

Voices of Struggling Readers

When asked about reading, students with gaps in their abilities will commonly respond with the following statements:

- There are too many hard words.*
- I get lost and can't get back on track.*
- I slow down when the reading is hard.*
- I only read things I'm interested in.*
- I really don't know why I need to read this. When will I ever need it?*
- I like to read fast.*
- I need quiet or noise when I read.*
- When I get to the end of the paragraph, I can't remember what all of the ideas were about.*
- I need pictures and diagrams to help me understand.*
- I read the beginning and the end of a reading and guess what's in between.*

So how can teachers help these students?



Resources

The Ohio ABE Resource Center Network Library has many reading resources that can arrive right at your doorstep. Please look online at: <http://ohioablelibrary.org>

Eureka! (hosted by the Ohio Literacy Resource Center) houses lesson plans, book lists and information on reading strategies. It is available at <http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka/agora.html>

Contact your regional resource center for answers to your reading instruction questions.

Additionally, SWRC can provide technical assistance to your program in planning and implementing evidence-based reading instruction. The Southwest ABE Resource Center (SWRC) has a wide variety of reading resources and supports available on its website at: www.sinclair.edu/facilities/swable. You can also contact us directly at 800-558-5374 or 937-512-5375.

Southwest ABE Resource Center



Reading Opens Doors!

Reading is a gatekeeper skill for adults.

Strong readers have the skills which lead to achieving goals while struggling readers are prevented from achieving at the level or rate they desire.

When students don't progress, take a look at their reading skills. They may be stuck because the text is too complex to be handled by the strategies they know.

Come inside to learn more!

Why does reading get harder?

The process of reading doesn't change from Dr. Seuss to Shakespeare. What changes is the complexity of the text. Sentence structure becomes more complex, specialized vocabulary is common, the concept load increases as does the length, and the reader may not have extensive background knowledge in the subject. Examples of this more challenging text include the reading done for GED preparation or in transitions classes or on the job.

How do readers handle this?

Effective readers have strategies and skills that allow them to manage the increased challenges, especially those presented by informational text (the type adult readers face every day outside of the classroom).

Those who are challenged when reading often experience frustration. More is expected of them as readers, and what they usually do while reading is not working. Adult readers are asked to think critically in applying the information from texts to new situations, in problem solving and in analyzing/synthesizing information from a variety of sources. All those skills take effective and efficient reading abilities to be successful.

What does research tell us?

Readers who struggle will not improve by simply reading more. *The research tells us that reading instruction must be provided for adults.* Evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) starts with collecting sufficient diagnostic information. Next, the instruction needs to be explicit and focused. Finally, the reading materials should be at the reader's instructional level.

What should teachers do?

- Talk with your students about their reading habits and what they assume good readers know how to do.
- Set aside dedicated time for reading instruction in your regular classroom routine.
- Do more diagnostic testing. Silent reading tests cannot tell you all you need to know.
- Present strategies and skills explicitly.
- Read aloud and share what you do and think while reading.
- Collect and use a variety of materials.
- Focus on informational text.
- Provide materials at various reading levels.
- Be confident that reading instruction does "count" on the GED and let your students know!

Classroom Activities

Try these ideas to help students build their reading skills:

- Start each class session with a reading: this could be a short poem, a current event or an informational brochure. Get the students' minds on the importance of reading daily.
- Offer a book club: encourage reading through shared experiences. The text could be read orally as a group or independently. Provide time for periodic group discussions about the reading.
- Select a "Comprehension Strategy of the Month": focus on teaching and using the strategy with all the readings the student will do at home, school and work. For example: students could be taught and encouraged to ask themselves the "W" questions about everything they read.
- Create a "What We Are Reading" list: keep a running list of what books, magazines, work manuals, etc. that students are reading. This could be shared with others for reading suggestions and used for lesson ideas.