

Moving from a Striving Reader to a Thriving Reader

Retention Prevention for
Secondary Students

Objective

- Discuss and understand how a customized reading program that addresses and targets struggling readers' brings students to grade level and gives them the confidence to believe in themselves.

Presentation By:

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Doral Academy Charter Middle School

- District – Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- Number of Students –
- Demographics –
- Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch –
- Percent of English Language Learners –
- Percent of Students with Disabilities –

The Reality

- Approximately 8 MILLION students between 4th and 12th grade struggle to read at grade level.
- Some 70% of older readers require remediation

Supporting Struggling Readers

- Meet students at their present reading level
- Help students be aware of their current level
- Work with students to accept current level and take responsibility for future
- Give students confidence in their abilities

Reading Instruction

- Every sixth-grader takes reading
 - Regular or advanced reading course based on fifth-grade FCAT achievements
- Teachers use several indicators to determine future placement
 - Maze Test
 - Benchmark Assessments
 - D.A.R. Assessment (if needed)
 - FCAT

Teacher Role

- Aware of students' specific challenges by the time they administer the D.A.R.
- Treat students as individuals
- Provide differentiated instruction
- Reciprocal Teaching

Phonics Instruction

- 7th and 8th grade students who struggle with decoding receive Phonics instruction
 - Prefixes, suffixes, root words, strategies to derive meaning
 - *Intensive Reading Plus Class*
 - *Intensive Class*
- Standard procedure in Dade County

Reading Classes

- Seldom use drill sheets
- Use real life scenarios that increase students' acceptance of reading
- Students come to class with one motivator – to get out of intensive and into regular classes

Students in *Intensive* Classes

- View themselves as lesser
- Feel punished and don't believe in themselves
- Need positive encouragement and motivators
- NEED TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

Positive Motivators

- Make students believe in themselves
- Encourage students through baby steps – mini accomplishments – in the reading process
- Eventually perform successfully on FCAT
- Produce more confident students who try harder

Reading Program at Doral

- Persuades students to believe in themselves
- Proves that reading can be fun
- Breaks down the reading process
- Allows for individualized instruction at student specific level

Relevant to Students

- Reading is interesting to students because program presents ideas and notions relevant to student age group
- Deals with current issues
- Real-life scenarios
- Students identify with reading articles
- Program is guided by students of their same age group

Technology Component

- Key to motivation
- Program has computer games that are educational
- Makes student feel comfortable in learning environment
- Students look forward to “playing” games
- Technology reinforces classroom teachings
- Teachers and students lead

Student Reactions

- Teach each other
- Love group work
- Don't mind reading outloud
- Love the different topics:
 - For example:
 - Forensics
 - The Brain
 - Their Bodies
 - The Environment
 - Lives of the Rich and Famous

Willingness to Share

- Students LIKE sharing their opinion
- Teachers aware of peer grouping
- Discussions need guidance
- Students discover expository text, fact and opinion, and compare and contrast

Interesting Topics

- Students love to learn and give their opinion about:

Forensics

The Brain

The Anatomy of their body

The Environment

The Rich and Famous

Teachers Provide Guidance

- Teachers are aware that Peer Grouping discussions need to lead students to discover the areas of the reading process that will give them strength in their abilities.
- Students develop skills to recognize Expository Text; fact and opinion, compare and contrast.
- Teachers guide students to become aware of their Lexile scores to self-monitor their own progress.
- Students receive clear understanding of their goal setting for the year.

DVD Magic

- Students look forward to watching short DVD's that are linked to the non-fiction text they love.
- Students identify with the adolescents that talk to them on the DVD's and are interested in the short factual information presented.
- Students retain a higher percentage of the content when presented in this form.

Guest Speakers

- A guest speaker joined us from Alaska to discuss the Iditarod race (a topic previously learned in a lesson) with the students.
- Students responded very positively by being enthusiastic. The Iditarod speaker made a huge impression on the students when he told them the race passed in front of his house.
- Students have also had the opportunity to hear a children's book author who inspire them with his own reading challenges to love reading and writing.

Adolescents Want Rewards Too!

- Adolescents are daydreamers.
- Adolescents have hope.
- Adolescents look forward to extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. They love to be praised, they even love stickers.
- Educators can continue to instill the love of reading in students throughout their education.
- Educators are the positive reinforcement that will serve adolescents as the foundation for a good attitude about learning.

I Believe in You!

- Most of us have been inspired by one person or another that has given us the “extra push” just by saying: “I believe in your abilities; I believe that you can make it.”
- As educators it is our mission to constantly remind students that they can achieve. I believe this will give way to a stronger, healthier self-esteem in an adolescent.