Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties

The Reading
Teacher's Sourcebook

by

Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D.
Children's Learning Institute
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D.
Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk
University of Texas at Austin

Jade Wexler, Ph.D.
University of Maryland, College Park

Deanna Bryan

and

Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
University of Texas at El Paso

PAUL H. BROOKES PUBLISHING CO®

Baltimore • London • Sydney

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775
© 2012 | All rights reserved

Contents

About the Authors ix
Acknowledgments xi

Introduction 1

I **Assessing Struggling Readers at the Secondary Level** 3
Terms to Know 3

1 A Schoolwide Approach to Reading Intervention 5
Tier I: Schoolwide Strategies and Routines 6
Tier II: Strategic Intervention 9
Tier III: Intensive Intervention 10
Implementing a Schoolwide Reading Intervention Approach 10

2 Overview of Assessment at the Secondary Level 15
The Sequence of Assessment 17

3 Selecting and Administering Assessments 19
Assessing Reading Fluency 20
Assessing Word Recognition 24
Monitoring Student Progress Over Time 25
Caveats About Oral Reading Fluency in Middle School Students 26
Outcome Assessments 27

4 Using Assessment Results to Plan Instruction 29
Grouping Students for Instruction 29
Determining the Instructional Focus 30
Setting Short-Term Goals with Students 32
Scheduling Small-Group Instruction 33
An Alternative Schedule for Reading Intervention Classes 34
Managing Small-Group Instruction 34

II **Effective Instruction for Struggling Readers**

5 Components of Effective Instruction 39
Terms to Know 39
Statement of Objective or Purpose 40
Daily Review 40
Explicit Modeling and Teaching 41
Guided Practice 41
Independent Practice 43
Teaching for Generalization 44
Monitoring Student Learning 44
Periodic Review and/or Multiple Opportunities for Practice 44

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775
© 2012 | All rights reserved

6 Delivering Effective Instruction 47
Terms to Know 47
Explicit Instruction 48
Targeted Instruction 49
Time on Task 49
Quick Pacing of Lessons 50
Positive Feedback 51
Corrective Feedback 51
Engaged Reading Practice 52
Address Student Motivation 52

III Research-Supported Instructional Practices 55
Terms to Know 56
Sample Lessons in this Book 56

7 Comprehension 59
Sample Lesson: Before-, During-, and After-Reading Comprehension: Previewing Text and Question Generation 61
Sample Lesson: Before-, During-, and After-Reading Comprehension: Generating Level 1 (Right-There) Questions 69
Sample Lesson: Before-, During-, and After-Reading Comprehension: Generating Level 2 (Putting-It-Together) Questions 76
Sample Lesson: Before-, During-, and After-Reading Comprehension: Generating Level 3 (Making-Connections) Questions 81
Sample Lesson: During Reading: Mental Imagery Log 86
Sample Lesson: During Reading: Main Idea Strategy 91
During Reading: Identifying Text Structures and Using Graphic Organizers 98
Sample Lesson: After Reading: Summarizing Text 113
Sample Lesson: After Reading: Wrap-Up/Main Idea Log 118

8 Vocabulary 123
Terms to Know 123
Word Types 124
Choosing Words to Teach 125
Explicitly Teaching Word Meanings 126
Word Knowledge 127
Word Consciousness 128
Word Learning 129
Sample Lesson: Word Knowledge: Semantic Mapping 130
Sample Lesson: Word Knowledge: Semantic Feature Analysis 138
Sample Lesson: Word Knowledge: Generating Examples and Nonexamples 147
Sample Lesson: Word Consciousness: Prepared Participation 154
Sample Lesson: Word Consciousness: Possible Sentences 158
Sample Lesson: Word Learning: The Word-Part Strategy 164
Sample Lesson: Word Learning: Using Context Cues 174
Sample Lesson: Word Learning: The Outside-In Strategy 182

9 Fluency 191
Terms to Know 191
Why Teachers Should Consider Fluency with Middle School Readers 191
Caveats About Oral Reading Fluency in Middle School Students 192
Assessing Oral Reading Fluency 192
Instruction to Support Reading Fluency 192

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

Sample Lesson: Partner Reading 195
Sample Lesson: Readers' Theater 197
Sample Lesson: Audio- or Computer-Assisted Reading 199

10 Word Recognition 201
Terms to Know 201
Introduction 202
Teaching Students to Recognize Syllable Patterns in Words 202
What Do Students Need to Know About Syllables? 203
Syllable Types 203
A Strategy for Reading Multisyllable Words 205
Planning and Implementing Word-Recognition Instruction 206
Sample Lesson: Word Recognition: The Multisyllable Word Reading Strategy 210
Sample Lesson: Word Recognition: The Silent *e* Syllable Type 216
Selecting an Effective Reading Intervention Program 222
Students Who Do Not Respond Adequately to Intervention 222
Conclusion 230

References 231
Appendix 237
Index 303
Permissions 311

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

About the Authors

Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., is Associate Professor in the Children's Learning Institute, part of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. A former teacher, she conducts research in schools focused on reading intervention, response to intervention models, coaching as a form of professional development, and reading comprehension. Her current projects include a study of reading comprehension in middle and high school students, a study of interventions for elementary-age children who have both attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and severe reading difficulties, and a project developing a Tier 2 first-grade intervention that targets both decoding and comprehension. She has served as the head of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Project, an initiative of the Texas Education Agency focused on the development of intervention approaches for struggling middle school readers. Dr. Denton is the coauthor of three other books, including a reading intervention program for the early grades and two books on the role of the reading coach, as well as numerous articles and book chapters. She has made presentations and provided training to teachers, administrators, coaches, researchers, and university faculties throughout the United States and in Europe and Hong Kong.

Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., holds the H.E. Hartfelder/Southland Corp. Regents Chair in Human Development and is Executive Director of the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, an organized research unit at the University of Texas at Austin. She was Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* and Co-editor of *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*. She is the recipient of the Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Research Award, the American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group Distinguished Researcher Award, the International Reading Association Albert J. Harris Award, and the University of Texas Distinguished Faculty Award. Dr. Vaughn is the author of numerous books and research articles that address the reading and social outcomes of students with learning difficulties. She is currently the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on several Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, and *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development research grants investigating effective interventions for students with reading difficulties and students who are English language learners. She is the author of more than 10 books, 150 peer-reviewed research articles, and 50 chapters.

Jade Wexler, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Wexler has almost 15 years of experience as a teacher and researcher in the field of special education. She earned her Ph.D. in Special Education (Learning Disabilities and Behavior Disorders) in 2007 from the University of Texas at Austin, where she remains a fellow in the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk Dropout Prevention Institute. She has extensive experience directing large-scale studies (funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Institute of Education Sciences, the Meadows Foundation, and the Greater Texas Foundation) investigating high-quality interventions for students with significant reading difficulties and students at risk for dropping out of school. Her current research focuses on investigating effective practices for adolescents with reading difficulties, including those in the juvenile justice system. She also investigates methods to decrease dropout rates and increase school engagement for students at risk for dropping out of school.

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

Deanna Bryan began her teaching career working with children with severe disabilities. While teaching in a life skills classroom, she met a student that she believed could learn to read. She began tutoring this student one on one and this is where her passion for teaching reading began. Ms. Bryan spent most of her teaching career working with middle school students. She was a public school special education reading teacher for 9½ years before going to work for the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. At the Vaughn Gross Center, she worked as a research assistant and then as an instructional coach. She was also a member of the development team for the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies. Ms. Bryan believes middle school teachers are special and feel they are called to work with this unique age group. She hopes that this book will serve these teachers well. Ms. Bryan currently resides in Austin, Texas, with her husband and two children.

Deborah Reed, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Texas at El Paso. She has spent 19 years working with adolescents as a middle and high school teacher, technical assistance provider, and researcher. While at the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, Dr. Reed served as Principal Investigator of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies, which resulted in the training of more than 21,000 content area and intervention teachers. She has also assisted the Florida Center for Reading Research and the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt in developing teacher-friendly resources for addressing adolescent literacy issues in both general and special education settings. Her publications have appeared in *Scientific Studies of Reading, Reading Psychology, Preventing School Failure, Research in Middle Level Education, Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, Learning Disability Quarterly*, and *Educational Assessment*.

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

Chapter 6

Delivering Effective Instruction

Are there teacher behaviors that make a difference in student learning? Absolutely. Teachers who have a repertoire of certain teaching behaviors are more effective than teachers who are unaware of these practices. The teaching skills and strategies proven to improve student learning can be thought of as "features of effective instruction." Through learning and practicing these skills, teachers can have a positive impact on the progress of their students, especially those with learning difficulties, often resulting in a heightened sense of empowerment and confidence for the teachers.

Some important elements of effective instruction for students with reading difficulties (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2002; Vaughn & Bos, 2012) include the following:

- Explicit instruction
- Targeted instruction
- Time on task
- Quick pacing of lessons
- Positive feedback
- Corrective feedback
- Student motivation

TERMS TO KNOW

autonomy	Personal independence
corrective feedback	Specific clarification provided by the teacher to give students information about their errors
explicit instruction	Instruction that is clear and obvious so that students do not have to guess what they are expected to learn
motivation	A feeling of interest or enthusiasm that makes a student want to complete a task or improve his or her skills
positive feedback	Specific praise provided by the teacher to reinforce students' correct responses and encourage student effort

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

quick pacing of lessons	Instruction that moves at a manageable pace for students while taking advantage of every minute; minimizes unnecessary teacher talk and transition time between activities
scaffolding	Adjusting and extending instruction so that students are able to be successful with challenging tasks; temporary and removed when no longer needed
scope and sequence	The content and objectives included in a curriculum and the order in which they are presented
self-regulation	A student's ability to monitor his or her own progress and make adjustments to complete a task as necessary
targeted instruction	Instruction that is based on assessments; targets student weaknesses, builds on strengths, and is designed to teach students exactly what they need to learn
time on task	Time when students are actively engaged in learning and applying what they have learned

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

When instruction is explicit, students know exactly what they are expected to learn. To provide a clear objective to the student, the objective must first be clear to the teacher. That is why the instructional planning discussed in the previous chapter is so important. **Explicit instruction** is provided through the following:

- A clear statement of the objective
- Modeling
- Demonstration
- Understandable explanation

The following is an example of explicitly teaching the sight word *through*: *Point to the word* through *on a flashcard or the board.*

Teacher: This word is *through*. It is an irregular word because the "o-u" makes the sound /ew/ and the "g-h" is silent. Let's read a sentence with the word *through* in it.

Students: When the Prince of Wales went through the door, he realized everyone was there to make him King.

Teacher: Great reading. You remembered that "t-h-r-o-u-g-h" is *through.*
In this sentence *through* means that he passed into the room.
Now, each of you think of a sentence with the word *through* in it.

The teacher calls on 2–4 students (including nonvolunteers) and they use the word *through* in sentences.

Still pointing to the word.

Teacher: What word?

Students: *Through.*

The teacher may ask individual students to read the word and then ask the group to read a list of previously learned words including the new word. The teacher also may ask the students to read sentences or paragraphs containing the word *through.*

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775
© 2012 | All rights reserved

The previous scenario is a simple example of explicit instruction. The main idea is this: Teachers should not make students guess or infer what they are supposed to learn; therefore, it is important to know the objectives of lessons and to express these objectives simply and clearly to your students.

TARGETED INSTRUCTION

Targeted instruction is instruction based on the results of ongoing student assessments. Essentially, teachers use the information gathered from assessments to determine what students need to learn. Assessment should be the first order of business at the beginning of the year or when a student first begins the reading class. Refer to Section I: Assessing Struggling Readers at the Secondary Level for an in-depth discussion. Assessment is essential for identifying each student's strengths and needs. Following the initial assessment, it is important to collect relevant data regularly to define students' progress or lack of progress in areas such as fluency, comprehension, and word recognition. This regular observation of students' learning should guide the teacher's design of instructional objectives and adaptations and indicate when reteaching is needed.

One way to support students' specific learning needs is through **scaffolding**. An effective teacher scaffolds to help a student move from what he or she already knows to new learning. With appropriate scaffolding or support, a student will be able to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be impossible to accomplish independently. Teaching struggling readers requires that the teacher be constantly aware of where students are in their learning and where they need to be. Instructional support, or scaffolding, is temporary and should be taken away as soon as a student is able to perform a task without help. Just as a father hanging onto the seat of his daughter's bike while she is learning to ride will eventually let go and watch her glide down the street on her own, an effective teacher must know when to support a student and when to encourage independence. Subsequently, once a task has been mastered, an effective teacher will raise expectations and provide necessary support, thus repeating the cycle of scaffolding.

Examples of scaffolding include but are not limited to the following:

- Choosing text at the student's instructional level so that the text is challenging for the student but he or she is capable of reading it with support
- Providing a partial response to a question and asking the student or students to complete it
- Acknowledging a partially correct response and helping the student correct or refine it
- Organizing tasks into smaller steps
- Connecting the topic of instruction to students' prior knowledge and experience
- Providing hints rather than telling a student an answer or moving on to another student when the first student does not respond

TIME ON TASK

Time on task refers to the time students are actively engaged in learning and applying what they have learned (Carroll, 1963). On-task behavior is usually observable. Student behaviors that would indicate time on task include the following:

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

- Making direct eye contact with the teacher
- Giving answers to the teacher's questions that are directly relevant to instruction
- Asking the teacher to clarify instructional information
- Applying a strategy or skill appropriately
- Performing an instructionally relevant task appropriately

Effective teachers continually monitor their classrooms for active engagement in the lesson and know how to employ techniques designed to increase time on task. Some effective techniques include the following (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2002):

- Plan activities that require students to be actively involved, with a minimum amount of time spent sitting and listening.
- Provide positive feedback to students who are on task.
- Question students frequently. To maximize student engagement, ask the question first, then pause briefly before selecting a student to answer. This will help ensure that all students think actively about the question because they do not know who will be called on to answer it.
- Set a timer to ring at random intervals, and award students who are on task when the timer rings.
- Provide ample visuals and materials to make learning concrete.
- Have classroom routines in place to minimize transition times and ensure that all students know and practice the routines.

If struggling readers are to close the gap with their peers, they must make progress at a faster rate than average readers, which requires increased instructional time (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). It is imperative, therefore, that instruction be designed deliberately to decrease downtime and increase students' time on task.

QUICK PACING OF LESSONS

Quick pacing of lessons increases time on task and instructional time (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). Effective teachers are constantly aware of their instructional pacing in relation to the responsiveness of their students. Planning is a prerequisite to quick pacing. To move at a pace that is manageable for students but that also keeps them actively engaged, an effective teacher must adequately plan the content to be covered and the instructional activities used to teach and practice the objectives.

It is important that teachers use data from assessments to help plan their lessons. Effective teachers know their students' strengths and needs and set objectives based on those needs. Next, they must consider the **scope and sequence** of the curriculum. This refers to the amount of material to be covered and the order in which it will be presented. It is difficult to modify the pacing, or speed of instruction, if the scope and sequence are not clear. Some school districts have curriculum guides with a suggested scope and sequence for each grade level. This may be an excellent resource. Remember, however, that struggling readers may need a modified curriculum that takes into account their areas of need. Teachers might want to think of themselves as emergency room doctors who treat their students' greatest needs first. For example, perhaps a teacher has a student who is unable to write a multiparagraph essay and also is unable to read more than 60 WCPM on grade level text. Which is more critical? Although there are important writing standards

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

for middle school students, the greater need is fluent reading. Assessment and progress monitoring can lead a teacher to a "diagnosis," and strong instructional design can help the teacher provide the "treatment" effectively.

Besides quick pacing across lessons, pacing within lessons should be energetic with little downtime. Pacing is improved when teachers are well organized and when students know and use routines for transitions and activities. Furthermore, adequate planning for active student involvement reduces behavior difficulties. Behavior problems may increase if students are bored or lessons are too easy or too difficult.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Positive feedback is authentic and specific. For example, "Good job! Well done!" and "Way to go!" are less meaningful to students than, "I can see that you are previewing the chapter by looking at the charts and graphs; good strategy" or, "You recognized the open syllable in that word; nice work." If a teacher continually gives out praise with no observation to back it up, then older struggling readers will notice. They may assume that empty praise from a teacher is a sign that they are not doing anything worthy of sincere praise. It can be useful to praise an unsuccessful effort provided you specifically praise the *attempt* but also correct the mistake. For example, if a student misreads a word, you may say, "You read the first syllable of the word correctly. The word has three syllables; try reading the second and third and putting them together to read the word."

Appropriate statements for positive feedback include the following:

- "You recognized the parts of that word. Good work."
- "Very impressive that you remembered how to write that word."
- "You are following the steps of the strategy so carefully! That should help you understand what you are reading."
- "Nice job of making notes while you read. That should help you remember what you are reading."
- "You read that passage with so much expression. Nice work."

CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Corrective feedback provides students with information about their mistakes. If a student continually performs a task, applies a strategy, or reads a word incorrectly, then the student essentially is practicing the mistake and the mistake will become a bad habit.

When giving corrective feedback, there are a few things to remember. Corrective feedback is simply providing information and, therefore, should be given in a neutral tone. Your classroom needs to be a place where older struggling readers are not afraid to make mistakes—a place where students know that you understand their instructional needs and that you will support and challenge them appropriately. When giving corrective feedback, try not to provide the feedback too quickly. Give the student time to self-correct.

Appropriate statements for corrective feedback include the following:

- After pointing to the paragraph where important information about a comprehension question resides: "This paragraph will tell you why the octopus is often near larger fish. See if you can reread the paragraph and find the answer."

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

- “The word you wrote is *signal*. Can you write *single*?”
- “That’s not quite right. Can you take another look?”
- “Yes, that is partially correct. Can you give me more information?”
- “Very close. This word is *special*.”

To give corrective feedback, you may simply provide a correct model and have students repeat the correct response two or three times: “Watch me. I’ll show you how to use the strategy.” (Model the strategy again.)

ENGAGED READING PRACTICE

Even though it is very important to teach students strategies and skills to improve reading outcomes, it is absolutely essential that students are given ample time every day to actively engage in reading. To be engaged in reading, students need to have a purpose for reading, as well as interesting text that is at an appropriate level so that they can appreciate and understand what they are reading. Sustained silent reading (SSR) is popular but is not associated with improved reading outcomes, perhaps because many students are not engaged appropriately in reading. If a student chooses a book to read during SSR that is not at an appropriate level, the student will most likely be looking at pictures instead of reading. The student might be quiet but will probably not be reading.

Students may engage in reading in a variety of formats. Individual silent reading is appropriate if text is on the students’ instructional or independent reading levels. With difficult text, it may be more appropriate to have students read orally with the support of a peer (as in partner reading), but “round robin” reading in which students take turns reading a paragraph or section while others follow along is not likely to actively engage students in reading. Other, more useful grouping formats for engaged oral reading practice include peer partners and small groups that meet with the teacher. Partner reading is described in detail in Chapter 9. When students read orally in a small group, the teacher is able to provide appropriate text, scaffold students when they struggle, and prompt students to apply the reading skills and strategies they are learning.

ADDRESS STUDENT MOTIVATION

When designing instruction for middle school readers, it is essential to think about **motivation**. One of the greatest challenges that teachers of older struggling readers face is motivating these students to persevere in their quest to improve their reading. Teachers can help increase student motivation by encouraging **autonomy**, or personal independence; making learning relevant; and teaching students how to self-regulate.

Generally speaking, adolescents are in search of control, autonomy, and independence. Adolescence is a time of exploring how to gain and handle this control. By creating a classroom environment that encourages autonomy, teachers can support the urge for independence in their students. First, teachers can be aware of this need and create opportunities for their students to make their own choices. For example, teachers may allow their students to choose their own reading material when appropriate (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Reed, Schallert, Beth, & Woodruff, 2004). Simply giving students a choice between two passages to read when practicing a new strategy or skill may encourage student engagement.

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

Another way to encourage student autonomy is to develop a classroom library. The presence of diverse and abundant reading material in the classroom is invaluable (Guthrie, Schafer, Von Secker, & Alban, 2000). As teachers get to know their students, they become aware of their students' interests and can keep these interests in mind while ordering books for the classroom or walking the aisles of a discount bookstore. Students are appreciative when they know teachers have added a book to the classroom library "for them." It may take some time to collect and/or purchase reading material that is of high interest to students. A classroom library is a work in progress, growing each year with the needs and interests of different students. This type of library may consist of books from several different genres such as fiction, nonfiction, action and adventure, mystery, poetry, joke books, classics, childhood favorites, autobiography and/or biography, short stories, sports, and historical fiction. A classroom library also may include baskets of comic books, magazines, newspapers, and books by popular authors. Teachers must focus on the high demands of the curriculum, and, as noted earlier, SSR programs cannot replace effective instruction. However, even 10–15 minutes of independent reading time each week gives students the opportunity to select their own reading material and to feel a sense of empowerment. It is not uncommon for students to get hooked quickly when reading books of their own choosing and then want to check out the books to finish reading at home. Middle school students often will check out books to read to a younger sibling at home.

Another aspect of motivation is relevance. If you can show students how the content of the lesson is truly relevant or important to them, then they will be more likely to tune in and engage in the lesson. To show students this relevance successfully, teachers must first determine students' needs and try to understand what is relevant to them. Swan (2004) gives several examples of how teachers can help their students make concrete connections to what they are learning. For example, as an introduction to the concept of *revolution,* a social studies teacher might show his class a 10-minute video clip from an episode of the cartoon *The Simpsons* in which the character Bart and his friends take over a summer camp run by abusive camp counselors. The more teachers listen to students and understand what is important to them, the easier it will be to adapt teaching to make classroom activities relevant to students (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). Although motivation is important, teachers must take care not to shortchange instructional time. Motivation alone will probably not improve reading outcomes.

A primary goal of teachers' efforts to motivate students is to encourage them to develop **self-regulation**. Students with high self-regulation are able to monitor their own performance and redirect their approach to a task when they realize that their current approach is not productive (Reed et al., 2004). For example, imagine a group of students working together to complete an assignment. They are sitting by the window and are able to see several of their friends running around the track for gym class. The conversation drifts from the assignment to social conversation about their friends. A self-regulating student might suggest that the group find somewhere to sit away from the window so that they can concentrate and complete their task. It is important to instill in students this ability to self-regulate so that they will not only self-regulate in reading class but also in other classes, at home, and one day at college or work. One activity that may promote self-regulation is to have a class discussion to identify and list the smaller goals or substeps necessary to complete a particular assignment. Then, as students are working on the assignment, the teacher periodically may direct them to stop and ask themselves whether they are being productive. Is their current approach helping them to accomplish the substeps? Do they need to change how they are working in any way? By talking through this

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775

process with students, teachers give them guided practice in self-regulation (Reed et al., 2004).

Biancarosa and Snow (2004) noted that students must be competent to improve their reading performance but that competence alone is not enough. Competence must be accompanied by engagement to make reading performance gains, and neither is sufficient without the other. Fostering an environment that encourages both autonomy and self-regulation supports student engagement in learning, but this environment must be coupled with instructional support and guided practice designed to build reading competence (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). It is not enough to provide instruction to struggling middle school readers, but neither is it enough to attend to student motivation without providing effective instruction. The next section includes a description of instructional principles that are particularly important in teaching struggling readers. The following sections describe reading strategies and instructional practices that are supported by research. We hope these tools will be part of the foundation of effective instruction in your classroom.

Excerpted from Effective Instruction for Middle School Students with Reading Difficulties: The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook
by Carolyn A. Denton, Ph.D., Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D., Jade Wexler, Ph.D., Deanna Bryan, & Deborah Reed, Ph.D.
Brookes Publishing | www.brookespublishing.com | 1-800-638-3775