

# **TIPs**

## **Techniques to Improve Practice Literacy**



### **Principal TIPs**

To move your school forward, the most important single thing you can do as an administrator is to make literacy the **#1** priority in your school community. There are many concrete steps that you can take to affect this crucial change:

#### **Spend Your Money Where It Does The Most Good: On Literacy**

- \* Allocate funds to hire a literacy coach who works in classrooms one-on-one with the teacher or with groups of teachers to strength literacy instruction.
- \* Allocate funds that help reduce the size of reading classes wherever possible.
- \* Choose good programs that match your standards and objectives.
- \* Be sure teachers and librarians have all of the materials needed to present these programs.
- \* Train teachers on literacy focused instructional skills through grade level meetings, study groups, and schoolwide professional dialogues.

#### **Allocate Time To Literacy**

- \* Focus a large portion of your professional development activities each year on literacy.
- \* Schedule large blocks of time, early in the day, for reading and language arts activities.
- \* Spend time in the classrooms during reading to support and monitor the program.
- \* Allocate time for assessment: both for individual students and the program at large.
- \* Spend time quarterly reviewing the data and scores on reading performance.

#### **Create An Appropriate Belief System**

- \* Set high standards of achievement for students and teachers.
- \* Believe in the students: All children can become proficient readers.
- \* Be a role model for literacy: Let students and faculty know that you believe in the importance of reading. Read to students and teachers. Be seen reading.
- \* Acknowledge successes. Students and teachers alike should be praised for advances, innovations, and achievement related to literacy.
- \* Promote joint responsibility for the success of the students. Teachers need to accept responsibility not just for the students in their room, but for all the children in the school.
- \* Lead and share the leadership. Leadership is a function, not a title. Enlist the help of others in this crucial activity.

#### **Reach Out**

- \* Stay abreast of the growing base of knowledge about literacy. Bring in experts when needed. Encourage teachers to read professional journals on literacy.
- \* Get parents into your school on a regular basis. Teach the parents what they can do to help their children be good readers. Encourage high expectations among parents.
- \* Expose students to learning experiences outside of the home or school. Cultural experiences, libraries, and museums expand the context of student learning and create life long learners.

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### **TeacherTIPs**

Reading and writing should be the focal point of most classroom instruction. Your classroom management and attitude will help you make the most of time spent with your students in reading and literacy development in all content areas.

#### **Manage Your Time And Resources**

- Schedule large blocks of time, early in the day, for reading, writing and language arts experiences.
- Structure lessons so students know what is expected of them and spend a maximum amount of time on task. Make resources available to students, make tasks clear.
- Provide a wide range of printed material for students. Books from different genres, magazines, and other assorted reading matter will pique student interest. Provide reading material from different levels.
- Explicitly identify and state the learning objectives/standards of every class lesson and homework assignment.
- Use all content areas to develop reading skills.

#### **Adjust The Attitudes**

- Express high expectations for all of your students. Apply 'academic press' to low achievers as well as high achievers.
- Hold students accountable for the completion and quality of their work.
- Insist on student cooperation for the completion of some classroom assignments.
- Make learning organic: Do not fragment the learning experience for students. Use reading strategies in all content areas. Make reading the central experience in social studies.
- Establish a structured classroom environment. Remember, discipline and order are things we do *for* students, not *to* them.
- Read and enjoy reading with your students.

#### **Provide Quality Instruction**

- A balanced literacy approach requires *phonics and comprehension skills*. Blend basal texts with first rate literature. Engage in guided, shared, and independent reading and writing.
- Offer students specific and personalized praise for the responses and work in class. Accent the positive aspects of their performance.
- Help students to clarify both their questions and their answers.
- Continually direct students towards higher order thinking skills: Move from concrete, factual questions towards questions that involve application, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas.
- To develop vocabulary necessary for reading, talk to students, explain terms, define concepts.
- Assess student performance regularly, more often for students that struggle. Be sure to use that information to tailor your instruction to meet student needs.

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### **Parents' TIPs**

Parents clearly have the highest stake in student achievement. The link between home and school has significant influence on the learning outcomes in the classroom. The home environment is most effective when it reinforces school practices and values.

#### **Create An Educating Family**

- Read to your children on a regular basis or listen to your children read.
- Let your children see you involved in reading for a variety of purposes: to obtain knowledge, to improve yourself, for work, for pleasure.
- Provide your children with a rich and varied supply of reading material. Use the library.
- Establish regular times dedicated to reading.
- Be available to help with homework, or contact the teacher if your child needs help.
- Provide a space and some basic tools for your child to do school work.
- Voice your high performance expectations to your child.
- Look for educational experiences outside of the home. Museums, cultural events, and the like will stimulate thinking on a wide range of subjects.
- Take control of your child's leisure time. You have the power to direct their energy and focus towards meaningful learning experiences, especially reading.
- Praise your child for their reading and writing achievements.

#### **Connect With The School**

- Be proactive in your communications with teachers, school administration, and district agencies.
- Make a point of understanding district goals, school wide policies, and teacher expectations for reading and writing.
- Attend school functions such as the PTA, Literacy Night, Parent-Teacher conferences. Where possible, make yourself a part of the policy-making procedure.
- Volunteer at the school. Even the simplest acts make the entire process easier for teachers and more meaningful to students. You become involved in learning at the most intimate level.
- Connect with other parents. Simple dialogue about school, learning, and student achievement raises awareness about important issues.