

Essential Conditions for Flow in Reading

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What is flow?

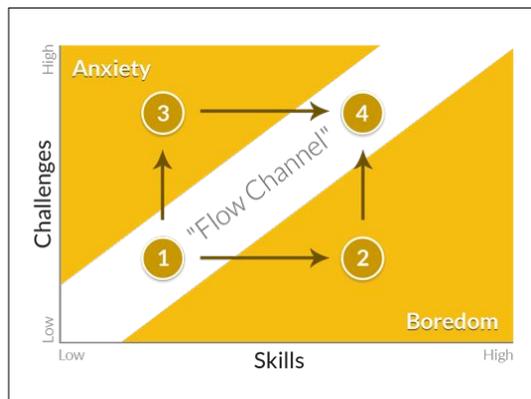
This is not flow.



Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991). *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*. New York, N.Y.: HarperPerennial.

Flow Defined

- Clear goals.
- Immediate feedback.
- Skills match challenge.
- Concentration.
- Sense of control.
- Problems forgotten.
- Self-consciousness fades.
- Altered sense of time.
- Autotelic experience.
- (Intrinsic Reward).



Most Common Flow

- Delle & Massimini (1988) claim that the most common flow experience is...
 - is reading!

Flow Producing Texts

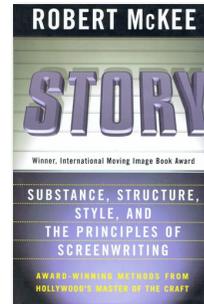
- Texts that produce flow (Mcquillan and Conde, 1996)
 - Texts that students read for pleasure.
 - With assigned texts, flow occurred more often when students had an interest in the text.
 - Flow also came when students perceived personal or intellectual benefits coming from the texts.
 - Fiction produced more flow than non-fiction.

The Reading Trance

- Nell (1988) likens flow in reading to a “reading trance.”
- The reading trance is most strongly associated with reading fiction.
- Narrative non-fiction” (Wolfe, 1975) can have the same flow-producing effect.
- Narrative non-fiction is “a story of true events,” where “story” means that the text expresses the basic elements of story grammar.

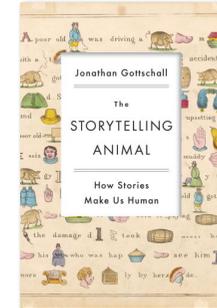
Story Grammar

“A Story Event creates meaningful change in the life situation of a character that is expressed and experienced in terms of a value and **ACHIEVED THROUGH CONFLICT.**”



Story Grammar

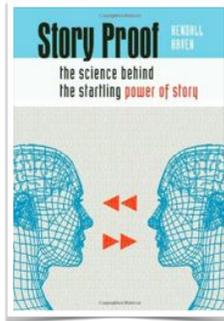
**Character +
Predicament +
Attempted
Extrication**



Story Grammar

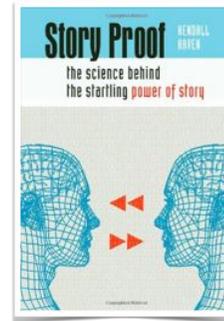
Story Proof: The science behind the startling power of story.

Kendall Haven (2007)



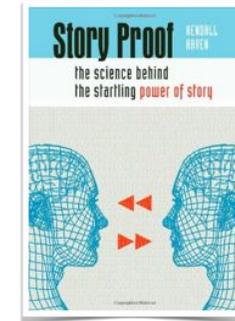
Story Grammar

- Character: the main actor in the story.
- Character traits: that which make the character unusual, unique, and interesting.
- Goal: what the character wants and needs.



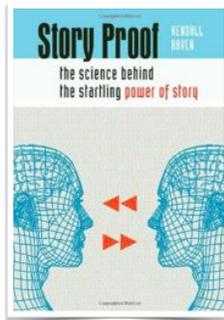
Story Grammar

- Motive: the vital reasons why a character faces conflicts, problems, risks, and dangers.
- Conflicts and problems: that which blocks the character from reaching the goal.



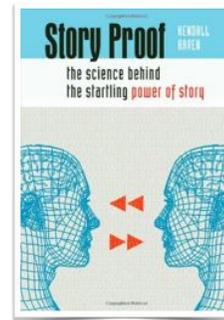
Story Grammar

- Risks and danger: the suspense producing probability and consequences of failure.
- Struggles: the internal and external fights required to reach the goal.



Story Grammar

- Sensory details: the images and pictures that help readers “see” a story.



Flow States

- Factors unique to reading flow states from McQuillan and Conde (1996) Flow readers...
 - have prior interest in the subject, author, or topic.
 - acquire new or forgotten information that
 - benefits them personally or intellectually.
 - feel the rewards of flow when they flexibly control their reading pace (Nell, 1988).

Flow and Rewards

- Mcquillan (1996) claims that the use of rewards does not cause improvement in reading attitudes, achievement, or habits.

Flow and Rewards

- Donalyn Miller, *The Book Whisperer* (2009)
 - has never seen students developing long-term reading habits through incentive programs.

Flow and Rewards

- Reading is its own reward.
 - Extrinsic rewards contradict this premise.
 - No research support for “rewards for reading.”
 - Let's advocate “reading as its own reward.”

Flow Limiters

- Assigned texts that students are not interested in.
 - Difficult, irrelevant, or boring texts.
 - We can limit flow by doing too many vocabulary comprehension questions.

Flow To-Do List

- Give students freedom to choose stories.
- Learn what students enjoy. Guide them accordingly.
- Give credit when Ss quit books for good reasons.
- Encourage students to read widely and narrowly.
 - Give them resources to make such choices.

Flow To-Do List

- Find or create non-fiction stories with story grammar.
- Poll student interest, and do related stories.
 - Make a list of 10 people that you admire.
 - Then prioritize the top 5.
 - Next, make statements about what they did.
 - Find and read stories about them.

Flow and Reading Amount

- How can we facilitate flow to promote more reading?
 - Kirchoff (2013) did not find this correlation.
 - But we need to keep asking the question so we can help our students enjoy reading even more.
 - Kirchoff, C. (2013). L2 extensive reading and flow: Clarifying the relationship. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 25(2), 2.

Thank You

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