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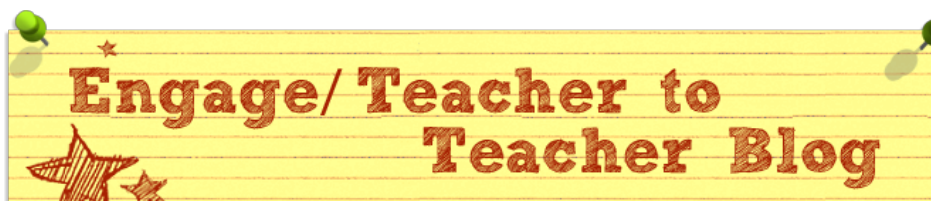
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Author**Teaching Tips: Fountas and Pinnell on engaging deeply with texts**

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1588 Views**Engaging Deeply with Texts****By Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas**

We have been working for a long time on ways to intervene to help struggling readers beyond the primary years. These readers have a great many needs, including intensive work looking at the parts of words as well as many experiences that help them develop fluency.

We will be describing a lesson framework that includes both, but one of their greatest needs is the development of deeper comprehension of texts. We recommend careful selection of texts that will offer enough challenge for the



reader to learn yet be accessible enough that he or she can process the text with high accuracy. Using a gradient of text will be helpful in the process of selection; however, quality, interest, and engagement are also strong considerations.

With the appropriate text (as well as a good assessment of what readers know and can do and need to learn next), you are ready to support deep comprehending. Here are some suggestions:

Analyze the text yourself and think deeply about it. What would highly proficient readers notice and think about? For example:

- The writer's larger message(s) (fiction and nonfiction).
- How a fiction writer showed time passing, fast or slow action.
- How a fiction writer revealed a character's traits or showed change.
- Whether the setting is important to the story or a biography.
- The artistry of the "lead" or ending.
- Twists and turns of the plot in fiction texts.
- Whether the fiction text (characters, action) is believable.
- How a nonfiction text is organized (headings and subheading; categories).
- Whether or not a nonfiction text is well-researched.
- Whether or not a text (fiction or nonfiction) is written in an interesting way.
- How a writer uses language to make the text interesting or help readers understand ideas.

Once you have thought deeply about the text yourself, it will be easy to guide readers in their own noticing.

Introduce the text with an eye to what you want readers to notice; engage them in conversation.

Support students as they read the text.

Engage in an open conversation afterwards; demonstrate and prompt for deeper understanding; confirm readers' thinking but nudge them to stretch.

Revisit the text on another day to do "close reading." They reread a short portion of the text with the purpose

of noticing and discussing any of the points you want them to notice.

Readers who struggle beyond the primary years need to engage deeply with texts every single day. Small group instruction is essential for promoting thinking and talking about texts.

WANT MORE? See Fountas and Pinnell at IRA's 57th Annual Convention in Chicago, where they will present "When Readers Struggle in the Intermediate Grades: Teaching That Works" as part of the Teaching Edge series. The session takes place Monday, April 30th, from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. For more information, go to www.iraconvention.org.

***Gay Su Pinnell** is Professor Emeritus in the School of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University. She has extensive experience in classroom teaching and field-based research, and has developed and implemented comprehensive approaches to literacy education. She has been Principle Investigator for two large-scale research projects, one utilizing a randomized design. She has worked extensively in clinical tutoring and early intervention for young struggling readers. She received the International Reading Association's Albert J. Harris Award for research in reading difficulties. She also received the Ohio Governor's Award for contributions to literacy education and the Charles A. Dana Foundation Award, given for pioneering contributions in the fields of health and education. She is a member of the Reading Hall of Fame.*

***Irene Fountas** is a Professor of Education at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has been a classroom teacher, language arts specialist and consultant in school districts across the nation and abroad. With her co-author Gay Su Pinnell, Irene has published several books, including The Continuum of Literacy Learning PK-8 and their latest publication, Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and Nonfiction Books.*

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