

An Investigation of Reading Intervention Programs in a Junior Secondary School Setting

Submitted by

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Statement of Sources

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates key factors contributing to literacy development of underachieving readers in a junior secondary school. Two intervention programs designed to enhance the reading skills of eight underachieving readers in a junior secondary school were used. These eight individuals, of normal intelligence, had in common a history of reading difficulties. In the first of these programs eight students participated in a one-on-one reading intervention program using an adaptation of the program *Making A Difference* (Ministry of Education and Training, Victoria, 1992). In the second program four students from the above-mentioned cohort participated in a one-to-four intervention program involving the use of a Meta Language Awareness Program involving, among other things, Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar and Brown 1985) procedures. The underlying premise to this study is that underachieving readers are characteristically non-strategic and that through two explicit methods of instruction used they can improve their reading. A key to helping the participants break the cycle of failure in reading is to help them make the connection between effort in the use of particular reading strategies and success in the reading process.

This study reveals that struggling adolescent readers have many reasons for their difficulties with reading and require different approaches to the process of reading. However, with teacher persistence in appropriate conditions, and tailoring reading experiences to meet student needs, such individuals can become successful, engaged readers who enjoy reading.

A detailed analysis of one case, 'Sarah,' is presented since "it can provide insight into the class of events from which the case has been drawn" (Burns, 1995, p. 320). Evidence measured in tests and anecdotal records illustrate general findings about Sarah and the other seven participants.

Themes related to the participants' ultimate success in reading are elaborated in this thesis, not because they are thought to be unique but because they will most likely be recognisable to other teachers of struggling adolescent readers.
