

Research Shows...

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Sustained Silent Reading Program

Montclair High School

Time to Read!



Eight Factors for SSR Success

Janice Pilgreen, in *The SSR Handbook*, identified traits common to successful SSR programs. If we work together as a team, we can support each of these eight factors.

Access

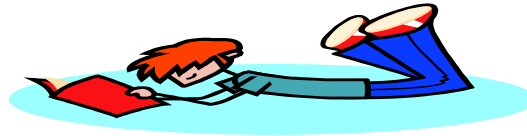
Kids need to have access to quality reading material that means books, magazines, comics, newspapers, and other materials. These should be provided to students in a variety of ways instead of requiring them to always bring their own book. Teachers can reserve time during 2nd to bring classes in the select books, encourage use of the public library or local book store.

Appeal

Reading material must be of high interest. A crucial element is self-selection. Students should be able to choose what they read for SSR. The library offers a wide variety of genres and readability levels so every reader can find something they can handle.

Conducive Environment

Ideally, the whole campus in this program. A comfortable, quiet, and uninterrupted environment is conducive to a successful program. Talking or discussion should be discouraged during this time so that students are protected from noise and distraction when they read.



Encouragement

Many students don't need encouragement to read but for those who do, you can encourage students to sample lots of reading material until they find something they like. Provide time for students to share their favorite stories to encourage others to investigate.

Staff Training

Staff training is an important step in implementing this program. It is important to establish buy-in to begin by viewing/discussing research studies and discussing possible problems and solutions.. Then focus on motivating teachers to learn strategies for linking students with books.

Non-Accountability

This program emphasizes *free voluntary reading* meaning that the students do not complete books reports, write journals, take quizzes, or generate any "tasks" from their reading.

Follow-Up Activities

Even though students reading in SSR is not task driven, students may want to express what they've read through discussion, drama, group writing, art, music, or other avenues. These are not meant to be accountability measures. Many suggestions are offered in Pilgreen's book.

Distributed Time to Read

The research shows that consistent SSR periods of 15-30 minutes three or more times a week are the most successful. Programs that allow for the same amount of time, but on a weekly or monthly basis do not effectively promote habit-forming reading behavior.

Research

Extensive research confirms that when readers are provided access to comprehensible and interesting reading material, **they read more** (Krashen, 1993; McEwan, 2001).

Students who participate in SSR programs **read more on their own** than those who do not (Pilgreen & Krashen, 1993) even years after the program is over (Greany & Clarke, 1975).

Research consistently shows that increasing recreational reading **profoundly increases reading ability and literacy development**.

Research on SSR demonstrated that children in these programs **did as well or better on tests of reading comprehension** in 51 out of 54 cases (Krashen, 2001).

The amount of time that students spend in recreational reading is a **predictor of a students' academic success** (Gallik, 1999).

When students read for only 15 minutes a day, they significantly increase their reading abilities, **Average and below average readers experienced the greatest gains** (Collins, 1980; Taylor, Frye & Maruyama, 1990; Weisendanger & Bader, 1989).

Researchers also documented the effects of SSR on vocabulary development. Students who had opportunities to read recreationally over an extended period of time **learned significantly more words**, without direct instruction, than control subjects, due to the former group's numerous experiences of decoding unknown words during SSR (Burgess, 1984; Krashen, 1993).