

Encouraging Reading for Reluctant Readers

The following instructional ideas can assist teachers who work with students who need to improve their interest, motivation and ability to read.

Choice – students are more likely to read material they choose. However, is asking some students to choose between *Silas Marner* and *Great Expectations* really a choice? Reluctant readers need to be involved in the selection of their own reading material.

Interesting Material – students are more likely to read material that interests them. Newspapers, magazines, trivia, the unusual and odd and materials specific to a student's interests are more likely to be read. Ask the students about their interests and help them locate reading materials that are interesting to them.

Easy – to – Read – readers start at different places when it comes to reading. Often, the reluctant reader needs to start at an “earlier” place than other students. In many respects, they need to “crawl before they can walk”. Help students select reading materials that are easy to read (small words, short sentences and vignettes), current events, have interesting illustrations and are easy to pick up and put down. Avoid long essays.

Connect Reading with Writing – reading and writing reinforce each other. Have students write abstracts (rather than a book report – that can come later) of what they read. Students can keep journals, write letters to authors and prepare “talking points” documents to share with other students and family members.

Read Aloud – It is widely accepted that reading aloud is an excellent way to learn and reinforce reading. Have students share bits and pieces of their reading material with their classmates. Start out small (maybe in a small group setting) and build on this – remember “crawl before you walk”. And, be a good role model and read aloud to your students each day.

Involve the home – give students reading assignments to do at home. Involve family members as much as you can. Perhaps students can share a “talking points” document with a family member. Be sure to follow up on these activities and give students points toward their grade.

Internet Reading - students are spending more time on the internet. Use this as a tool and motivator to increase the amount of reading students do. Use appropriate internet searching in cooperative learning and small group activities to get students reading more.

Build Vocabulary – vocabulary and reading go hand-in-hand. Reinforcement and repetition are good ways to build a student’s vocabulary. Some students need lots of repetition of basic reading skills to improve. Crossword puzzles, word-searches, fill-in the blanks, etc. are all good ways to build basic skills.

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