READING: THE KEY TO THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

by:

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When I look back upon my different classes of learners over the years, I vividly recall something that has continually amazed and fascinated me. The last year of my teaching experience were spent in the classroom with students who had severe behavior problems. Needless to say, these children didn’t respond to traditional teaching methods specially on reading. And so often there would be able to escape and calm himself inside the story. It has been all too heart wrenching to work with learners whose problem made learning to read an enormous obstacle. I have watched some of the grade child struggle to read through a primer book independently for the first time.

I think it was a challenge to us what is the best method of teaching reading would be used. Be it phonics, whole language, language experience, the proverbial list goes on. I've learned through trial and error, and my own pupils’ frustration that there is no catch all, “one size fits all” method of teaching reading. It is matter of getting to know pupils unique learning styles and perception of language. The task can be at the very least a juggling act not only for our pupils who struggle, but also for those who have seemingly been avid readers since birth and the present who need to be consistently challenged.

There are many ways a teacher can structure her classroom reading environment to meet the needs of her pupils’ different learning styles. The following are suggestions to create that type of environment: (1) establish a daily “DEAR” (Drop Everything and Read) time for silent or buddy reading, (2) make your classroom a “print rich” environment. Offer a wide variety of books, magazines and posters, create a word wall and word story games, (3) offer manipulative for younger children such as letter books, puzzles and magnet boards, (4) create a story center with recorded books and provide opportunities for pupils to record and listen to their own reading, (5) develop a classroom book file. Have pupils offer input about their favorite kinds of
books in an interest inventory and then gather books on different subjects such as animals, humors, fairy tales, virtues such as honesty, trust, etc., for kindergarten to grade 2, read a short passages aloud, provide many hand-on-games, some whole-class and small-group time with the teacher, some choice of reading materials and lots of movement, for grade 2-3, teach reading using strategies similar to those K to 2, with addition of more visual techniques (board work, filmstrips, posters), great choice of reading materials to increase motivation and more choice regarding partners and for grade 4-6, teach reading using strategies similar to those for grade 2-3, with addition of more auditory techniques (interview, reporting, discussions), more analytic materials (nonfiction, newspaper, magazines), greater choice of reading materials to increase motivation, more choices how to work with whom, more interaction with peers, and somewhat less movement.

In implementing any method of teaching reading, a key component is to develop what is considered an innate fascination with language and the printed word that is within most children. Although we are in the modern teaching now with high technology and computerized; earning tools, there is still no substitute for the printed page. Reading is the key our children need to unlock their history, present, and future.

References:

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