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Final Position paper for at risk students

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With at-risk students, the biggest factor for teachers is focusing on the aspects we can control. So often teachers get stuck on the places where students come from, bad home lives or other factors along that line, but as teachers we can’t control children's home lives; all that we can control is having effective teaching strategies in place to help students succeed. The more students, parents, and teachers can work together to help students improve reading, the stronger they will become as a reader. One way parents can help is reading together as a family and stepping away from so much technology time. Learning to read is hard for students because our brains aren’t wired to learn reading naturally like language.

Early intervention needs to be in place to help struggling readers. The longer students fall between the cracks, the farther they will get behind their peers. Reading instruction for students needs to include all of the key components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Not every student learns the same as the next so one reading instruction might work for one student but not the next student.

The three books were great resources and I plan to use them daily in my classroom to help students become stronger readers. Most of the proposed strategies I use in my classroom already. That made me feel good that I’m doing something right to help students improve their reading. Some of the strategies I want to make sure I’m working on daily are: motivation, prompting, and more pre-teaching. When readers are motivated and engaged, they are personally invested in their reading. Middle school students who struggle to read tend to have negative thoughts when it comes to reading because they have struggled for so long. Readers need to experience the pleasure of reading to fully enjoy reading. Bringing in books that students can relate to and have a lot of interest in will help them be motivated to read. The books provide many prompting phrases to help students before reading, during reading, and after the stories. With the prompting this helps guide students when they are reading and as they are used on a daily basis, students will begin to self-monitor their reading. Struggling readers haven’t always had as much experience with books before school so their background knowledge has to be built upon by the teacher. I know I have in the past just assumed a student knew what a word meant. I have learned from this and make sure in the classroom I’m always reviewing important words with students and discussing the book before we read and activating and building students' background knowledge on the topic. As struggling readers' vocabulary grows, the easier it is for students to process what they are reading. Students will then be able to spend more energy looking for the meaning of the passage and not spending all of their energy solving unknown words.

Most students who struggle to read also struggle to write. When learning to read, writing should be combined together. Reading and writing have letters, sounds, words, synaptic patterns, and mapping out meaning in common. Writing activities that students work on should not all be on the computer. When students are handwriting they have an easier time learning letter recognition. When writing is not used daily in reading interventions, students are being limited on the learning that can take place. When writing is used in reading interventions, it’s a great building block for students becoming a stronger reader. The writing that takes place needs to be purposeful and about the reading that is taking place. Freewriting has a place in the classroom but to help improve reading the writing needs to be about what they are reading about in the lesson.

I enjoyed this class and learning so many skills that I can improve upon my teaching. Working in the special education department many of my students have reading disabilities. I love helping students have fun when reading and finding a true passion for reading.