General Reading Strategies

These reading strategies can be used with any student in any classroom

1. To develop automaticity with word recognition, quickly turning a projector off and on, flash one word at a time on the board. Have students orally read the word.

2. When asking students to write letters, words, or sentences, use this process to engage multiple modalities at the same time. Repeat the letter, word, or sentence twice. Have the students repeat it back twice. Have them write it once. Finally, have them read it.

3. When asking a question, allow enough "think time" for students to generate an answer then randomly choose a student to answer by selecting from craft sticks with individual student names.

4. Use nonsense words to assess students knowledge of the alphabetic principal.

5. Use nonsense words to assess syllabification skills.

6. When teaching most common words with irregular spellings (aka "sight" words), focus on what is predictable about each word. For example when teaching the word 'answer' write this on the board: _ _ _w_ _ then have students fill in the predictable parts of the word.

7. Have students sort words from a story into parts of speech.

8. When students are "following along" as you read out loud, randomly stop in different places requiring the students to chorally complete the sentence.

9. Have students highlight words or letters in a newspaper article that follow a certain pattern (e.g. digraphs, silent 'e' words, words with two syllables, etc.)

10. When teaching content area words don't neglect phonics. For example, when introducing the word "atmosphere"; before writing the word on the board, pronounce it, break it into spoken syllables, then write it on the board on syllable at a time. Finally, discuss meaning full parts of the word (i.e. atmos is Greek for "vapor, steam" and sphere is Greek for "globe, ball").

11. To help students visualize what is happening in a story, periodically stop when reading aloud and have students draw a picture to describe something in the story. For example, after an author describes a main character, pause to have students quickly draw what they think he or she would look like.

12. Before students read a content area passage, select key words from the text and have them write a sentence or paragraph using the words. After reading the passage compare accuracy of the words before and after reading the text.

13. When reading an informational passage, use the 3-2-1 strategy to measure student engagement. After reading the passage, have students write 3 things they learned, 2 interesting things, and 1 question they may have about what they read.

14. After teaching about a specific topic have students think of one word for each letter of the alphabet that relates to that topic. For example, after teaching about weather, students may choose the word "arid" for the letter A, the word "barometer" for letter B, and so forth.

15. Choose three words and have students select which one doesn't belong. For example, when teaching nouns use the words computer, duck, and run. While teaching beginning sounds use the words house, hat, and dog.

16. Have students identify affixes by underling prefixes or suffixes in words from a newspaper article.

17. Use word sorts to help students categorize features or meanings of words. Advanced students can create word sorts to be used by their peers.

18. To teach inference, gather a suitcase full of objects and have students describe what the owner of the suitcase must be like based on inferences made from the items in the suitcase. Relate the activity to clues that the author gives in a story or passage from which students can draw inferences.