

i-READ: Literacy Intervention in the Middle Years and Secondary School

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i-READ is a concerted effort to reach secondary school students disengaged and disinterested in learning. It is directed at students who are in need of assistance with reading. The success of the intervention relies on the committed, collaborative efforts of students, parents, teachers, LSAs, volunteers, and the Kindergarten staff and students of feeder schools.

AIMS

- ✓ Improve the literacy learning opportunities and outcomes of disengaged and disinterested students in the middle years and secondary schools
- ✓ Showcase effective literacy practice that incorporates authentic and meaningful activities
- ✓ Develop a model of literacy support that can be adapted in all classrooms across disciplines
- ✓ Adopt innovative and cutting-edge literacy practices and the use of technology
- ✓ Educate support personnel (LSAs, support teachers, volunteers) in effective ways to work with, and support, struggling readers
- ✓ Instigate a mentoring model that includes 1:1 tutoring and “buddy reading”

WHY?

Growing Concern

There is an increase in the number of pupils experiencing reading difficulties in secondary classrooms. When this is combined with budgetary cuts and staff shortages, limited services are available to students. The provision of intervention programs in secondary schools is virtually nonexistent and secondary schools are baffled to know how to accommodate the growing number of students who present with literacy needs.

Shame and embarrassment

Resistance, resignation and/or the reluctance to try are just a few of the reasons students give for not seeking reading assistance. Too often, adolescents with reading problems choose to remain invisible, withdraw or disengage in learning.

Adolescence and motivation

Adolescence can coincide with a decline in motivation and engagement. Boys in particular often disengage in school learning and consistently outnumber girls in remedial programs and score lower in national literacy tests. Three factors are essential to motivating reluctant readers: literacy practices that connect outside with inside school -- students need opportunities to connect what they are learning with their passions and interests outside of school; the use of technology; and opportunities to develop self-efficacy. Literacy tasks need to be meaningful as opposed to “mindless” and students must be trusted to make choices about what they read and write

PRINCIPLES OF I-READ

i-READ is based on four research-based principles:

- *Students engage in authentic learning experiences* – real reading and writing for real purposes. Literacy is best learned when it serves real purposes and is linked to the interests and future aspirations of the student. Authentic literacy activities are defined as activities in the classroom that replicate and reflect literacy activities that occur in students’ lives outside of school and instructional contexts.
- *Students are given responsibility and choice in what they read and write.* I-read adopts strategies that are “collaborative, dialogic, and responsive to the lives and needs of the learners” (Auerbach, 1993; Freire, 1993; Horton, as cited in Glen, 1996; Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000). Choice abounds in a diversity of ways -- students select and keep a log of the books/texts they read from the in-class library or on the e-reader. They write about topics of their choice that are published for a real audience. On a weekly basis, they receive support

and guidance from trained LSAs who discuss what they are reading and work on aspects of their writing.

They have extended periods of time to engage fully with a text and spend at least 20 minutes of the 45 minute 1:1 session reading aloud with the LSA/teacher. Students then negotiate the number of pages they will read before their next 1:1 session.

In addition, students are encouraged to change their perceptions about reading and of themselves as readers, by adopting the role of expert in “Buddy Read” with Kindergarten children. The students are responsible for selecting picture books and reading aloud to kindergarten children.

- *Students are encouraged to be self-regulating.* If disengaged students are to re-engage then self-regulation has to be a critical component of the process. Zimmerman (2000) states, “Perhaps our most important quality as humans is our capability to self-regulate” and for these students this is often the most challenging aspect of learning. Accountability is built into the model in various ways, for example, they are accountable to their “buddies” and LSAs through the use of the reading log.
- *Collaboration at the core*

Struggling readers need to know they can trust those with who they risk reading. Shame, humiliation, and embarrassment have to be eliminated for the struggling reader to make the changes necessary to achieve success. Collaboration between student and student, students and LSAs, and students and teachers/parents is essential. Students require opportunities to interact, listen, negotiate, turn take and give feedback. Through these activities students develop a sense of belonging and security.

STRATEGIES

i-Read uses the following evidence-based strategies known to eliminate the threat, embarrassment or anxiety associated with struggling reading. These strategies focus on comprehension and “meaningfulness”. The strategies allow the reader to emulate what a good reader does.

LSAs are trained in the use of these strategies. LSAs work with students twice per week for 45 minutes. During this time the following strategies are adopted.

- 1. Reading aloud a self-selected book** (approximately 20 minutes) Strategies such as echo, shared, paired and NIM are used to give the reader access to the books chosen. During this time, it is essential that the student does the majority of reading. Struggling readers tend to avoid reading out aloud and have had few opportunities to read uninterrupted. Reading aloud without interruption allows the student to gain a sense of confidence and develop a feeling for what it means to be a successful reader.

A fundamental rule of i-Read is that students should only read books they love. Students who are bored with a book are responsible for replacing with one he/she loves. A selection of “hot books” that inspire adolescents to read is readily available.

Favourite adolescent authors - Andy Griffiths, Michael Morpurgo, Pittacus Lore, Jeff Kinney, Shamini Flint and Roy Apps.

Series - Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Boys Beast, and Captain Underpants.

Factual texts based on students’ interests – horse books, biographies, history, war books, science, amazing facts, Guinness World Records

Magazines- football magazines, motocross, motorbike.

At the completion of the reading time, the Reading log is completed and a commitment made to the number of pages to be read by the next meeting. Students keep a log of the books they

read, the number of pages completed and rate their opinion of the book. It is extremely important for students to commit to reading a specified number of pages by the following session. The students nominate the number of pages and sign the reading log as a way of acknowledging their commitment. It is entirely the student's decision regarding the number of pages to be read.

During reading time with the LSA, students are supported with echo, shared, paired, or NIM reading. It is a time for students to build confidence, demonstrate strategies, and develop a love of reading.

2. Timed writing

At each session, students and the LSA participate in timed writing for five minutes. They complete their timed writing in their "Writer's Notebook". It is essential that the students experience writing without restriction and judgment. For many disengaged and struggling writers their avoidance strategies tend to justify not writing. The timing of the writing tends to eliminate procrastination. A sense of urgency is created and time limit makes the task doable. Students are told not to let spelling get in the way. Capturing the essence of the story is critical. Students are free to write about anything they choose.

3. Writing Assistance

At the end of the five minutes of timed writing and after reading aloud, students are asked if there is any assistance they would like regarding an aspect of their writing. If the response is yes, then the LSA would assist the student. Any writing assistance should be done on a separate piece of paper and not in the writer's notebook.

4. Dialogue journals

A dialogue journal is a notebook kept jointly between the LSA and student. Each enters a message to the other and the journal is exchanged after each entry. The LSA starts the dialogue with information that has been shared during the one-on-one time. The entry concludes with a question for the student to respond. The student responds during the week and brings the journal to the next reading time.

Not only does the journal serve as reading material, but it also gives the LSA an opportunity to respond to the student's writing by modelling correct spelling, punctuation, grammar etc back to the student via the journal entry. The idea is for the LSA to write an equivalent amount as the student. Leaving the student with a question at the end of the journal entry provides a starting point for the student to begin writing a response.

5. Buddy reading with Kindergarten

Linking i-Read students with kindergarten children at feeder Primary Schools ensures that the students have a real audience and purpose for reading aloud. Buddy reading starts in the third week and is undertaken for three weeks on a regular basis.

The students are instructed on how to read to young children and what they should consider when selecting a book. Each student selects two books to read. This activity leads to increased levels of self esteem and confidence.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is carried out prior to the students commencing the program and at the end. It is important that the assessment be separated from the program and if possible, it is advantageous to have the assessment completed by someone other than the LSAs or teachers working with the students. A number of literacy assessments are used to monitor the progress of the participants and make informed decisions to assist the student..

Dolch site word list

This is a list of 220 high frequency words and is simply used as a quick, reliable indicator of the student's familiarity with sight words.

Reading standardised test

The choice of test will vary from school to school depending on what assessments are in place. If there is no assessment in place, Compass could be considered:

Compass is an online literacy and numeracy assessment developed by the Australian Council for Education Research for adolescents and young adults. Compass uses a multiple choice format and is unique in that it promotes student engagement with the assessment by using age, content and ability appropriate prompts that aim to reflect the experiences and interests of the students taking the test.

It aims to provide teachers with detailed information about literacy and numeracy skills and achievement and cover a broad range of ability. There are three levels of tests in literacy and numeracy. They are: Blue = lower primary; Orange = middle primary; and Purple = upper primary/lower secondary.

The assessments are colour coded so that students are not aware of the level selected for their assessment. This is designed to minimise any potential loss of self esteem and to enhance engagement with the tests. In reading (literacy), the strands are:

- Text location and interpretation;
- Contextual understanding;
- Text language and knowledge.

Question types are spread out over various text types including:

- Informative;
- Argumentative; and
- Imaginative.

Date	Title of book	Author	Number of pages read today	Number of pages to be read by next week	Rate book out of 10
2/3	Boys vs Girls		10		
2/3	Flamingo	Mac Pate	200-77	page to finish	10/10
27/3	Boys vs Girls	Mike Pate	15		
27/3	Boys vs Girls	Mike Pate	16		6/10
3/4	Boys vs Girls	Mike Pate	24		8/10
	Boys vs Girls		145 (at home)		
10/4	Terrace		42-65		
	Boys vs Girls		Finished		9/10
01/5	Terrace	Mac Pate	Finished		9/10
3/5	Boys vs Girls	Mike Pate	7-25		

30 by next week.

Attitudinal Survey

The survey provides insights into students' thoughts about reading and their self-perceptions regarding reading. Through answering the questions, they perform a reading self-assessment based on their prior literacy experiences and where they think they are now. It also indicates the students' preferences in reading. Students are asked to describe the best reader they know giving insights into what he/she values when it comes to reading and what they may strive to achieve. They also explain the strategies used for processing unfamiliar words and how they feel about reading aloud, writing, and name the books they have enjoyed.

Running Record

A running record is one method of assessing a student's accuracy and types of errors/miscues. It can be used as a guide to the student's independent level and indicates the reader's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to using the cueing systems of reading.

Writing samples

A sample of each student's writing is collected at the beginning and end of the program. Students complete a timed writing experience at every session and this writing indicates progress over time in terms of expression, composition, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. It also provides a way of monitoring changes in the student's spelling.

First Steps Map of Development

In some schools, the *First Steps Map of Development* is used to monitor the progress of readers.

If this is the case, in the first week, I-Read student's reading is mapped against the First Steps Map of Development for reading. The Continua provides insights into what readers are achieving and serves to inform planning for further development. The Continua makes explicit some of the indicators, or descriptors of behavior that students apply when they construct and communicate meaning. The clustering of indicators into phases allows teachers to map overall progress. Individual students can exhibit a range of indicators from various phases at any one time. 'Key' indicators place students within a specific phase.

LOGISTICS

Students

The number of students attending i-Read is dependent upon the availability of support staff. Each student attends the reading mentoring sessions twice per week at a consistent time for 45 minutes. It is important to consider the classes from which students are being withdrawn – their class teachers need to be informed and allowances made for any assignments to be completed. The work students do during the i-read session could be substituted for other assessment tasks. Students should not be “punished” for attending i-READ. Where possible, students should not be removed from the classes they enjoy and in which they are succeeding. (If this happens, reading is often misconstrued as a punishment).

School requirements

1. Designated school coordinator. The success of the program is dependent upon the identification of one key staff member who monitors student progress, meets with LSAs, establishes the reading room and liaises with parents.
2. Designated room – should look like reading room, bookshelves, comfortable chairs, computers, posters
3. E-reader – these will require storage, charging facility, someone to load books
4. Quality literature – books to be on hand and a range of genres -- magazines, factual texts
5. Writer's notebooks – spiral bound books that do not look like school exercise books for all students and LSAs
6. Reading log and file for student to complete each session
7. Filing cabinet for the student logs and the record/notes kept by the LSAs on a session by session basis
8. Contact with feeder primary schools re the possibility of “Buddy Reading” with the kindergarten children. This is done on a regular basis for a minimum of 3 weeks. The timing of the 3 weeks is negotiated with the feeder schools.

Other logistical considerations

Commencement date?

Duration – depends on school calendar (10 weeks optimal)

Students absent from classes?

In-class assessments during i-READ

Duty of care?

Secure storage of student information

Exiting – students are not locked into the program for “life”. Once they have made significant gains and after consultation with the LSA, parents and students, the student is exited.

Parent feedback – how and when?

Celebrations – essential for student success to be celebrated

SCHEDULE

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Why</i>	<i>Who</i>
Week 0	<p>Identification of students</p> <p>Negotiation with parents and students</p> <p>Pre assessments completed</p> <p>Co ordinator and staff identified</p> <p>Room organised. Books available.</p> <p>Writer's notebooks, dialogue journals and kindles/e-readers purchased.</p>	<p>Establish baseline data</p> <p>Enlist parents in the process</p> <p>Self-selected students committed to literacy improvement</p>	<p>Co ordinator</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Students</p>
Week 1 2 days	<p>Whole school professional learning on understanding reading (2 hours)</p>	<p>Ensure everyone is reinforcing consistent messages regarding reading</p> <p>Create network of support for students in classrooms and mentoring situations</p> <p>Demonstrate strategies that are effective across all disciplines based on comprehending</p>	<p>Whole staff</p> <p>KL</p>
	<p>Parent workshop for parents of students in i-Read and other interested parents</p>	<p>Provide critical link in network of support</p> <p>Reinforce consistent message to students</p> <p>Celebrate their child's success</p>	<p>Parents</p> <p>KL</p>
	<p>LSA, volunteer, teachers in the program 1.5 day workshop</p>	<p>Understand the components of the program</p> <p>Learn strategies</p> <p>Resolve questions</p>	<p>LSAs.</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>KL</p>
Week 2-10	<p>Students commence</p>	<p>45 minutes twice per week</p>	<p>Students</p> <p>LSAs</p>
Week 5 and 10 One day x 2	<p>KL visit</p>	<p>Address any specific issues relating to students</p> <p>Consult with LSAs and co ordinator</p> <p>Talk with parents when necessary</p> <p>Interview and listen to students read</p>	<p>KL – meet with teachers in program, LSAs, students, parents</p> <p>Listen to students read</p>