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*Sincerely,
Karen Haag*

10 Tips for Changing to a Proficient Reader Classroom REGARDLESS OF CONTENT WE TEACH

1. Students read for significant amounts of time and talk about what they're reading.
2. Teachers show students how to live literate lives. Teachers reflect on our learning and share it with each other and with students. Lead students to understand the importance of using these strategies for life.
3. Teachers set up classrooms with spaces conducive for talking and working. In particular, no matter the size of the classroom, teachers make a gathering space available.
4. Students create their own literacy notebooks for taking notes (daybooks), recording their thinking in the moment, assessing their progress, and setting and resetting goals. Teachers model how to respond to texts in ways that help students read better and prepare for life. Students select their best thinking to share with us.
5. Teachers think aloud, modeling how to use each strategy, preferably one strategy at a time. First, teachers analyze our own reading process so that we understand what we do. Then, we think aloud our reading and writing strategies so as to model the complexity of comprehension for children.
6. Teachers and children analyze mentor texts so children envision what is possible. Choosing meaty texts is critical so that we have something to discuss and wonder about.
7. Teachers create an environment that encourages risk-taking, questioning, problem solving and mistake making. Teachers and children question. Children ask and discuss questions they have about text in small groups.
8. As we demonstrate how to use the proficient reader strategies, students learn to select the strategies that match the reading task. Give students choice whenever possible: of text to read, how to respond, how to talk, how to use a daybook, etc.
9. Structure lessons so that we gradually release responsibility through this series of steps: show students how, then practice together, and then ask readers to use their strategies independently, reflect on what worked and what still needs work. As a community, make suggestions for how to improve comprehension.
10. Know each child through conferring and assessing. Grade what we value: meaningful discussion, setting goals, assessing goals, reflection, problem solving, and using reading strategies.



Going School-wide

1. Provide embedded professional development for teachers and assistants.
2. Encourage teachers and assistants to set personal goals.
3. Inform instruction with data from assessment. Ask students to set personal goals.
4. To get started, study a reading strategy per month to focus conversation with all staff. Use announcements, bulletin boards, meetings, and conversations in the halls to get school-wide conversation started.
5. Use lead teachers, reading specialists, or consultants to demonstrate lessons for your teachers and students on site.
6. Provide suggestions for lessons, collaboration ideas, and resources through a weekly newsletter.
7. Conduct book studies with staff.
8. Use closed-circuit television to highlight students explaining their newly gained understanding of using strategies to comprehend. (Optional, but helpful!)