

ALTERNATIVES TO ROUND-ROBIN READING

As recommended in *Classrooms That Work* and *The End of Round Robin Reading*.

Be clear on the purpose for this read. Do you want to practice oral reading, or do you just want the students to read the text? There are better alternatives to both of those objectives, than choosing round-robin reading. In fact, round-robin reading is one of the most often used strategies and one of the least effective in promoting good reading. Think about this: one student reads at a time while the others may or may not be paying attention. Cold oral reading puts students on the spot and creates anxiety and embarrassment. The teacher spends a lot of time explaining what the text then means. It also takes a lot longer to cover the same amount of text.

Try some of these instead....

Everyone Read to page ... (ERT)

This is the simplest alternative and can be used regularly. The teacher tells students how much to read. They read that segment and then the teacher follows-up on whatever purpose was set. Discuss the questions as a group or in partners, then everyone goes on to the next segment. In ERT everyone is reading the text for themselves in whatever way is appropriate in order to find out specific things they will then share with everyone. If you want to make sure that each student is actually reading the text, practice a strategy called "whisper-reading." Students read outloud, but in a whisper. As you monitor, you can easily see and hear that students are reading the text for themselves.

* This can be used in small/flexible groups.

Choral Reading

Choral reading works best for poetry and refrains. The whole class can read or you can vary it by alternating rows or tables. Students enjoy choral reading and it does give them fluency practice.

*Use this for whole group or centers.

Partner Reading

Partner reading allows friends to help each other read just as they help each other with numerous other activities. For partner reading to be effective, students need to learn a variety of ways to do it. On some days that are designated as "take turn" days, the partners take turns reading the pages, and helping each other as needed. On other days that are designated as "ask question" days, the partners read each page silently and then ask one another a question about each page before going onto the next page. On "sticky note" days, the partners are given sticky notes to mark things they want to remember.



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They have a limited number of sticky notes and must decide together where to put the notes to mark what they find most interesting, important, or confusing. Occasionally, the teacher declares a "you decide" day in which the partners can decide to read together in any way they wish. Having these different kinds of partner-reading formats over the course of the week provides some variety in the reading. It also ensures that students engage in both silent and oral reading.

*Use this method in whole group or centers.

The more we transfer the responsibility of reading to the students and teach them the strategies to make sense of what they are reading, the more powerful learners they will become!