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March Academies
Canceled

March 18
ACT

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Math CAMP

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Friday Focus

CARTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Volume 2, Issue 21

March 7, 2014

What Do Good Readers Do?

What do good readers do?

Have you taken just a moment to reflect on that very important question? As educators, we must take the time to examine our instructional practices and ask ourselves if we are doing enough to grow *really good readers*.

Research tells us that **good readers know the purpose for their reading** and they know there can be many *different* purposes for reading. They also **preview the text, activate prior knowledge, and make predictions** about what they will learn from their reading. Strong readers instinctively do these things prior to reading a text. It is up to us to train our students in these habits so that as they grow they can be gradually released to do these processes on their own.

Good readers are mentally active readers. They **make connections, visualize, predict and confirm, re-read, draw conclusions, stop and review**, and use a host of other **during reading strategies** that help them **think while reading**. Good readers often have a pencil in hand while they read so they can make notes or observations about the text. Unfortunately, most children do not innately do these practices—they must be taught through direct instruction and modeling.

After good readers complete a reading task, they are able to process what they have read in a variety of ways: **summarizing, retelling, discussing**, etc. These students are able to present what they have learned from a text with **clarity and precision**. Good readers are able to provide justification by **citing textual evidence**. In order

for readers to be proficient at these types of responses, they must have modeling and practice.

Good readers are critical readers. Comprehension is necessary but not sufficient for developing adolescents' critical awareness of all texts. **Critical readers analyze how writers, illustrators, and others involved represent people and their ideas.** To be fully literate, adolescents must develop a critical awareness of how all texts position them as readers and must consider such factors as **how authors' backgrounds and cultures influence their writing**. Good readers apply critical thinking skills to texts found in printed and electronic media to consider how authors manipulate electronic and print information in different ways and for varying purposes.

Finally, good readers know how to cope with unfamiliar vocabulary. They

know how to use **context clues** to read around a word and discover its meaning. They can use parts of words (**prefixes, suffixes, and root words**) to **decode** meanings of words. They are able to understand various **connotations** of words. Our top readers can deal with **technical vocabulary**, difficult names of people and places, and do not panic when a new word appears in the text. If we want our students to be strong readers, we must teach them how to attack vocabulary.

Good readers are equipped readers: They have the tools they need to take apart a text. They are purposeful, strategic, and critical readers who understand the content presented in various types of texts. Some readers come to us with more skills than others, but we can provide them with the training, modeling, and hard work they need to learn to do *what good readers do*.



The Challenge of Content Area Reading

We see it all the time: kids who read pretty well in Language Arts demonstrate more problems when reading in other subject areas. For kids who struggle to read literature at their grade level, content area reading is even more daunting to the point of being nearly impossible for some when they hit high school subjects in history, math, and the sciences. There are some things we can do to help.

Text Differences: From the standpoint of how readers approach the task, there are substantial differences between fiction and non-fiction. Often, kids aren't aware of this; they go about reading a textbook or an article on the Internet the same way they read a novel. We need to help kids shift their expectations and their approach to match the kinds of texts they have to deal with.

Reading Process: Most kids see reading as a single act; they don't think of it as a process at all. In order to help kids improve, we have to help them become aware of how they read especially when they aren't reading very well. Every reader has a process and some processes are better than others. As the complexity of their texts increases, kids need to know not only what they are reading but how they are reading as well.

Reading Strategy: The most common strategy employed by students when they encounter a difficult part of a text is simply to stop reading it. Without explicit training and frequent reminders, few students develop strategies to overcome specific problems. While strategies are valuable to students when reading literature, they are almost certainly required for success when reading non-fiction. We need to be explicit about specific strategies kids can use when they tackle tougher texts in the content areas.

Reading Modeling: Even though most teachers don't teach reading, all teachers can read. And that means that all teachers can model their own reading processes and strategies in front of their students. Kids need to see models of successful adult readers in the content areas just like they see them in Language Arts.

