

Transcript EDUC172 Part 2-03

We often classify readers into different types of readers.

Advanced readers who are reading above their grade levels. Our normal readers who read when they have to do but don't read that much of any substantial nature when they're not asked to do the reading for school, and then struggling readers who tend to do less reading and over time that becomes a bigger and bigger problem.

The way to get students motivated into reading is to both engage them in the social aspect of it, to create reading circles and to engage different types of readers within those reading circles and to find ways to motivate students.

Motivating students is essential because this helps them to get over the fact that they are sitting there reading and into the fact that what they're actually doing is finding useful knowledge and building their understanding of the world.

One way to get at that is to develop fundamental questions for the students to pursue in their learning. This is often referred to as predictive reading. In predictive reading, we help the students to figure out what they might find within a text before they read it.

Therefore, what we engage them in is a conversation that addresses their curiosities, that has them think about the subject and figure out what they don't know. Hopefully what they don't know is also what the text is going to be able to help them to understand and therefore they find out through practice that that's what motivates a good scholar or researcher or someone who is fluent with using print materials to find the information they need.

This is of course what we want all our students to be able to do.

Often reading when it becomes an act that people engage in on a habitual basis is developed through curiosity. Curiosity is really important and it also helps us to start broadening our reading, as we find that things that feed our curiosity come from many different areas.

While there are many different genres of reading, all of value the more we can take in the better. Just like writing, we need to do a lot of it in order to become good at it. In any given experience where one has books and is surrounded by information we tend to classify our reading into various genres. You can see in the books behind me that there are areas here which deal with visual art, with poetry, with fiction, with non-fiction and the nonfiction broken into different subjects.

Sometimes material qualities of the text also affect the way we see it. Is the big book or is a small book? All these typical ways of organizing knowledge help us in the long run to organize all the different thoughts we have in our heads.

Let's think then about gathering a group of students and using literature circles to help them to share their own discoveries on a topic with other students. Literature circles are a good way for a teacher to bring more texts into a classroom than they have in class sets or personally available.

By using a guiding question to lead the discoveries, the students are then set out to go find information that can help to contribute to the group's understanding. They can all share different texts with each other and highlight what they've enjoyed and what they learned or what they found challenging or what they disagreed with.

Bringing that kind of social interaction into reading is also important as it gives extra value and peer support to daily reading activities that are so beneficial for students' academic performance.

Reading is crucial and again one of the ways that we can help students is to look ahead at the text and find ways to explore it before we give it to them. It is good, as we've said, to model reading, to model reading silently and to model reading aloud.

Another excellent way for students to engage with texts and for teachers to be able to assess the degree of difficulty that students are having with the given text, is to have them read aloud.

It is also useful to use the précis and writing a short summary of texts as a way to demonstrate or to allow the students to demonstrate their comprehension. And to pose within the précis any questions they might have of the text or anything they felt they didn't quite understand.

These kinds of responses can be written or done verbally so that after working through a portion of texts have a student or students not repeat it verbatim but give a summary of the text that you've read with them.

Hearing texts read aloud is very important. This is because even when we're reading silently we're not really silent. There is a voice in our heads that reads the text aloud.

We cannot, for example, comprehend a text simply by looking at it. You can practice this anytime you want to take a text that you cannot and have no sound in your head you'll notice that it's very difficult to read. It's very difficult to read in any language if you can't sound silently in your head the words that are present.

The fact that we need to be able to articulate silently in our head in order to be able to comprehend the text we have a hand shows us that one of the most important things for comprehension is swift and automatic reading, meaning the ability to read ahead of the word you're actually looking at.

This is another indicator of students who are struggling with reading. That they often have to keep a finger or something at the word they are reading in the moment in order to be able to read it.

A fluent reader will usually read two or three words ahead of the word that is presently being articulated either in their head or out loud. So this is another way that we can identify when students are having more trouble with texts that they can't pronounce the words they are encountering, that's one clear sign that they probably are not comprehending it unless it was just a slip of speech.

And another one is that they're using some kind of finger or a pointer or a ruler in order to help keep them focused visually as they try to sound out the words they see.

Indeed once fluent our ability to recognize a word is not impaired even when the word is misspelled and letters are swapped around. A number of interesting experiments have been done in which letters are taken and maintaining the first and last letter of the word the internal letters are all jumbled up.

For most people it's still very easy to make sense of what those words say. That's because we've come to recognize the length and the shape and the typical way the word looks and therefore we can still make sense given the first and last letters of what the word might be trying to say.

This ability is key to being automatic as a reader that is being able to read fluently and fluent reading is essential to cope with the large amounts reading expected of students in secondary education situations.

Therefore the more reading that students do the more they become able to work with less familiar words.

In the next section we'll take a look at a little reading exercise or rather a kind of reading and writing exercise in which one can start to make sense of a word by identifying word roots. This is also the key to working with vocabulary so that what is learned in one subject can actually begin to be transferred across other subjects.