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**Contributions of Reading Self-Concept, Intrinsic Motivation and Reading Value  
to Sixth graders' Purposeful Reading: The Mediating Role of the Task Model**

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**Abstract:**

This study explores the relationships between sixth graders' motivation for purposeful reading, their task understanding skills, and their comprehension of written texts. More specifically, we investigated the role of students' understanding of reading tasks as a mediator of the relationships between reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation, reading value, and comprehension performance. Two-hundred and thirty-one sixth graders completed a purposeful reading motivation questionnaire, four tasks assessing their understanding of reading tasks, and four tasks assessing their comprehension of written texts. Intrinsic motivation and self-concept predicted comprehension performance but did not predict task-modeling skills. Mediation analyses showed that task-modeling skills only mediated the relationship between

reading value and comprehension performance. The contributions of various dimensions of adolescents' motivation for reading, their task-modeling skills to their reading comprehension are discussed in light of current models of purposeful reading.

**Keywords:** Reading Self-Concept, Intrinsic Reading Motivation, Reading Value, Purposeful Reading, Task Model.

## **Introduction**

Purposeful reading can be defined as one's ability to use documents to achieve their purposes (OECD, 2019). Purposeful reading encompasses a broad range of self-generated or externally assigned goals such as finding facts, learning about a topic of interest, or reflecting on controversial issues. When the reading task is assigned by a third party, readers must create a coherent representation of the task demands, or 'task model' (Rouet & Britt, 2011), which is a key challenge in itself (Britt et al., 2018). To support students' academic success, teachers need to make sure that students understand what they have to do and how to do it. Helping students develop the set of skills that help them understand the task demands is no trivial matter, especially for sixth graders transitioning from primary to secondary school. We define task-modeling skills as a set of skills related to language comprehension, metacognition and experience with purposeful reading tasks that support one's accurate understanding of the task demands. In addition, allocating efforts to understand the task instructions can be demanding and teachers also need to ensure that students are engaged and motivated to complete the task (Guthrie *et al.*, 2012b). Indeed, the impact of motivation on reading comprehension, most notably intrinsic motivation, self-concept or reading value, has been well-documented in research (Guthrie *et al.*, 2004; Retelsdorf *et al.*, 2014; Xiao, 2022). Studies have also pointed out that intrinsic motivation, self-concept and reading value do not affect reading comprehension in the same way (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010).

Yet, little is known about the mechanisms that underlie the association of motivation with reading outcomes. The present study explores the assumption that students' understanding of the task demands may act as a mediating factor. Understanding the interplay between these variables represents a key leverage point for the development of training programs that support students' reading literacy (Dweck, 2017; Martin, 2023).

***Purposeful reading: the role of the task model***

Purposeful reading, also called ‘task-oriented reading’ (Vidal-Abarca et al., 2010), or ‘goal focusing reading’ (McCrudden & Schraw, 2007) may be defined as reading to fulfill a specific goal, such as answering questions for a class (Rouet et al., 2017). Rouet and Britt's (2011) Multiple-Document Task-based Relevance Assessment and Content Extraction model (MD-TRACE) construed purposeful reading as a five-step cycle that unfolds iteratively, guided by self-regulation mechanisms. Students first need to understand the task instructions to create a mental representation of the task demands, or task model (Step 1; Rouet & Britt, 2011). A reader’s task model serves as a basis to decide whether to look for information or to rely on one’s prior knowledge (Step 2). Then, students engage with the texts at hand, extract information (Step 3) to produce the expected answer, or task product (Step 4). Students may then compare the task product with their initial expectations to decide if the product is adequate or if they should recycle through previous steps (Step 5; Rouet & Britt, 2011).

The REading as a problem-SOLVing model (RESOLV, Rouet et al., 2017) further specified the mental representations elaborated prior to reading in relation with task goals and outcomes. RESOLV posits that students’ representations of the task context and task demands contribute to reading decisions. The context of a reading task includes multiple components such as the request (*i.e.* the task instructions), the requester, the available resources and obstacles, the audience (*i.e.* who will assess the task product), and the self which relates to the students’ internal resources (*e.g.* self-efficacy, values, topic interest). In school, students interpret this context to form a context model. Then, they use their context model and their prior experience, knowledge, cognitive and metacognitive strategies to shape their understanding of the task demands (*i.e.* form a task model). Both the MD-TRACE and RESOLV models emphasize that creating a task model requires a set of skills related to language comprehension, metacognitive knowledge and strategies, and depends on self dimensions such as motivation.

Studies have shown that a coherent task model can improve purposeful reading performance for children, adolescents and adults (Ayroles *et al.*, 2021; Llorens & Cerdán, 2012; Oger & Sanchiz, 2025; Schoor *et al.*, 2021). Particularly, a recent research study showed that enhancing the task model of students aged 12-14 is important for multiple documents activity achievement, and how explicit instructions and goals are necessary for secondary students' success (Griffin *et al.*, 2024). These studies have assessed students' task model in relation to a specific task, either prior to solving the task, with open-ended questions such as "In order to solve this question correctly, what must you do?" (Ayroles *et al.*, 2021; Llorens & Cerdán, 2012; Oger & Sanchiz, 2025), or after the task completion (Schoor *et al.*, 2021).

Thus far however, it remains unclear whether one's understanding of task demands represents an independent skill or whether it is simply a by-product of reading comprehension. Some dimensions of task understanding may transfer across particular situations (*e.g.* whether the task requires the location of a factual detail, a causal explanation or one's critical appraisal of a complex situation). In addition, dimensions of students' motivation such as their interest, self-concept and values may impact their engagement of cognitive resources in the reading task (Britt *et al.*, 2018; List & Alexander, 2017; Rouet *et al.*, 2017). Hence, motivation stands out as a key leverage to understand students' purposeful reading behavior and outcomes.

### ***Reading motivation: a multidimensional concept***

Motivation has received a lot of attention in educational research over the past decades (Wigfield & Koenka, 2020) as it can affect academic performance (Guthrie *et al.*, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000) and particularly reading comprehension (Guthrie *et al.*, 2012b; Rosenzweig & Wigfield, 2017). Wigfield and Guthrie defined reading motivation as 'the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading' (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000, p. 405). Motivation in reading is a complex theoretical construct that subsumes several dimensions, such as self-concept, intrinsic motivation and task value

(Davis et al., 2018). Prior research suggests that self-concept and intrinsic motivation are rather stable traits at the onset of secondary education (Hoge et al., 1990; Miyamoto et al., 2020). The status of task value is less clear, as it depends both on the individual and on the particular context (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). However, using a bifactor model with 169 undergraduate students, Part et al. (2023) found that 71.2% of the variability in task value was due to trait variation (*vs.* state variation).

According to the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), student's behavior is driven by expectancies for success and subjective values. In this theory, expectancies refer to the anticipation of either succeeding in a particular task, or failing it. Self-concept and expectancies are closely related and jointly contribute to driving student's behavior during the task (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995). Reading self-concept refers to students' perception of their competence to accomplish reading tasks (Retelsdorf et al., 2011). Self-concept encompasses (i) a cognitive dimension, referring to perceived competence and representing an individual's evaluation of their abilities (Harter, 1982); and (ii) an affective dimension, related to self-esteem (Covington, 1984) and shaped by social norms and comparison (Coleman & Fults, 1982). Self-concept is argued to be domain-specific and a relatively stable trait as compared to self-efficacy, which is highly context- and task-dependent (Bong & Clark, 1999). Studies have shown positive correlations between reading self-concept and performance in purposeful reading in 10-year-old (Xiao, 2022) and in 11-year-old students (Retelsdorf et al., 2014).

The phrase "task value" denotes the set of reasons why a student finds a task worthwhile. Values are essential to set up and pursue learning goals, because students must find meaning in what they do. According to the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT, Eccles et al., 1983) task value involves four components: (i) attainment value, which is one's personal representation of the task relevance, (ii) utility value, which is the importance students attach to the task to fulfill

their personal goals, (iii) cost, which refers to the amount of effort required given the benefits the task will provide, and (iv) intrinsic value, which refers to personal interest and enjoyment in the task (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). Research has shown that reading value can impact students' behavior and comprehension (Anmarkrud & Bråten, 2009, Jang, 2008; Raccanello et al., 2022). Raccanello et al. (2022) examined the impact of 10-year-old students' reading value on their performance in a purposeful reading task and their perceived boredom during the task. Participants had to read three online texts and were asked to handwrite a short essay to answer the question 'Are videogames beneficial or not?'. Results showed that low reading value was associated with higher boredom, lower engagement and poorer performance. Results also showed a positive and direct effect of reading value on online multiple-text comprehension.

Intrinsic value, defined as the enjoyment one feels or expects to feel when doing the task, is related to intrinsic motivation, a central aspect of self-determined motivation, which drives spontaneous behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2022). For example, students will decide to engage in a reading task because they love the experience of reading. Intrinsic motivation is a fairly stable trait that reflects a predisposition to reengage with certain objects or activities over time, demonstrating a more enduring motivational state (Krapp, 1993). A survey study with 3354 university students examined the relationship between self-determined motivation and academic performance. Results revealed a strong relationship ( $\beta = .75, p < .001$ ) between the Self Determination Index and academic performance (Trigueros et al., 2020). Intrinsic motivation can also significantly influence reading comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2007) and purposeful reading (Andreassen & Bråten, 2010; Naumann et al., 2019). Andreassen and Bråten (2010) showed that 10.5-year-old students' intrinsic reading motivation was positively correlated to their performance on factual and inferential purposeful reading tasks.

Naumann (2019) also showed that students with higher intrinsic motivation spent more time on difficult tasks using PISA 2009 computer-based reading literacy assessment data.

All in all, research suggests a profound impact of intrinsic motivation, self-concept and/or task value on students' performance in academic tasks involving reading and comprehending texts. However, whether these dimensions can differentially affect specific aspects of the reading experience has been little documented so far. Guo *et al.* (2016) showed that ninth grade students' intrinsic value predicted effort, whereas students' self-concept predicted academic achievement in math. Studies about reading comprehension highlighted that intrinsic motivation and reading value should be more linked to effort and perseverance, whereas self-concept would be a better predictor of academic success (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2020). Yet, the specific contribution of each dimension of motivation is still unclear.

Based on List and Alexander's (2017) Cognitive Affective Engagement Model (CAEM, List & Alexander, 2017), Strømsø *et al.* (2020) found that students with high topic interest and positive attitudes toward the task engaged more in text selection and integrated more information in their writing. Although based on a different terminology, these findings suggest an impact of motivation on both readers' strategies and their outcomes. However, the unique contribution of intrinsic motivation, self-concept, reading value remains to be explored, as their distinct effects on task-modeling skills and purposeful reading performance are still unclear. In the present study, we explore whether the influence of motivational dimensions may be mediated by students' understanding of reading tasks, considered a specific dimension of reading proficiency. We argue that task-modeling skills are influenced by changes in motivation and, in turn, influence reading performance. Thus, task-modeling skills could mediate the relationship between self-concept, reading value, intrinsic motivation and purposeful reading performance.

### ***Research questions and hypotheses***

Purposeful reading requires sustained effort and decision-making (Britt et al., 2018), which involves readers' motivation towards the goal. Based on the expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 1983) and the RESOLV model of purposeful reading (Rouet et al., 2017), this study aims to examine the relationships between reading self-concept, reading value, and performance in reading comprehension tasks. As argued earlier, we consider intrinsic motivation to have a substantial overlap with intrinsic value. Therefore, only attainment value, utility value and cost were measured to examine reading value relationships.

The main objectives of the present study were to examine the unique contributions of self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to (i) purposeful reading performance and (ii) task-modeling skills, and (iii) the role of task-modeling skills in the relationship between the three dimensions of motivation and purposeful reading performance in sixth-graders.

Our research questions and hypotheses were as follows:

RQ1: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance? Consistent with prior research, we predicted positive relations between the three motivation dimensions and students' performance.

RQ2: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to task-modeling skills? The RESOLV model highlights that self-efficacy, values and interest affect the context model and, subsequently, the elaboration of the task model (Rouet et al., 2017). Therefore, we expected a positive contribution, with not specific prediction regarding the respective dimensions of motivation.

RQ3: Do task-modeling skills mediate the relationships between self-concept, intrinsic motivation, reading value and purposeful reading performance?' Prior research has shown that

the quality of the task model significantly affects purposeful reading performance (Ayroles et al., 2021; Llorens & Cerdán, 2012; Oger & Sanchiz, 2025). In addition, the RESOLV model posits a relation between the dimensions of motivation and the elaboration of the task model. Hence, we expected task-modeling skills to mediate the relationships between the three dimensions of motivation and purposeful reading performance, resulting in a combination of direct and indirect effects.

## **Methods**

### ***Sample***

340 French 6<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the present study. Students were recruited in schools enrolled in an educational innovation program conducted by the regional education authority (Territoire Numérique Éducatif). Students were included in the analysis if they completed all the tasks correctly, without the assistance of an adult or a peer. Data from 104 students were excluded either because they did not participate in one of the two sessions, because they failed to comply with the instructions (missing responses, response monotony, random responses), or because their caregivers denied permission to use the data. The final sample consisted of 231 students ( $M_{age} = 11.14$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ , 46.7% female).

The required sample size was estimated using G\*Power (GPower 3.1, Faul et al., 2009). In order to test the relationships between motivation, task-modeling skills and purposeful reading performance we used linear multiple regression ('Fixed model, R<sup>2</sup> deviation from zero', with an effect size (f) of 0.15, an alpha level of 0.05, and a power of 0.95). This effect size was chosen based on conventional benchmarks for medium effects in educational research, where relationships between motivational constructs and reading outcomes tend to fall within this range (Kraft, 2020). Thus, the chosen parameters ensured adequate power to detect theoretically and empirically expected effects, leading to a required sample size of 138 participants. We oversampled to accommodate all the schools and classes that expressed an interest in

participating in the study, as part of the broader educational innovation program. The study was reviewed and approved by the local Ethics Committee (reference blinded for review).

### *Material and measures*

The material and analysis code of this study are available in OSF: [https://osf.io/j82gf/?view\\_only=8975e99efa3a4dd09a8ddf38fce45d23](https://osf.io/j82gf/?view_only=8975e99efa3a4dd09a8ddf38fce45d23)

#### *Purposeful reading motivation questionnaire*

A motivation questionnaire targeting purposeful reading in a school context for French sixth graders was designed by the authors for the present study, as no validated questionnaire assessing motivation for purposeful reading existed in French. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate 23 assertions covering reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation, and reading value, on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The questionnaire items were inspired by validated instruments such as the Motivation to Read Questionnaire (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; *e.g.* “I read because I have to”), the Reading Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995; *e.g.* “I think I am a good reader”) or the Motivation for Reading Information Books (Guthrie *et al.*, 2012a; *e.g.* “I can find the main idea of a section in an information book for school”). Multiple reading contexts were presented: text comprehension, purposeful reading, and digital reading. For the study, the digital reading items were dropped since Cronbach’s alphas showed some of them correlated negatively. In the end, five items assessed self-concept, six items measured intrinsic reading motivation, and five items measured reading value (see Table 1). Original French items are presented in Table 16 in Appendix. Maximum scores for each dimension have been adjusted to 30 to standardize the scales across all dimensions, ensuring comparability of scores. All three dimensions showed

sufficient internal consistency: Cronbach's alphas were 0.75 for self-concept, 0.85 for intrinsic motivation, and 0.72 for reading value. A Confirmatory Factorial Analysis (CFA) was conducted for the final version of the questionnaire. Several fit indices were considered: Chi-square ( $X^2 = 223.35, p < .001$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .91), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = .90), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = .07). A good model fit is achieved when the Chi-square value is low, the fit indices (CFI and TLI) are greater than or equal to .90 (Carvalho et al., 2018), and the RMSEA is below .08 (Barrett, 2007).

**Table 1***English version of the 16 final items from the purposeful reading motivation questionnaire*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>English translation of the items</b>
	I understand well what I read
Reading self- concept (alpha = .75)	I read better than most of my classmates I am able to find information in a text I am able to identify the important information in a text I find it difficult to answer questions about a text
Intrinsic reading motivation (alpha = .85)	I only read when I have to, otherwise, I never read I like it when the teacher asks us to read a book during the holidays I feel good when I read I don't like to reread a passage of the text to make sure I've understood it I like classroom exercises that ask me to answer questions about documents I don't like reading multiple texts to find information
Reading value (alpha = .72)	I'm not sure I have enough energy to read multiple documents in class It's important to try to understand the texts I'm given to read I don't really see the point of reading the books from school (those given by the teachers, or those from the library, for example) Knowing how to search for information in written documents is important in everyday life Learning to find information in multiple texts will help me succeed in school

*Reading fluency test*

Reading fluency was included as a control variable in this study in order to ensure that students' performance was attributed to motivation rather than their basic reading skills. A standardized French fluency test (Lefavrais, 1986) was used to measure low-level reading processes. Students had three minutes to underline as many animal names as possible in a list of 486 French common nouns presented on three A4 pages (21x29.7cm). Participants were told

to read in the usual order (from left to right, without skipping words or lines). Each underlined animal name was scored one point. If a non-animal noun was underlined, one point was deducted. Average score for the fluency test was 67.74 ( $SD = 14.85$ ). Minimum and maximum scores were respectively 30 and 113, corresponding to the usual range for 6th graders.

### *Task-modeling skills assessment*

General task-modeling skills were assessed with four specific items implementing the “questions about the question” procedure (Llorens & Cerdán, 2012) to assess students' ability to correctly interpret the demands of purposeful reading tasks. Students were presented with a fictitious purposeful reading task involving a question (see Table 2). Instead of answering the question, they were asked to answer follow-up multiple-choice questions: “What is the interrogative word in the question?”, “What are the most important words?”, “What type of information do you have to find?”. The items were available for rereading, students could take as much time as they needed. The items involved content related to French sixth grade curriculum or to general knowledge familiar for 6<sup>th</sup> graders (*i.e.* “the great white shark”, “plants”, “solar airplane”, “the durian fruit”). Two items were long (*i.e.* “the great white shark” task, 47 words; “solar airplane”, 51 words), and two were short (*i.e.* the “Plants” task, 10 words; “the durian fruit”, 12 words) to ensure that they represent the different types of tasks that 6<sup>th</sup> graders can encounter in school settings. When participants selected the correct answer, the platform automatically assigned a score of 10 points. Conversely, if they chose an incorrect answer, a score of 0 point was automatically assigned. For each of the four items, participants could get a score between 0 to 30.

**Table 2***Items used for task-modeling skills assessment*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Original items (in French)</b>	<b>English translation</b>
The great white shark	Les requins blancs peuplent les océans depuis des millions d'années. C'est un animal prédateur mais il attaque rarement les humains. Il capture ses proies grâce à une mâchoire puissante remplie de dents pointues. Combien il y a-t-il de dents dans la gueule d'un grand requin blanc ?	White sharks have inhabited the oceans for millions of years. They are predatory animals, but they rarely attack humans. They capture their prey using a powerful jaw filled with sharp teeth. How many teeth are there in the mouth of a great white shark?
Plants	Comment font les plantes pour survivre à la sécheresse ?	How do plants survive drought?
Durian fruit	Pourquoi le durian est-il interdit dans certains lieux publics en Thaïlande ?	Why is durian forbidden in certain public places in Thailand?
Solar airplane	En 2016, l'avion Solar Impulse 2 réussissait l'exploit de faire le tour du monde en utilisant seulement l'énergie solaire. Il a parcouru 43041 km en 17 étapes uniquement grâce à l'énergie solaire. Mais où l'avion solaire a-t-il atterri à la fin de sa 17ème et dernière étape autour du monde ?	In 2016, the Solar Impulse 2 plane achieved the feat of flying around the world using only solar energy. It covered 43,041 km in 17 stages solely powered by solar energy. But where did the solar plane land at the end of its 17th and final stage around the world?

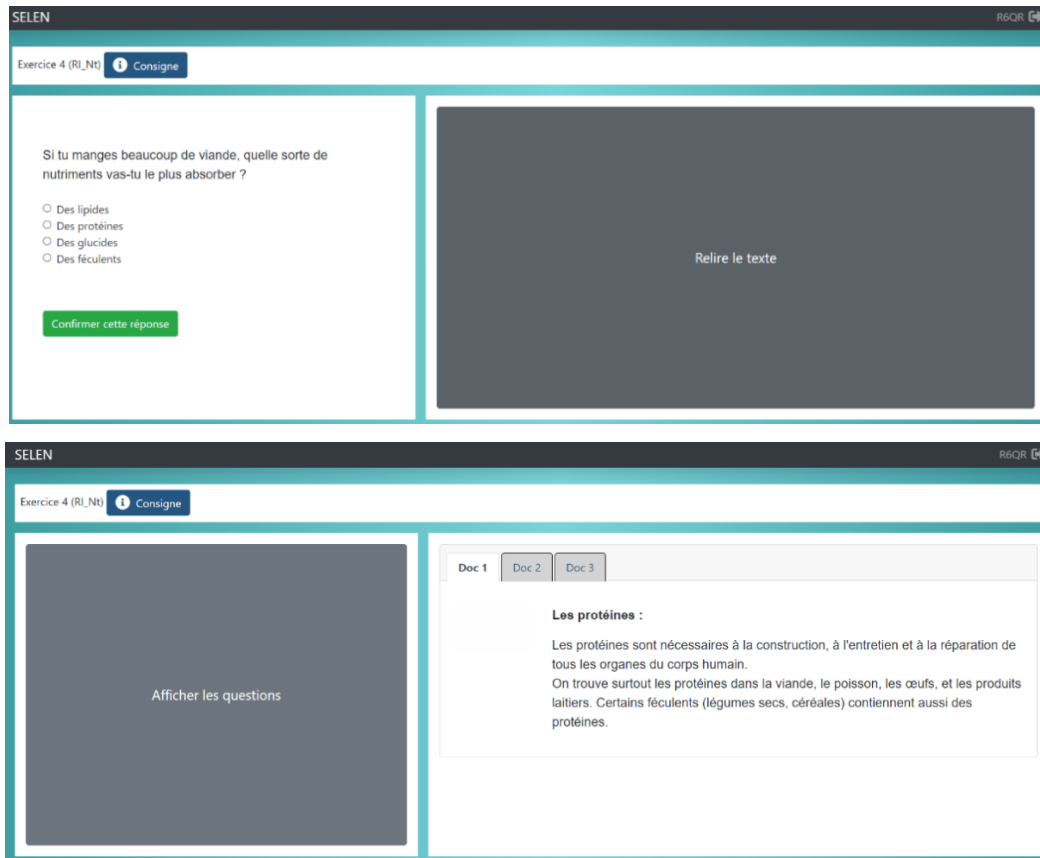
*Purposeful reading tasks*

Students performed four purposeful reading tasks in an online environment created for a more global research project (anonymized for the sake of review). Each purposeful reading task included three different short documents (texts around five lines in font size 12 for each)

in three different tabs. Students could interact with the different tabs to access the three texts. They had to use the texts to answer four inferential questions, that required to bridge domain knowledge with information extracted from the documents. For all questions except one, the answer could be found in one document. The questions and the documents were available the entire time. On a split screen (see Figure 1), students could see either the question, or the documents. They had to click on the left part of the screen to make the question appear (which made the documents disappear at the same time), and click on the right part of the screen to make the question disappear and access to the documents. Participants could switch from question to documents as many times as they wanted. They couldn't move on to the next question without selecting an answer, and could take as much time as they needed to complete the tasks. Task content was created based on the curriculum for sixth grade. Four themes were addressed, one per task: "Victor Hugo", "the sewers of Paris", "real tennis", "nutrients". Purposeful reading comprehension score was the total number of items correctly answered (0-160). Success rate was calculated from the score.

## Figure 1

*Example of a question and the texts for the purposeful reading task about nutrients. Screen capture from the web platform*



## ***Procedure***

The two 50-minute sessions were conducted with the entire class, in cooperation with the teacher, during regular class hours. During the first session, the students completed the purposeful reading motivation questionnaire. Then, they took the reading fluency test, and the task-modeling skills assessment. In the second session two weeks later, the participants completed the four purposeful reading tasks. The task-modeling skills assessment and the purposeful reading tasks were presented through a web platform designed by the research team. Students used laptops or tablets owned by the schools. The whole class took a practice task at the beginning of each session to familiarize with the interface and the type of tasks, the experimenter answered any questions.

### ***Data analysis***

Correlations and regressions were performed to examine the unique contributions of reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance (RQ1), and to task-modeling skills (RQ2). For RQ2, in addition to a hierarchical regression, a stepwise regression was conducted to identify the most parsimonious set of motivational predictors of task-modeling skills. This method, based on statistical criteria, complements the hierarchical approach by highlighting the unique contribution of each predictor (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). To investigate whether task-modeling skills mediate the relation between self-concept, intrinsic motivation, reading value and purposeful reading performance (RQ3), mediation analyses were performed.

### **Results**

The data that support the findings of this study are available in OSF: [https://osf.io/j82gf/?view\\_only=8975e99efa3a4dd09a8ddf38fce45d23](https://osf.io/j82gf/?view_only=8975e99efa3a4dd09a8ddf38fce45d23)

### ***Descriptive statistics***

#### *Students' reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation and reading value*

Descriptive data are presented in Table 3. Overall, students reported that they feel competent in reading, enjoy reading activities and find reading useful and important. Students' level of motivation was comparable across the three dimensions of reading motivation.

**Table 3***Descriptive data for the motivation questionnaire*

	Cronbach alphas	Mean ( <i>sd</i> )	Min	Max
Reading self-concept	.75	22.394 (3.307)	7.2	30
Intrinsic reading motivation	.85	20.658 (5.380)	6	30
Reading value	.72	23.969 (3.130)	12	30

*Note.* Scores for each dimension have been adjusted to a maximum of 30 points per dimension.

*Students' task-modeling skills*

Descriptive data are presented in Table 4. Students' task-modeling performance was rather high, but varied dramatically across students. The easiest question was to identify the interrogative word in the question, while participants had more difficulty identifying the important words in the question.

**Table 4***Descriptive data for the task-modeling questions*

	Mean ( <i>sd</i> )	Min	Max	Success rate
Total task-modeling skills scores	88.12 (26.22)	0	120	73%
Q1 Interrogative word	33.76 (10.66)	0	40	85%
Q2 Important words	24.70 (10.07)	0	40	62%
Q3 Type of information	29.10 (11.99)	0	40	72%

*Purposeful reading performance*

Participants' total score on the purposeful reading tasks was 101.62 points on average ( $sd=32.83$ ), corresponding to 64% correct (range 51-73% depending on the topic).

***RQ1: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance?***

Correlations were carried out between reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation, reading value, task-modeling skills, purposeful reading performance and reading

fluency (Table 5). Regarding the relations between motivation and purposeful reading performance, significant positive correlations were found for each dimension of motivation. Although correlations among the motivational dimensions were high, they did not reach the established thresholds for multicollinearity (e.g., 0.85; Elith et al., 2006).

**Table 5**

*Pearson's correlations of the variables*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. PR performance	—					
2. TM skills	.397***	—				
3. Self-concept	.424***	.239***	—			
4. Intrinsic motivation	.382***	.178**	.581***	—		
5. Reading value	.346***	.204**	.584***	.737***	—	
6. Reading fluency	.347***	.273***	.455***	.226***	.273***	—

*Notes.* \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . PR = Purposeful Reading; TM = Task-Modeling

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the unique contribution of self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance, when controlling for reading fluency. Reading fluency was entered first (Model 1). Then self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value were entered in a second model. Model 2 explained more variance than Model 1 with a higher  $R^2$ , and was more parsimonious since AIC and BIC indices were lower (Table 6). Model comparison was significant ( $F(3,226)=12.0$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that motivation dimensions explained performance over and above fluency. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 6**

*Model fit indices*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	AIC	BIC
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1 Fluency	.347	.120	631	641
2 Fluency and motivation	.491	.241	603	624

The hierarchical regression revealed significant unique contributions of self-concept and intrinsic motivation to purposeful reading performance when controlling for reading fluency. The contribution of reading value failed to reach significance, probably due to its overlap with the other two predictors (Table 5).

**Table 7**

*Results of the hierarchical regression analysis for the unique contribution of self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance*

	Estimation	Standard errors	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Model 1</b>				
Fluency	.347	.062	5.60	< .001
<b>Model 2</b>				
Fluency	.204	.065	3.125	.002
Self-concept	.199	.080	2.473	.014
Intrinsic motivation	.202	.089	2.258	.025
Reading value	.026	.089	.286	.775

***RQ2: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to task-modeling skills?***

Table 5 above reports correlations between each dimension of reading motivation and task-modeling skills. All three dimensions of motivation showed significant and positive correlations with task-modeling skills. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted with reading fluency and the three dimensions of reading motivation as predictors and task-modeling skills as the dependent variable. Model 2 explained more variance than Model 1 ( $R^2=.312$  vs.

273). However, model comparison failed to reach significance ( $F(3, 226)=1.91$ , ns), probably due to the high overlap among predictors. We conducted a stepwise regression analysis to identify the most effective combination of variables that could best explain task-modeling skills (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). In stepwise regression, order of entry of the variables only depends on statistical criteria such as  $p$ -values, variables are either added or removed step by step automatically by the algorithm. Each model includes a new predictor at each step (in forward selection) or removes a non-significant predictor (in backward elimination). Variables that were considered but excluded do not contribute significantly to predicting the dependent variable, which makes this analysis more robust (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Results of the stepwise regression analysis for the unique contribution of self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to task-modeling skills*

	Estimation ( $\beta$ )	Standard errors	Estimation standard	$t$	$p$
<b>Model 1</b> (intercept)	88.701	1.666		53.252	< .001
<b>Model 2</b> (intercept)	57.242	7.514		7.619	< .001
Reading fluency	.464	.108	.273	4.286	< .001
<b>Model 3</b> (intercept)	39.064	11.329		3.448	< .001
Reading fluency	.400	.112	.234	3.575	< .001
Reading value	1.130	.530	.140	2.131	.034

Model comparison indicated a progressive improvement in model fit with each step (Table 9). Model 1, which included only the intercept, served as the baseline. In Model 2, adding reading fluency significantly improved model fit ( $R^2 = .074$ ,  $F(1, 229) = 18.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating a significant impact of reading fluency on task-modeling skills. Model 3 introduced reading value, further improving model fit ( $R^2 = .092$ ,  $F(1, 228) = 11.598$ ,  $p < .001$ ), although

its contribution was more modest compared to reading fluency. The coefficient associated with fluency remained significant but slightly decreased, suggesting that reading value accounted for additional variance in task-modeling skills. The inclusion of self-concept and intrinsic motivation did not further improve the model.

**Table 9**

*Model fit indices of the stepwise regression analysis*

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	p
1	.000	.000			230	
2	.074	.074	18.371	1	229	< .001
3	.092	.018	11.598	1	228	< .001

***RQ3: Do task-modeling skills mediate the relationships between self-concept, intrinsic motivation, reading value and purposeful reading performance?***

Mediation analyses were conducted to examine whether task-modeling skills could mediate the relationships between each dimension of reading motivation and purposeful reading performance. A bootstrap estimation with 1000 samples was used (Zhao et al., 2010). Reading fluency was added in the three analyses as a control variable. The results revealed a partial mediation of task-modeling skills between reading value and purposeful reading performance (see Table 10 and Figure 2). Quite unexpectedly, reading value was the only motivational dimension to exert a significant direct effect on purposeful reading performance once the effect of task modeling skills was accounted for. Reading value also had an indirect effect through task-modeling skills, supporting a partial mediation model. However, task-modeling skills did not significantly mediate the effects of self-concept and intrinsic motivation on purposeful reading performance (indirect effects for self-concept,  $b = .415$ ,  $p = .057$ , and intrinsic motivation,  $b = .217$ ,  $p = .074$ ) (see Appendix).

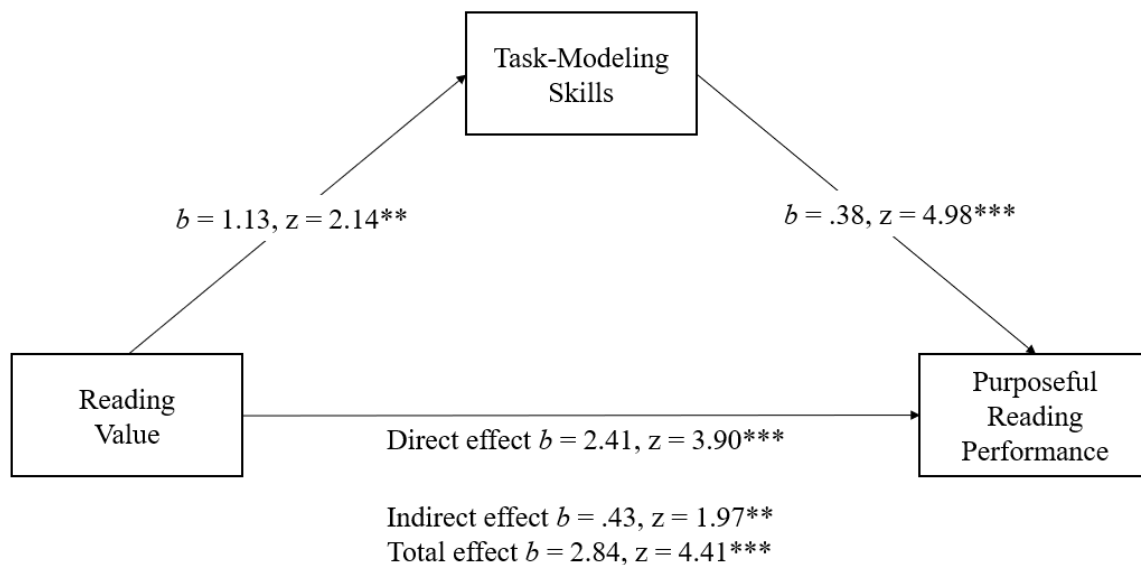
**Table 10**

*Mediation analysis for the effect of task-modeling skills on the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance*

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p
Direct effect	2.407	.617	3.897	< .001
Indirect effect	.430	.218	1.970	< .05
Total effect	2.836	.643	4.408	< .001
TM skills → PR performance	.380	.076	4.978	< .001
Reading value → TM skills	1.130	.527	2.145	< .05
Fluency → Reading value	.057	.013	4.306	< .001
Fluency → TM skills	.400	.111	3.598	< .001
Fluency → PR performance	.449	.132	3.387	< .001

**Figure 2**

*Mediation effect of task-modeling skills on the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance (\*\* p < .05, \*\*\* p < .001)*



*Note: Only the significant effects are reported in the figure. For clarity, relations between reading fluency and other variables are not included.*

**Discussion**

This study examined the unique contributions of sixth graders' reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation and reading value to their purposeful reading performance and task-

modeling skills. Students completed a purposeful reading motivation questionnaire, task-modeling skills assessment, and four purposeful reading tasks. We expected positive unique contributions of the dimensions of reading motivation to (i) purposeful reading performance and (ii) task-modeling skills, as well as (iii) a mediation effect of task-modeling skills on the relationships between the dimensions of reading motivation and purposeful reading performance.

***RQ1: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to purposeful reading performance?***

As predicted, purposeful reading was impacted by self-concept and intrinsic motivation, which corroborated past studies (*e.g.* Andreassen & Bråten, 2010; Guthrie *et al.*, 2007 for reading motivation and comprehension; or Retelsdorf *et al.*, 2014; Xiao, 2022 for reading self-concept and comprehension). The effect sizes observed in our analyses are consistent with prior studies. Kraft (2020) argued that even small effect sizes can have significant implications when scaled to classroom contexts. Kraft further advised to contextualize effect sizes by considering task complexity and variability inherent to educational settings (*i.e.*, differences among students, teachers, educational contexts, and methods).

In contrast with the predictions of theoretical models of purposeful reading (List & Alexander, 2017; Rouet *et al.*, 2017), we found no unique contribution of reading value to purposeful reading performance. Several explanations can account for this pattern. First, although our reading value measure showed good internal consistency, a significant proportion of participants clustered around the higher end of the scale (12–30). Insufficient variability, combined with a high overlap with the other two motivational constructs (Table 5) may have restrained the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance. In addition, the particular setting of the experiment may have lowered the impact of reading value.

Students' awareness that their performance was to be examined as part of a research project may have shaped their task representation, emphasizing the authority of the requester and the perceived importance of compliance, thereby diminishing the influence of reading value. It is also possible that reading value has a more indirect impact, influencing variables such as engagement or reading strategies, rather than a direct impact on performance (List & Alexander, 2017). Such explanation is corroborated by our findings showing that reading value impacted reading performance via task-modeling skills (see discussion for RQ3).

***RQ2: What is the unique contribution of reading self-concept, intrinsic motivation and reading value to task-modeling skills?***

Reading value significantly influenced task-modeling skills performance, whereas self-concept and intrinsic motivation had no unique impact. As a reminder, reading value in this study included attainment value, utility value and cost, but did not include intrinsic value, which was considered too similar to intrinsic motivation. The Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles, 1983) highlights that students who perceive a task as valuable are convinced that completing the task is relevant (*i.e.* attainment value), will serve their personal goals (*i.e.* utility value dimension), and that the benefits they will obtain outweigh the effort required (*i.e.* cost). Valuing a task leads students to invest more effort (Eccles, 1983). This pattern has already been demonstrated in prior studies about math (Guo et al., 2016) and multiple text comprehension (Raccanello et al., 2022), and can explain the contribution of reading value to creating a coherent task model. However, future work is needed to investigate the causal relationship between reading value and task-modeling skills. It is possible that participants with high reading value find meaning in reading tasks because they better understand the expectations of reading tasks. Regardless of the causal direction, reading value and the ability to create a coherent task-

model are related, which involves that when perceived task value is enhanced in class, task-modeling skills should also improve.

The RESOLV model emphasizes the role of the self component, notably intrinsic motivation and self-concept, in elaborating a coherent task model. However, we found no unique contribution of these two variables to task-modeling skills. This may be due to the design of the assessment. Students were instructed to imagine they were helping a peer to solve a task, but they did not actually have to solve it. As a result, the lack of direct involvement may have reduced their intrinsic motivation to fully engage with the task, as they might have perceived it as less personally meaningful or rewarding. In addition, task-modeling skills were assessed with relatively simple questions (73% success rate). The low level of difficulty may have reduced the need for sustained effort or persistence. Consequently, students may not have felt the need to engage deeply, explaining the lack of influence from intrinsic motivation and self-concept. This aligns with research showing that intrinsic motivation has a stronger impact on more complex purposeful reading tasks (Naumann, 2019). Moreover, students with a high self-concept, driven by social comparisons (Coleman & Fults, 1982), may have found the questions too easy to feel motivated by outperforming others. Future works should further explore this issue by using more complex tasks in order to capture a broader range of task-modeling skills. In sum, our data only provides evidence for a contribution of reading value to students' ability to understand task demands, without ruling out a possible influence of other motivational dimensions.

***RQ3: Do task-modeling skills mediate the relationships between self-concept, intrinsic motivation, reading value and purposeful reading performance?***

Our mediation analysis showed that students' ability to create a task model mediates the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance. This is in line with theoretical frameworks such as the RESOLV model (Rouet et al., 2017) or the CAEM model (List & Alexander, 2017), which posit an effect of reading value on readers' strategies and behaviors in purposeful reading. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to show that students' ability to construct accurate task models across various topics partially mediates the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance.

The lack of direct or indirect contribution of reading self-concept and intrinsic motivation to performance in the mediation model is puzzling, given that these two constructs had a distinct contribution to performance in the regression analysis conducted as part of RQ1, when reading value did not. Once more, we have to suspect that high intercorrelations among predictors may have reduced the specific contribution of each of them to a less than significant level. Whether these high inter-correlations are intrinsic to the six grade population or an artefact due to the particular instrument used in this study remains to be further investigated.

### ***Practical implications***

The present study offers new insights into how students' reading self-concept and intrinsic reading motivation can support purposeful reading performance. In addition, our findings highlight that students can develop general task-modeling skills that can contribute to reading comprehension performance regardless of the domain or content of the text. Instructional programs should seek to support students' task-modeling skills and identify when and how to apply those task-modeling skills. Interestingly, results showed that the more students perceive purposeful reading tasks as valuable, the better they understand the demands of the task, which eventually improve their purposeful reading performance. This pattern suggests that teachers should be explicit about the value of the tasks they give to their students, so that

students can invest more effort to process the task instructions and to elaborate a relevant task model.

### ***Limitations and perspectives***

The use of self-reports questionnaires to assess motivation limits the scope of our findings. Young students tend to overestimate their own abilities due to a lack of metacognitive skills (Schneider & Löffler, 2015), even if researchers argue that not all children are unrealistic when it comes to assessing their own abilities (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020). Moreover, the breadth of our questionnaire items warrants a cautionary note. We assessed three dimensions of motivation in reference to three reading contexts: text comprehension, purposeful reading, and digital reading. We intended this broad approach to encompass both traditional and purposeful reading contexts, and to align with the use of digital devices to assess students' purposeful reading in the study. However, this diversity may have introduced excessive complexity in the questionnaire, potentially blurring the relationships between motivational dimensions and reading outcomes. One suggestion for future improvements would be to focus exclusively on purposeful reading items. As another limitation, we phrased some items in general, domain-independent terms, which may have made the items too vague or difficult to interpret. One way to address this limitation in future studies would be to use more discipline-specific items, or to use a scenario-based assessment approach (O'Reilly & Sabatini, 2013), contextualizing questionnaire items within a specific academic situation.

Finally, future research could use more complex tasks to assess students' general ability to understand task demands. In this study, task-modeling skills were measured using rather simple 'questions about the question' asking about the interrogative word or important words of the question. In future work, 'questions about the question' could also focus on the process involved in the task (*i.e.*, How am I going to find the information?). This would be interesting

to see if self-concept and intrinsic motivation would be related to task-modeling skills when focusing on the core and the process of the task model.

### **Conclusions and implications**

To sum up, this study emphasized the differentiated roles of reading motivation dimensions on purposeful reading and established a mediating role of task-modeling skills. Our findings indicate that reading self-concept and intrinsic reading motivation have a direct influence on purposeful reading performance, while only reading value influences task-modeling skills. In addition, we showed that students' ability to elaborate coherent task-models independent from content partially mediates the relationship between reading value and purposeful reading performance. Fostering students' motivation could therefore help them better understand the questions they need to answer, and consequently increase their reading comprehension performance.

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(blinded for review)

### **Declaration of interest statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest with respect to the contents of this paper.

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## Appendix

**Table A1.**

*Items from the Purposeful Reading Motivation Questionnaire.*

Dimension	French items	English translation
Reading self-concept	Je comprends bien ce que je lis	I understand well what I read
	Je lis mieux que la plupart de mes camarades de classe	I read better than most of my classmates
	Je suis capable d'identifier les informations importantes d'un texte	I am able to find information in a text
	Je suis capable de trouver des informations dans un texte	I am able to identify the important information in a text
	Je trouve difficile de répondre à des questions sur un texte	I find it difficult to answer questions about a text
Intrinsic reading motivation	Je lis seulement quand j'y suis obligé(e), sinon je ne lis jamais	I only read when I have to, otherwise, I never read
	J'aime quand le professeur nous demande de lire un livre pendant les vacances	I like it when the teacher asks us to read a book during the holidays
	Je me sens bien quand je lis	I feel good when I read
	Je n'aime pas relire un passage du texte pour m'assurer d'avoir compris	I don't like to reread a passage of the text to make sure I've understood it
	J'aime les exercices en classe qui me demandent de répondre à des questions sur des documents	I like classroom exercises that ask me to answer questions about documents
	Je n'aime pas lire plusieurs textes pour trouver une information	I don't like reading multiple texts to find information

	Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d'avoir assez d'énergie pour lire plusieurs documents en cours	I'm not sure I have enough energy to read multiple documents in class
	Il est important d'essayer de comprendre les textes qu'on me donne à lire	It's important to try to understand the texts I'm given to read
Reading value	Je ne vois pas trop à quoi ça sert de lire les livres du collègue (ceux donnés par les professeur(e)s, ou ceux du CDI par exemple)	I don't really see the point of reading the books from school (those given by the teachers, or those from the library, for example)
	Savoir chercher des informations dans des documents écrits est important dans la vie de tous les jours	Knowing how to search for information in written documents is important in everyday life
	Apprendre à trouver des informations dans plusieurs textes m'aidera pour réussir au collège	Learning to find information in multiple texts will help me succeed in school

**Table A2**

*Mediation analysis for the task-modeling skills in the relationship between self-concept and purposeful reading performance*

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p
Direct effect	2.899	.623	4.655	< .001
Indirect effect	.415	.219	1.901	= .057
Total effect	3.314	.649	5.104	< .001
TM skills → PR performance	.375	.075	4.975	< .001
Self-concept → TM skills	1.109	0.539	2.057	< .05
Fluency → Self-concept	.101	.013	7.757	< .001
Fluency → TM skills	.352	.120	2.934	< .05
Fluency → PR performance	.296	.140	2.115	< .05

**Table A3**

*Mediation analysis for the task-modeling skills in the relationship between intrinsic motivation and purposeful reading performance*

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p
Direct effect	1.728	.347	4.973	< .001
Indirect effect	.217	.122	1.785	= .074
Total effect	1.946	.363	5.359	< .001
TM skills → PR performance	.375	.075	5.020	< .001
Intrinsic motivation → TM skills	.579	.303	1.910	= .056
Fluency → Intrinsic motivation	.082	.023	3.522	< .001
Fluency → TM skills	.417	.110	3.795	< .001
Fluency → PR performance	.448	.129	3.479	< .001