simply replied: "you never asked me" (p. xiv). The conversation with her son caused her to realize that her "assumptions about what motivates boys to read were just that -- assumptions" (p. xiv). In *Listening to the Voices of Boys,* she works hard to disrupt the common misconception that boys do not like to read. She suggests that it is critical that classroom teachers learn about what she defines as the students' *motivational mosaic* and use this information to formulate a plan that will provide engaging reading opportunities. The seven chapters that follow provide background and ideas on how a
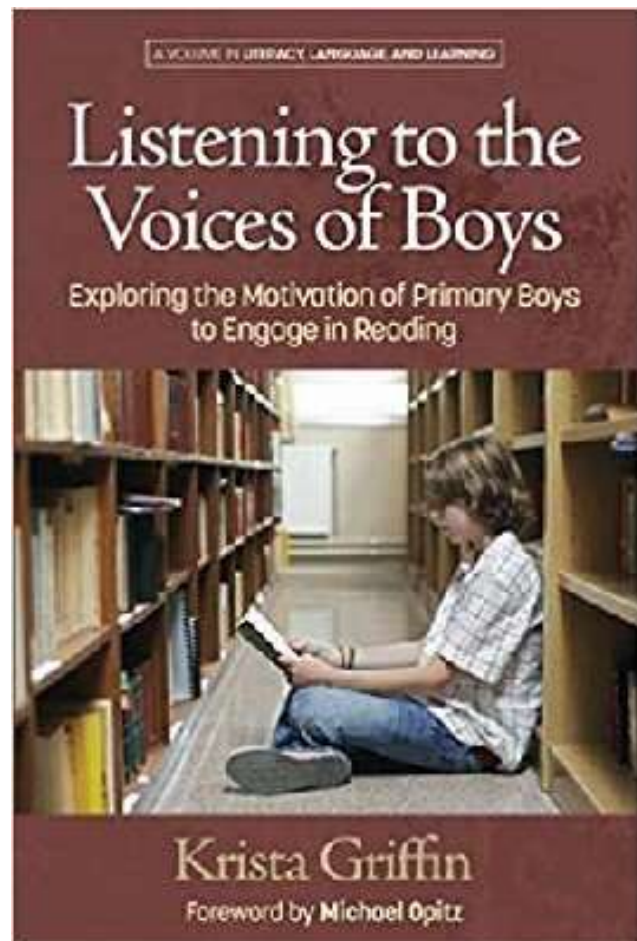
teacher may increase motivation in the classroom. Griffin addresses aspects of value, self-efficacy, interest, and choice as influences on motivation by providing activities that are a mix of ideas from other sources as well as from her own personal experience.

There is a long history of and interest in learning about the relationship between motivation and reading, so the topic of this book is not new. However, Griffin offers some thought-provoking insights and perspectives that may be of interest to both new and veteran teachers. Griffin's technique to assess motivation is noteworthy. She uses a method that is adapted from Clark and Moss's (2001) mosaic approach. The intent of the mosaic approach is for the teacher to utilize a series of active and accessible tools, such as allowing children to take photographs, engage in conversations, and conduct observations to learn about the child. After the initial step of gathering the information, the second step is to pull together that data for the purpose of reflection and action.

Griffin's motivational mosaic approach involves four steps: observation, a bookmaking activity, a shoulder-to-shoulder interview, and a create-your-thoughts art activity. For each of these steps, Griffin provides guiding questions, examples, and forms to assist in conducting the assessment. She contends that motivation is a multi-faceted construct, and she is not alone in this assertion. In fact, the term *motivation* is not consistently defined, even among reading researchers (Conradi, Jang, & McKenna, 2011). During this assessment, Griffin attends to many commonly recognized aspects of motivation. For example, during the shoulder-to-shoulder interview, she suggests that you learn about the student's *attitude* by prompting with "tell me how you feel about reading" (p. 19). The *self-efficacy* aspect of reading is accessed with the question "would you describe yourself as a great reader, a good reader, an ok reader, or a not so good reader?"

(p. 18). Griffin also addresses *goals* with the question "why do people read?" and *value* with the question "is it important to be a good reader in life?" (p. 18). These aspects of motivational can be measured in elementary children using other available tools (Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2013; McKenna & Kear, 1990); however, Griffin's motivational mosaic approach provides an alternative assessment method that some early childhood teachers may find more developmentally appropriate than measures for older students (e.g., Henk, Marinak, & Melnick, 2012; Henk & Melnick, 1995).

Not only does Griffin provide a method for assessing, but she also provides a system for coding and analyzing the collected data. The analysis involves studying each piece of data, generating codes that are then used in cross-case analysis with all pieces of data collected. She suggests that these codes can then be used to generate themes and grouped into categories that will inform instruction. While Griffin does not identify specific variables of motivation that the teachers should look for, she suggests that the teacher look for themes (i.e., quiet environment) within the particular class to determine how to address the motivational needs within a class.

Some reader may express concern at the amount of time needed to conduct the assessment, data analysis, and interpretation process. Griffin addresses these concerns, as well as the point that analyzing that data may cause some anxiety among teachers. She provides clear, concise, and practical steps for teachers to interpret data sets and uncover the motivational factors in the classroom.

Griffin also explores external influences (e.g., social) for a lack of engagement among boys for reading. For example, she suggests that limited role models exist for boys reading; and therefore, boys may not view reading as a high-value activity. She provides suggestions that could be used to promote reading

motivation at the classroom, school, or even district level, such as exposing young boys to male mentors who value reading. Regarding the value of reading, Griffin purports, "if we truly want to help boys understand how reading relates to our lives, teachers need to consider making explicit connections between how the reading tasks at hand relate to their future" (p. 47). She provides examples and frames for the conversations that teachers may have with the whole class or individual students about their purpose, relevance, or value of a reading-related activity. For example, "today we will do_____….this is going to help you gain skills in _____ which will help you later when you want to _____" (p. 47).

Griffin provides many suggestions for building reluctant readers' self-efficacy, or the belief in "whether or not they can be successful in completing the task they are given" (p. 53). She presents suggestions that can be used to scaffold young readers' reading experiences, including differentiating the reading tasks, as well as instructional grouping ideas (e.g., peer modeling) to make the task more manageable for the reader and build a sense of self-confidence. She emphasizes, "if reading is too hard, it reduces feelings of self-efficacy, leaving boys feeling they cannot be successful, so why try?" (p. 54). The author's clear suggestions for building self-efficacy in the classroom will be useful for teachers who have exhausted their existing resources.

Although some readers may benefit from controlled reading experiences, Griffin notes that other readers may respond positively to reading activities that reflect their personal interests or choices. In her process of gathering data, she found that "although they were clear in their desire to have autonomy in their response, boys rarely (if ever) were given a choice in how to respond" (p. 72). Griffin provides strategies for teachers to provide choices, such as a tic-tac-toe board of options, as well as specific response ideas that may

inspire instruction choices in the classroom (e.g., book clubs, book reviews, and interactive notebooks). These ideas are not exhaustive but rather provide a springboard for veteran teachers to revisit ideas that they once used or to take away a new idea for their reluctant readers. Griffin also suggests that reluctant readers may benefit from explicit instruction in book selection, which could help alleviate the frustration experienced searching for a book, genre, or author that the reader may enjoy. While the idea of choice in reading is not new, specific approaches geared to young male readers can be useful for some teachers.

The reading environment may influence readers' motivation: "if we know reading at school is important and we want to ensure this practice is as productive as possible, creating an environment as close to ideal reading conditions as possible seems logical" (p. 80). Rather than providing a list of potentially motivating environments, however, Griffin provides an easy-to-follow series of class activities in which the students can voice their opinions about the classroom environment. In her Design the Environment activity, students have an opportunity to draw their ideal learning environment on one side of the page, then on the other half they draw a classroom that reflects their ideal environment. As a class they compare these ideas to help design a classroom that accommodates the students' needs. While it is not possible to meet every student's desire, teachers should strive to balance the range of desires in a class. Griffin's collective approach to creating the environment is unique and will be welcome to teachers who are looking for ways to make their classroom more child-centered.

The book concludes by unpacking the five reasons that Protacio (2012) identified as what motivates upper elementary English learners to read. Based on the findings of a four student classroom case study, Protacio identified five motivators for English learners: Sociocultural Environment, Integrative

Orientation, Instrumental Motivation, Perceived Competence, and Reading Materials. After describing each reason, Griffin provides anecdotal recounts of her experience with English learners, then finally provides some suggestions for addressing Protacio's reasons with primary grade students. For example, a suggestion for addressing the Sociocultural Environment includes supporting families to support students' needs for social networks. Her examples for supporting integrative orientation include the use of text sets and after school clubs. Griffin recommends "taking what we know about good practices for all boys and modifying the practices to meet the needs of English learners" (p.108). For example, earlier in the book, for boys who struggle to see the value of reading, Griffin suggests explicitly pointing out the purpose of reading activities. In the same way, for English learners, Griffin suggests "we can explicitly state how reading helps them in concrete ways" (p.106). While this chapter may provide some quick ways to adjust a teacher's efforts to impact motivation for *young* English learners, it should be noted that the suggestions are based solely on Protacio's interview study of four boys and two girls pertaining to *upper-grade* boys and girls. So while the ideas are useful, the reader should be cognizant that younger readers may be motivated in different ways and that Protacio's findings should not be generalized to all English learners. Teachers particularly interested in finding ways to motivate young English learners in their classroom may need to explore other research-based approaches for teaching young English learners.

Listening To the Voices of Boys is a worthwhile read for primary grade teachers. Throughout the book, the author shares her personal experiences, her classroom research, and her review of other research to stress the importance of debunking the popular belief that boys are not motivated to read. She also unpacks the complex construct of motivation to determine the factors of motivation that may be hindering young boys' engagement in the classroom. Griffin's mix of practical, easy-to-implement strategies include good reminders as well as fresh ideas for veteran teachers. . Griffin's clear directions, along with examples and insights, make the mosaic assessments easy to employ and the data manageable to interpret. Because "…every boy is different; therefore, every boy's motivation mosaic will look different" the author does not provide a prescription for curing limited motivation (p. xv). Rather, she offers some suggestions for how primary grade teachers may better understand a lack of motivation and address it.

While this book can certainly help primary grade teachers with ideas for engaging primary grade boys in reading, these ideas should not be limited to boys. *Listening to the Voices of Boys* could be a resource for all teachers, so they might learn about the motivational mosaic of every child, and the book could inspire instructional change that promotes greater engagement in reading for any reluctant reader.

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