

PERSONALIZED READING STRATEGIES AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT  
STRUGGLING THIRD GRADE READERS

by

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## CAPSTONE PROJECT SUMMARY

The following capstone project includes an interactive table chart containing effective tools and supports in order to answer the research question: *What personalized tools and reading strategies best support struggling third-grade readers?*

After witnessing a steady number of third-grade students, 66% of my incoming students over the last five years, who scored below the grade-level benchmark in reading fluency as measured by the Dynamic Indicator of Basic and Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test, the search for tools to support these students raised the above research question. After conducting the literature review that accompanies this capstone project, various tools and strategies were uncovered to match well with the synthesis of information from the literature.

The table chart is an organized information center housing effective tools and strategies to be used with and/or adapted around other curricula by teachers of students in the intermediate grades, particularly third-grade. Based on the findings from the literature review, the chart contains four main topics housed within four organized categories. The main topics include: Reading Motivation and Interests, Building an Environment for Reading, Growing Fluency and Comprehension, and Personal Reading Time.

The intended use of this interactive table chart is for teachers who desire or need additional resources and tools for their students, particularly for struggling readers. However, the links within this chart will aid struggling to strong readers as the activities

can be easily differentiated with the options provided in order to better serve teachers who use this tool.

The following information explains the topics that were selected. The Reading Motivation and Interest topic has to do with finding out what the struggling reader is interested in, what may be the cause of any anxiety in reading, and what possible motivators would help the struggling reader to become motivated. The Building an Environment for Reading topic not only involves the creation of calm and relaxing reading space, but includes norms and expectations of students so that students know what to expect during their reading activities. The Growing Fluency and Comprehension topic may serve helpful for teachers as it includes resources for leveling students appropriately for success and how to measure growth in fluency and comprehension. The fourth topic, Personal Reading Time, provides tools to guide, support, and organize students while reading independently at home or at school.

Within these four topics are four different categories which are displayed across the top of the chart: Target Discipline, the Significance of Target Discipline, Tools and Strategies to Meet Target Discipline, and Outcome. Within each target discipline, listed under the appropriate topic, is an explanation as to why it is significant, includes examples and interactive links to be used by the teacher, and includes the expected outcome of each discipline as well. The interactive links connect usable tools for instructional support; information, reproducible worksheets, and systems for organization.

Under the Motivation and Interest topic, the Target Disciplines category includes student interests, reading challenges to create interest, book talks, and celebrating reading. All of these target disciplines have links for activities including student interest surveys, reading challenges, a book talks guide, and other activities to create motivation in reading. The second topic, Building an Environment for Reading, includes three Target Disciplines: flexible seating, norms and expectations, and soft music. This section provides ways for teachers to cultivate an effective reading environment for students during reading time with or without partners, and a calm environment to help foster engagement and minimize distraction. The third topic, Growing Fluency and Comprehension, includes five Target Disciplines which include fluency passages, reading comprehension for both fiction and non-fiction texts, book study, and parent support. Here, numerous resources for practicing fluency, finding fluency passages, and building student comprehension with tools such as a plot map and character traits list are available and organized for ease of use and understanding. The final topic, Personal Reading Time, has two Target Disciplines: daily uninterrupted reading time, and personal reading time. With seven links to supportive tools that help foster reading independence, additional links to bookmarks, reading logs, and helpful tips on how to read anywhere on a busy schedule allows teachers to support readers both at home and at school.

With over 40 links to provide information and activities, this easy to use interactive table chart is a helpful guide for any intermediate elementary teacher, particularly for third-grade, in the providing of personalized tools and strategies to support struggling readers.

Target Discipline	Significance of Target Discipline	Tools and Strategies to Meet Target Discipline	Outcome
<b>Reading Motivation and Interest</b>			
Student Interests and Intrinsic Motivation	Knowing what interests a student reader allows teachers to offer books of interest. Students are intrinsically motivated to read and explore topics of interest.	<a href="#">Student Reading Surveys</a> <a href="#">Student Interest Inventory Info</a>	Students explore, consider, and read books that interest them.
Reading Challenge and Extrinsic Motivation	Use of external motivators such as contests for the most minutes read or the most stories completed provides extrinsic motivation for students to read.	<a href="#">20 Book Challenge</a> Interactive learning website, MobyMax.com, offers <a href="#">Online Reading Challenge</a> opportunities for students.	Student involvement in healthy competition encourages reading that may not otherwise occur. Allows exposure to various genres.
Book Talks	Allows peers to provide feedback on books that might interest other readers. Allows student exposure to books that peers have enjoyed.	<a href="#">Book Talk Information &amp; Ideas</a> <a href="#">Donalyn Miller on Book Talks</a> <a href="#">Book Talk Presentation Template</a>	Classmates and peers discover books that they may also enjoy but would not have discovered otherwise.
Celebrate Reading	Providing excitement over reading and creating fun opportunities to enjoy reading books allows students to be more excited about books and reading in general.	<a href="#">February is I Love to Read Month</a> <a href="#">Reading Theme Day</a> Ideas	Students become excited for reading time and look forward to reading activities.

## Building an Environment for Reading

Flexible Seating	Providing a place to read other than a hard desk chair allows students to relax and enjoy the environment for reading. Allows students the freedom of choice and creates a bonus for reading time.	<a href="#">Reading Spots</a> <a href="#">Flex Seating Options</a>	Students become absorbed in the reading of their books.
Norms and Expectations	A foundation of norms provides students with appropriate expectations, how to be prepared, and how to ensure success during partner and group reading activities.	Reading Time <a href="#">Expectations</a> Reading <a href="#">Group and Partner Norms</a>	Fewer disruptions and quicker transitions.
Calm Environment	The creation of a safe, quiet, and relaxing environment provides students the opportunity to focus and engage in reading.	<a href="#">Calming Study Sounds</a> <a href="#">Classical Music</a> <a href="#">Calm and Peaceful Classroom Tips</a>	Students engage in reading tasks with reduced distractions.

## Growing Fluency and Comprehension

Fluency Passages	By practicing oral reading fluency students will grow their rate, accuracy, and expression with the goal of meeting benchmark standards appropriate for age/grade level. Background knowledge is helpful especially for reluctant readers.	Practice and Measure Growth: Fluency Passages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ReadWorks.org</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ReadingA-Z.com</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Read Naturally</a></li> </ul> <a href="#">Fluency Strategies and Activities</a> Comprehension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ReadTheory.org</a></li> </ul>	Student growth in oral reading fluency. Increased reading comprehension.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Raz-Plus.com</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Read Naturally</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Reader's Theater</a> passages are a fun and motivating option to build fluency and comprehension skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Chocolate Touch Reader's Theater</a></li> </ul>	
Non-Fiction Text	By understanding how to find vocabulary meanings, make predictions, and locate information, students will better comprehend what they read. Topics that interest the reader are encouraged for reluctant readers	<p><a href="#">Informational Text Comprehension</a></p> <p><a href="#">Informational Text Scavenger Hunt</a></p> <p><a href="#">Fountas &amp; Pinnell Instructional Level Expectations for Reading</a></p>	Students grow understanding with non-fiction texts. Increase comprehension and fluency skills.
Fiction Texts	By understanding story structure and plot, students are able to better comprehend what they read. Topics that interest the reader are encouraged for reluctant readers.	<p><a href="#">Plot Map</a></p> <p><a href="#">Character Traits</a></p> <p><a href="#">Fountas &amp; Pinnell Instructional Level Expectations for Reading</a></p>	Students develop understanding of fictional text. Increase comprehension and fluency skills.
Book Study	Practice in literature comprehension is provided by use of predicting, inferencing, vocabulary, and story comprehension skills.	<p>Complete book study guide for <a href="#">Mummies in the Morning</a> by Mary Pope Osborne (Magic Tree House Series #3)</p> <p><a href="#">Book Study Guide</a> (for any book)</p> <p><a href="#">Literature Response Questions</a></p>	Students increase comprehension and fluency skills. Students gain skills through group discussion.

Parent Support	Helpful resources and tools provided for parents to utilize at home and guide them. in understanding early literacy.	<a href="#">Tools for Parents</a> <a href="#">Supports, Tips, and Strategies for Parents</a> <a href="#">How to Grow a Reader</a>	Students benefit from increased support. Parents gain knowledge in ways to support their students.
<b>Personal Reading Time</b>			
Daily Uninterrupted Reading Time	Students encouraged to read at least 15-20 minutes each day during a designated reading time using good fit books to grow their reading fluency and comprehension.	<a href="#">Importance of 20 Minutes per Day</a> <a href="#">Foster Independent Reading Success</a> <a href="#">Reading Log</a> for students to record 20 minutes/day. <a href="#">Bookmark Reading Log</a> to be kept in student chapter book. <a href="#">Independent Reading Tools Expectations</a>	Support reading enjoyment. Students grow comprehension and fluency skills. Students gain reading independence with teacher support.
Read Anywhere	Students hold the power to read during any given downtime but may need guidance to begin this routine before it becomes a healthy habit.	<a href="#">Reading Time and Place</a> for busy students <a href="#">Best Places to Read</a>	Students achieve 20 minutes of reading regardless of busy schedules.

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