

Preferred teaching strategies

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Following their analysis, the panel concluded that the collective results did not provide clear evidence that encouraging students to read more actually led to improved reading achievement.

Of the few studies that did find gains in student reading, “ the gains were so small as to be of questionable educational value. ” (p. 3-26).

In short, the panel concluded that the research has yet to prove that sustained silent reading efforts lead to improved reading achievement. In addition, the panel suggested that their findings didn’t mean that encouraging students to read more could not be made to work, rather that the way it has been done (and studied) in the past has failed to produce changes in reading achievement. Revisiting Silent Reading (Hiebert ; Reutzel, 2010) encourages us to rethink silent reading, to consider some advice about it, and to think about how to make it work in our classroom.

Chapter 8 provides teachers with information about four conditions that improve the practice of silent reading in classrooms. These include: Student self- selection of reading materials: Teachers should guide students to choose good texts to read during silent reading time. The books should be of interest, should draw from a variety of genre and topics, and should be at an appropriate level ” not too easy, not too hard. This is particularly important for struggling readers who often select books they cannot read.

Student engagement and time on task during silent reading time: Teachers should keep a pulse on students during DEAR time. Emphasize that DEAR time is reading practice time.

It's not indoor recess, but rather it has an important purpose: to provide time to practice reading skills. Read the full chapter for a good description of “gossips, wanderers, and squirrels.” See if you have any of those in your classroom! Accountability: Related to the above, accountability of what has been read may help build reading stamina and proficiency.

Several methods of accountability are suggested, including logs, reader response, and anecdotal records. This seems like a highly personal decision, and for it to really work, would have to be something easy and quick.

Interactions among teachers and students: It's important to foster teacher-student and student-student conversations about books. Rather than using your DEAR time to read yourself, engage your students in conversations about what they're reading. Reutzell, Jones and Newman (2010) developed Scaffolded Silent Reading (ScSR) as an approach to silent reading that addresses many of the our conditions.

ScSR includes thoughtful classroom library arrangements, color coded levels, a reading genre wheel, and student-teacher conferences. Preliminary research on ScSR suggests that silent reading programs can be improved if the teacher makes several proactive decisions, including structuring, guiding, teaching, interacting with, monitoring, and holding students accountable for time spent reading independently and silently.

be spent as wisely as possible. Following the guidelines presented here is a good first step.