

Strategies for reaching Striving Readers

The term “striving readers” encompasses a variety of students who are “at risk.” Some may only have rudimentary reading skills. Others read just enough to get by. Others have stopped trying and depend on others to exempt them from work or do it for them. Still others do not understand what their teacher wants them to do. Guided Reading helps teachers provide an engaging and supportive environment in which all striving readers can learn.

The Advantages of Guided Reading

Striving readers are often lost during whole-group work and may quickly become disengaged. As a teacher, you need to address striving readers’ needs in a small-group setting so that you can bring the reading to a level where they can process text. Guided reading is especially helpful for small groups of readers who need extra support.

- ✓ Guided reading provides explicit instruction that directly addresses students’ needs.
- ✓ Leveled text presents considerate challenges.
- ✓ Decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension may require some work, but are within students’ abilities.
- ✓ Learning comes from reading in the same way stronger readers learn.
- ✓ More reading is possible because high accuracy and reasonable fluency are possible.
- ✓ Extra time can be spent on word analysis.

Strategies for Bringing Students Into Texts

To build reading success, meet one-on-one and often with a striving reader, or group striving readers with carefully selected texts.

Discover what students’ interests are and list them.

To survey interests, you might use questions such as:

- ✓ What games do you enjoy playing?
- ✓ What story would you like to hear (or read) again?
- ✓ What superheroes can you name?
- ✓ Which pet would you not ever want to have? Why?
- ✓ What character from a story would you like to meet?
- ✓ What do you like to do on weekends?
- ✓ What animal would you like to learn about?

After the discussion, help your striving readers find books in the classroom that focus on their interests.

Model what to do when you read an unfamiliar word or concept.

For example, you might say:

The sentence says, "The kitten hurt its paw when it jumped down from the bed." I'm not sure what p-a-w means. The author says the kitten hurt its paw when it jumped down. Since a kitten jumps on its feet, I think the word paw means the kitten's foot.

The word paw starts with p and ends with -aw. I know another word with aw, the word saw. I can use the word part -aw to help me say the word.

The word is paw.

Ask students to read and then reread.

Select a particular passage two or three times to make sure students understand the content. After they read, talk with them about the passage and ask questions. Encourage deep discussion.

Making Routines Consistent.

To prevent mixed messages for striving readers, make sure that any volunteers or support staff in your classroom work with you to learn your routines for language and literacy. Have volunteers listen to students read or work with other kinds of sharing. Volunteers can also read aloud texts that students are interested in but cannot easily read themselves.