

Round Robin Reading and Other Perils of Literacy Education
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Perils of Literacy Education #10: Trying to Get to the Aqua Section of the SRA

For Consideration:

- Reading inauthentic texts (Textoids) is like scrimmaging without ever getting to play in the game!
- Answering questions on literal details and finding “hidden” main ideas diverts our attention from actual comprehension.
- Readers learn to read by reading REAL Texts.

Teaching Tips:

- Just Say NO!
- www.dittosanonymous.com

Perils of Literacy Education #9: The Book Report

For Consideration:

- Buying “three-for-one” leisure suits is still a leisure suit; 1001 new ways to do a book report is still a book report.
- Just because WE faked our way through countless book reports does not mean that students should have to do it too.
- Moving Beyond Literal Recall is Paramount!

Teaching Tips:

- Try Book Reviews! They exist in the world outside of school and have an intended audience other than the teacher.
- Reader Response Journals can provide accountability, as well as support for discussion, interpretation, and comprehension.

Perils of Literacy Education #8: “Extension” Activities

For Consideration

- Readers should NOT spend 30 minutes responding to 10 minutes of reading.
- Most extension activities have little to do with comprehension, just keeping children busy.
- Lifelong readers would never tolerate these activities in the name of becoming a lifelong reader!

Teaching Tips:

- Consider what you, as a proficient reader, do when you finish reading a book.
- Consider the relationship between the activity and your objectives.
- Consider whether the extension activity extends students' thinking or just their time.

Perils of Literacy Education #7: The Teacher-Student Reading “Gap”**For Consideration**

- What students read OUTSIDE of school should have a place in their reading lives INSIDE school.
- Teachers need to expand their own reading lives to explore what students are reading.
- Novels (especially “classics”) should not represent 90% of the reading students do in school.

Teaching tips:

- Bring magazines, comics, graphic novels, and newspapers into classrooms.
- Encourage on-line reading for purposeful tasks.
- Integrate Classics with Contemporary Novels, Picturebooks, and other texts.
- Remember... Choice is an important aspect of reading engagement.

Perils of Literacy Education #6: Overemphasis on Literal Recall**For Consideration**

- Literal recall is more about memory than thinking.
- Literal recall privileges the text over the reader and their thinking.
- I have taken quizzes on my own books and got one wrong!

Teaching Tips:

- Texts provide opportunities for the construction of multiple main ideas, treat them accordingly.
- Why “Max wore a wolf-suit and made mischief” is more important than the type of suit he wore.
- Assessment should help us get to know our students as readers, not level them!

Perils of Literacy Education #5: Round Robin Reading**For Consideration**

- Round robin reading focuses on oral performance and accuracy, not comprehension.
- Round robin reading may cause anxiety and embarrassment.
- Students rarely pay attention when they are not the one reading aloud.
- RRR is about CONTROL, not about effective reading instruction.

Teaching Tips:

- Practicing a poem overnight to read aloud in class is different than round robin reading.
- Most adult reading is silent. So our students' reading should be also.
- Choral reading, shared reading, partner reading are all better options.

Perils of Literacy Education #4: The I-R-E Discourse Pattern**For Consideration**

- Unless we consciously focus on changing these traditional interaction patterns we will invariably fall back on this as a "default setting."
- It is not our job to "FILL" students up with main ideas, it is our job to help them MAKE SENSE of texts by themselves.

Teaching Tips:

- Stop asking questions you already know the answers to!
- Talk with students about what we are trying to do in our discussions.
- Try talking less, and listening more.
- Offer comments in addition to asking questions.

Perils of Literacy Education #3: Being a Boy Reader**For Consideration**

- The U.S. Department of Ed reading tests for the last 30 years show boys scoring worse than girls in every age group, every year.
- Eighth grade boys are 50% more likely to be held back than girls.
- Two-thirds of Special Education Students are boys.
- Overall college enrollment is higher for girls than boys.

Teaching Tips:

- Let Boys Be Boys! Let them read some of the things they want to read. No one has died from reading Captain Underpants, honest!
- Look at the Children's Choice Awards as well as the Teacher's Choice Awards
- Magazines, comic books, video catalogs, how-to-manuals, sports books, humor, adventure, animals & nature, graphic novels, and more need to be part of our classroom libraries.
- GuysRead.com

Perils of Literacy Education #2: High Stakes External Assessment**For Consideration**

- Overemphasis on test reading narrows our vision of accomplished reading.
- Tests assume reading is about answering questions.
- We all can't all be above average (except in Lake Wobegon).

Teaching Tips:

- Teach standardized test passages as a genre.
- Separate reading for a test from reading for a life.
- Remember, the biggest factors in test performance have little to do with teaching and schooling.
- Reading is not a race, nor a competition, don't treat it as such.

#1 Peril of Literacy Education: The DeProfessionalization of Teachers

For Consideration

- There is a big difference between program delivery and reflective practice.
- Blindly following a Script is NOT teaching, it is simply babysitting with oral commentary.
- After three years of following a scripted program, teachers are the same teacher as when they started, just older.

Teaching Tips

- Teachers should conduct research on their teaching to demonstrate what they know about their students and the profession
- Work with Administration to develop better literacy programs
- Becoming Political may be scary, but it may be our only hope
- Develop stronger associations with local universities and literacy educators

Some Final Thoughts

- Life Long Readers would not tolerate some of the things we do to readers in school.
- We read for enjoyment, information, and adventure, not to get better at reading.
- Readers need Time to read, Choice in what to read, and Access to books to be Successful.
- Think of Ourselves as Readers First and Teachers Second

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