

Reluctant Readers

Promising Practices 21

Suggestions for Program Improvement for Ohio ABLE Practitioners

Curriculum/Instruction

Program Puzzler

In your ABLE program, you and other instructors notice that students are reluctant to read outside of class. Students admit that they do not like to read and only read in class because they were told by the teacher to read. Because of the lack of practice, students' progress in reading has been hindered. What can you and other instructors do to help encourage these reluctant readers?

Peer Perspective

- Establish a classroom library with a wide variety of books available. This can help students find topics that interest them.
- Think about your classroom routine. Do you include specific time for reading? Or does reading only come from worksheets? Consider setting aside a time for independent or group reading in each session. This can help build a commitment to reading that can carry over into time outside of class.
- Using your assessment results, make a class listing of student reading levels. Then seek out reading materials based on students' levels. Newspapers like ProLiteracy's *News for You* can help meet the needs of beginning and intermediate level readers.
- Consider reading to your students a few minutes each day. By modeling what reading should sound like, you can help build an interest in reading. This can also be extended to include books on CD or tape. Many teachers have had success reading popular titles to their students. Students may get hooked on a particular author or genre.
- Collaborative oral reading is another way to support students in their reading. First, you read a section; then, you ask different students to read in turn. Continue throughout the passage, including yourself in the mix of readers.
- Book talks or clubs are a great way to engage students with books when everyone is reading the same book. You could set formal times and dates or just ask informally in class, "What are we currently reading?"
- Some students are reluctant to read due to vision problems. Colored overlays and note cards used as guides can help sometimes, but you may need to refer some students to a vision care provider.
- Many students only think they are reading if they are reading a book. Help students connect the skills they are learning to their lives outside of class—create a bulletin board of other everyday things we read including mail, signs, magazines, work information, food labels, advertisements, e-mails, text messages, or webpages. Encourage students to share where and what they read.



Timely Tips

The library is a great place to take a class field trip. Work with your local branch to arrange a time and place for students to come and meet the staff, see the layout of the library, and learn about the services and materials available to them. Make sure everyone leaves with a library card!

Seek out book donations from local civic groups and other organizations so students have free books available to take home. Be specific in the types of books you are requesting (e.g., level, genre).

Set up a reading challenge between students and staff or among classes. Keep track of pages read and have a reward at the conclusion for all readers.

Added Insights

Growing students as readers can have tremendous impact on their lives. Research indicates that reading is a gateway skill that is needed to help students with their academic, employment, and personal lives. It is estimated that 90% of what adults do in their lives involves some measure of reading.

By using some of the activities listed in this Promising Practices, instructors can also build students' interest in education. Many students increase their attendance in classes where reading a book is included because they want to see how the story ends. Additionally, more reading opportunities for students help to build their background knowledge. This aids students in making connections between what they see, what they experience, and what they read.

Last, studies show that parents who are reluctant readers are modeling that behavior for their children. Increasing adults' reading connections can translate into reading connections for their children. Family literacy experts encourage daily reading by children, by parents, and by children and parents together.

Supports

The Ohio ABLE system has a number of supports to help programs and instructors with reading instruction and materials.

Southwest ABLE Resource Center

800-558-5374

<http://www.sinclair.edu/facilities/swable/index.cfm>

The Southwest ABLE Resource Center specializes in reading and writing instruction and materials. It offers online, face-to-face, and alternative trainings in reading as well as an extensive lending library of reading materials. Most materials are leveled and are available in multiple copies.

Ohio Literacy Resource Center

800-765-2897

<http://literacy.kent.edu>

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center features a searchable database (Eureka!) of instructional resources including strategies, lesson plans, lists of recommended trade books, and links to other resources.

Ohio Resource Center

614-247-6342

<http://ohiorc.org>

The Ohio Resource Center provides links to peer-reviewed instructional resources including content and professional resources. It also provides assessment and general education resources that will support the work of pre-K-12 classroom teachers and higher education faculty members.

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