

Reading is becoming harder and harder to teach as we continue to see an increase in our ESL population. This subject has become one of the greatest challenges for a teacher because it affects every other subject the student takes. The student needs to be able to read and understand the writing prompt, the math problems, the social studies book, and the science facts. I currently have one student who is a perfect example of this. She is struggling with reading and reading comprehension and therefore is failing every subject. We strongly believe that it isn't because she couldn't do the work if she had understood it but that she lacks the ability to read and understand it. These cases are occurring more often.

This year I have gone to several writing workshops to learn more about how to teach and get my students to write personal narratives and expositories. However, I have not attended a single reading workshop. Writing has been so greatly stressed this year that I feel as if reading has been put on the back burner. This is my first year teaching and I definitely would have benefited if it had made known to me when the reading workshops were. Teachers need to be taught how to teach reading, what strategies to use, and how to get the students motivated.

It would be wonderful if we could take the time and let each student decide when they wanted to begin to read, like Frank Smith says, "Everyone learns different things at different paces and different times in their life, reading is the same, not everyone is ready to learn to read at a set age." While I said it would be wonderful to give every student the time they needed to begin reading, however, that goal is just not attainable. In order to get our students to move up in grade levels and not have ten year olds mixed with six year olds in second grade, they must learn to read at specific levels that have been decided upon for their age group. Due to this needing to occur teachers must be taught the proper way to teach reading.

As Louisa Moats states, "when a student is a poor reader it doesn't mean they aren't as smart as one that is a high reader, it just means they are less skilled with the language. Teacher's need to remember this when teaching reading. I feel as if we are very quick to get frustrated with our low readers. Our frustration only frustrates our readers more and makes them lose their confidence. We need to be nothing but supportive and encouraging as our young readers are learning to read.

Frank Smith talks about silent reading being the best thing you can do for your students, it is the most natural way to read. I try really hard to give my students 15-20 minutes of silent reading each day. I have to say that I have seen a drastic increase in many of my students ability to read a book and be able to write about what they read, comprehend it.

I believe a combination between the two beliefs on teaching reading needs to occur. Teachers NEED to attend professional development classes that keep us up-to-date on research and give us the best ideas on how to teach our students to read. Teachers also need to give the students silent reading time to help them develop on their own without instruction. I also feel another struggle that we face is across the curriculum for each grade level. We need to learn to communicate with each grade so that we can build off of what the students had learned the previous year. I feel as if we don't take this very seriously when teaching. I have several times gone to teach my students about specific things they should have learned in earlier years to