PROFICIENT READING SKILL AS A GATEWAY TO SEVERAL DISCIPLINES

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Reading is a fundamental skill that everyone needs to learn. It is a skill that we use in everyday living. From watching television to looking down at a food menu, we really cannot get away from it. This is one of the reasons why proficiency in reading is encouraged in early years of schooling. It is a very essential foundation to many disciplines and other areas of curriculum. Reading is not only a required skill for academic purposes but to every individual's daily living as well. Failing to acquire this literacy skill can cause someone to be left behind by other people and it could be harder for him or her to cope with the environment where he or she belongs.

Unfortunately, many children struggle to master reading skill. According to Meredith Cicerchia (2017), the reading skill of a child greatly affects his performance in all subject areas thus, reading interventions or trainings must be provided. It is because struggling readers can quickly fall behind their peers and may develop low self-esteem and a lack of confidence as a result. It is important to pay attention right away if the student struggle in reading because he or she may encounter worse problems if this would not be solved or given attention immediately. It will not only affect the academic performance of the student but can also affect him or her psychologically.

There are some reading strategies that can be beneficial for both teachers and students. These could be best applied to struggling readers and for the children who are starting to learn how to read. Using charts or books with pictures could help children learn better. If there are images present in the reading materials, they will be more interested in reading because children love colourful visual presentations. Reading materials play an important role in teaching students how to read because if they are
not interested in the material that they are using, they may find reading as a boring or
tedious activity.

Janelle Cox suggested that one of the best ways to engage students in reading is
to let them choose what they want to read. There is no problem if the students want to
read comics, almanacs, storybooks and any other reading materials of their choice
because as Cox said, "when you give students a voice and a choice, then they will
choose something that is of interest to them and makes it more likely that they will be
motivated and engaged to read the book until the end." If students will be forced to
read some materials that they find uninteresting, it could give them negative attitude
towards reading which a teacher should avoid because this may lose their interest to
other reading materials as well.

Incorporating technology with reading activities and practices is also a good
technique since many children nowadays are hook with the use of their gadgets which
also come with an Internet access. Different reading games in forms of downloadable
mobile applications could enable the students to enjoy and learn at the same time. Also,
the teacher may play reading tutorial videos which are downloadable from different
sites. Letting the students watch those kind of videos and films is both entertaining and
informative at the same time. It can be a good alternative to the usual way of teaching
students how to read.

Of course, it is also important to know that teaching students how to decode
printed texts is not enough for them to be considered as good readers once they learn
how to read. It is also important that they can comprehend what they are reading and
this can be achieved if there is a connection between the readers and the text. Ellen
Winner (2014) said that "to encourage a fraught reader may involve connections to real
life situations. They should be given reading materials in which they can relate to and
appropriate to the level of understanding of the readers. Reading comprehension could
also be enhanced through asking some questions regarding the story.
Reading skill is one of the most important skills that every child must be developed in the early years of their education. They should be given attention in enhancing this skill because reading opens many doors to other disciplines. Children must be encouraged to read because it does not only a required skill for them not to be left behind but also a good practice to acquire knowledge which enable the students to be intelligent. The more they read, the more they learn a lot of things and for without reading, our minds will become like bodies without a soul.

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