

The Class That READS

Best Practices for Primary Reading

By Etta Kaner, Cathy Miller-Davis, Judith Taylor, Jan Moxey



This curriculum insert offers a preview into the soon-to-be-released ETFO primary reading resource called *The Class That Reads*, written by Etta Kaner, Cathy Miller-Davis, Judith Taylor and Jan Moxey. Connected closely to current curriculum expectations, this resource is a primary teacher's "best practice guide" to the teaching of reading.

Developed as a result of a reading survey conducted by ETFO, *The Class That Reads* offers practical information, management ideas and support for the learner in all areas of the reading program. A reading wheel that displays the components of the reading program and the fundamental factors that affect reading in a primary classroom create a focus for the publication. A planner and parent booklet are also key features of this soon-to-be-released and not-to-be-missed resource.

This *Voice* insert provides a glimpse of one of the 10 reading components from the reading wheel, Independent Reading. Watch your steward's mailings or check the ETFO website at www.etfo.on.ca for ways to order your copy of this outstanding document.

**"To say that children learn to read by reading
is not to deny the need to provide explicit instruction
and many demonstrations in the classroom." J. Braunger and J. Lewis**

Independent Reading

How to do independent reading
Provide a range of materials, both fiction and non-fiction, for students to read.

Look for:

- Books that have been used previously in read aloud, shared or guided reading sessions.
- High quality well written texts that students can read independently.
- Books that have powerful illustrations and interesting, provocative text that will interest students.
- A variety of text forms: poetry, concept books, folk tales, fairy tales, picture books, nursery rhymes, pattern books, chants, literature from adventures to classics.
- Real world reading can be introduced through environmental print, newspapers, recipes, maps, brochures and children's magazines.

Establish a Silent Reading Time
During initial independent reading sessions, the teacher demonstrates how to select books and how to read independently.

Some points to remember:

- Allow students time to read the material and get involved with the text.
- Sometimes silent reading is assigned 15-20 minutes at the same time each day. This is referred to as DEAR – Drop Everything and Read, or USSR – Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading.

- Once routines are established some of the time could be used by the teacher to have reading conferences and to monitor student selection of materials.
- Students read their selected materials and record on a reading record form, such as the one accompanying this article. The form uses a colour guide so students can indicate the kind of materials they are reading.

Management of independent reading
Much of the success of the silent reading time will depend on how well the environment and the class is prepared. Here are some things to get ready before you start that will help ensure success.

- Display books with covers showing in order to assist students in finding books of interest.
- Display recent read-alouds, guided and shared reading books in the same place and easily accessible.
- Monitor student involvement and touch base with the students who require some assistance to locate what they want to read.
- Have interesting book displays or bins displayed by topic.
- Set up reading records where books will be recorded. A sample reading record is included here.
- Set up an author study area to display books from a variety of authors.

- Create a climate of support as students extend their efforts by selecting challenging reading materials.
- Have different kinds of books available.

Managing Student Movement and Involvement

Managing student movement as the children choose books to read is of vital importance, as is keeping each child involved in the activity.

- Keep book displays in different places in the room so students don't push or crowd in order to select books.
- Set a routine for selection early in the year so students realize they will not have unlimited time to find their selection.
- Set a predictable routine, such as the time of day, location of reading materials and storage of reading records to reduce the movement around the room.
- Allow students to find selections by table group, sock colour or birth months. This can reduce the frenzy of finding books.
- Have students select several books to keep with them to read. This will avoid needless wandering and exchanging books.
- Provide time for recording books that have been read.