

Independent Reading + Reading Conferences

with



Making Classtime Valuable for Every Student

A Message from our CEO

Thank you for signing up to receive our eBook. As you scan through its' contents, we hope you are able to glean information that will add value to your classes.

Teachers are meant to guide students toward growth, and that is exactly what independent reading and reading conferences allow them to do.



May your students' language flourish, and may you continue to learn.

-Kyle Larson, CEO and Founder, AIR Language

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Why do we need to allow for students to progress at different rates?



It's natural.

Students naturally learn at different rates, and allowing them to progress at their own pace ensures they fully grasp concepts, leading to better retention and a deeper understanding of the language. Plus, it reduces the tendency of some to “regress to the mean”.

It builds confidence and motivation.

Giving students control over their learning helps build confidence and self-motivation. They feel successful, become more engaged, and are more likely to take responsibility for their progress. Plus, individualized learning allows them to continue learning after they leave school.

Tailored Instruction and Real-World Relevance

Flexible pacing allows teachers to address each student's specific needs, providing targeted support or enrichment as needed. This approach mirrors real-world learning, preparing students for language use beyond the classroom.

“Personalized learning is a way to actually enact the pedagogy we believe in and that kids thrive in.”

-Dianne Tavenner, Summit Public Schools, Founder,
EdWeek.org

Independent reading is a powerful way to personalize learning because it allows students to choose texts that interest them and match their reading level, leading to engagement and motivation. This autonomy helps students feel more connected to their learning, as they explore topics that resonate with them personally. It also provides opportunities for differentiated instruction; teachers can guide students toward books that target specific skills or areas for growth, tailoring the experience to individual needs. Through independent reading, students can progress at their own pace, developing critical reading skills when they need them and fostering a lifelong love for learning, making it an essential component of personalized education.

Why should we use independent reading and reading conferences?

Reading conferences are crucial for personalized learning because they provide one-on-one time for targeted feedback and individualized instruction. These sessions allow teachers to assess comprehension, discuss strategies, and set personalized goals, strengthening the teacher-student connection. By using tools like progress tracking software, teachers can efficiently monitor each student's growth, adjust reading levels, and celebrate achievements, ensuring that every student receives the support they need to succeed.



Tips to Introduce Independent Reading

Three objections to in-class independent reading:

1. *Loss of Instructional Time*: Teachers worry it reduces time for direct instruction or required content.
 2. *Lack of Actual Reading*: Concerns arise that students may not engage deeply or choose appropriate books. This leads to students wasting valuable class time.
 3. *Challenges in Differentiation*: Managing different reading levels and tracking progress can be difficult without the right tools.
- These challenges call for strategies to effectively grow reading capacity in the classroom.

- Start small. Start with 5 minutes of reading time, and add a few minutes per week to eventually read for as long as you see fit.
- Set a timer. This will relieve anxiety some feel when reading. Many teachers even project timers in front of the class. This could also make reading more effective.
- Ask students to share what they read or how many points they earned the day prior.

- Have students self assess their reading stamina at the beginning and/or end of reading. Many teachers have students rate themselves daily on a 1-5 scale.
- Commit to meeting with two students daily—even if one meeting is just a check-in. This will impute purpose onto your students in their reading.
- After students read, have them turn and tell their neighbor what they read.

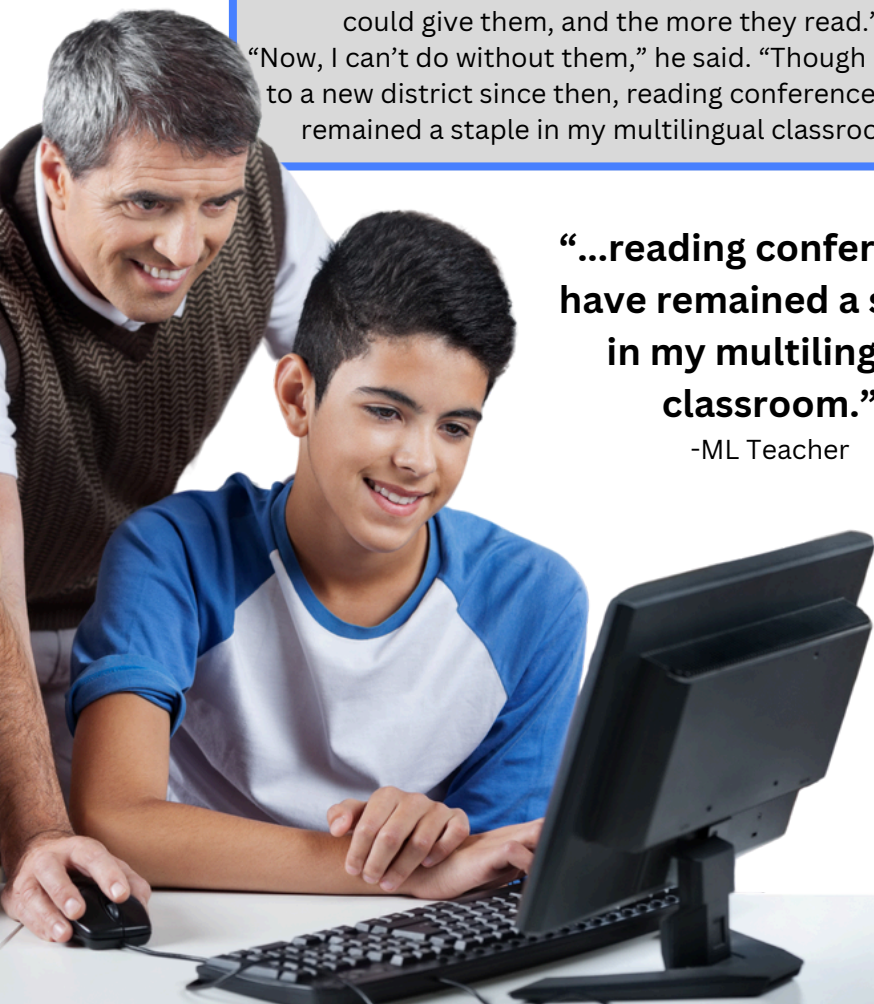


Reading Conferences: A Strong-Willed Teacher

One teacher, who wished to remain anonymous, was skeptical about the use of reading conferences with his multilingual learners. “What if they don’t understand the book? What if they don’t understand me?” he recalled. Then, after administration pressured him, he relented and committed to one month of reading conferences. “The first week was difficult because students weren’t reading independently while I was meeting with others, but the more I met with students, the more direction I could give them, and the more they read.” “Now, I can’t do without them,” he said. “Though I moved to a new district since then, reading conferences have remained a staple in my multilingual classroom.”

**“...reading conferences
have remained a staple
in my multilingual
classroom.”**

-ML Teacher



The Amended CELL protocol

Step 1: Rapport Building

The purpose: deepening the relationship and lowering the affective filter. Communication should be authentic, and this step sets the stage for a productive conference.

Step 2: Gauging Prior Knowledge

Students discuss what they know about the topic before reading. This lowers the monitor, as well as gives an opportunity for formative assessment of the student's abilities.

Step 3: Reading and Assessment of Understanding

In this step, teachers are to ask students to read out loud, after reviewing reading goals. The teacher is to listen in the light of what the student is currently working on.

Step 4: Drawing Attention to Content-Specific Concepts

The teacher learns about the student, the student uses new knowledge, and the teacher asks questions that might draw out gaps in knowledge or understanding.

Step 5: Setting Reading Goals

In this step, teachers and students are to collaborate, based on all they learned about the student's abilities, to write a new reading goal for students to work on.

Step 6: Closing

Before the end, teachers and students look at the books to explore. Teachers suggest books, and students are asked about topics they are interested in. Teachers are to encourage and engage students in their reading.



What Multilingual learners need in a reading system

One big difference between language education and everything else in the building, is that students know what they don't know!



Phonological Awareness and Sound-Word Correspondence:

ELs struggle with recognizing sounds in words and need strong, concrete connections between sounds and words, often requiring audio reinforcement.

Lack of Background Knowledge

Missing cultural or contextual knowledge can make it hard for ELs to connect with and fully understand texts.

Need for Audio Support

Hearing words pronounced correctly helps ELs connect text to sound, improving pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension.

Concrete Word-to-Sound Correspondence

ELs need explicit instruction and resources to bridge the gap between written words and their spoken forms. These obstacles underscore the importance of multi-sensory, targeted support for English learners in reading.

No Choice in the Matter

One big difference between language education and everything else in the building, is that students know what they don't know! Students are, all too often, given books that have nothing to do with their everyday lives. This runs counter to why they are reading--to learn language to connect with others.



What AIR Language can do for Multilingual Learners

Five benefits of using AIR Language

1. **Personalized Learning:** Tailors reading content to each student's needs, allowing them to progress at their own pace.
2. **Audio and Visual Support:** Integrates audio and visual aids to connect sounds to words, improving pronunciation and comprehension.
3. **Standards-Aligned Assessment:** Offers assessment tools aligned with recognized standards for consistent progress tracking.
4. **Student Analytics:** Provides detailed insights into each student's progress to guide instruction.
5. **Engaging Content:** Features interactive and visually engaging reading materials to keep learners motivated.

These features make AIR Language an effective tool for supporting English learners.

Click below to see how AIR can add value to your role.

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