

Ten Steps to Successful Reading Intervention with Struggling Readers

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1 Accurate assessment

Assessment before you start is really important. Make sure that you know your reader's real reading level. Eight in ten words should be read accurately if the book is to work for your pupil.

2 Praise and rewards

Every five minutes try and say something positive about the progress your pupil is making. Use a reward stamp frequently, once every fifteen minutes minimum.

3 Error free environment

Make each step in your lesson so simple that it's almost impossible for your pupil to trip up and get it wrong.

4 Over learning

Go over the same material again and again so that you really reinforce the lesson objectives.

5 Light touch phonics

Many weak readers are turned off by phonics. They have had a lot of over exposure to it in the early years of primary. So when you use phonic teaching methods, do it sparingly and for short periods of time. Five minutes is long enough.

6 Real reading opportunities

A good storyline with exciting characterisation and conflict is essential for your readers. They need to be truly engaged.

7 Fun and entertainment

Try and make your lessons varied and exciting. Praise and rewards are key to this, but so is the use of a bit of drama and role play.

8 Mixed bag of interventions

Variety is key. Pupils like a routine but they like a routine that keeps them guessing and has a variety of teaching strategies. No single strategy will appeal to everybody in your group.

9 Involve parents

Parents often feel frustrated about the reading skills of their son or daughter. Try and get them to reinforce the reading process at home and participate in the praise and rewards system you are using at school.

10 Short, simple personal targets

Each pupil needs to know what they are aiming for. Explicit short term targets for each reading session are very helpful, especially when reinforced with rewards and praise. This makes target setting entertaining.