

EDUCATION

A New Read on Literacy: The 3 Keys to Building Lifelong Readers

NewsUSA

(NU) - In today's digital world, there is no denying the benefits of technology in education. However, despite technology's ability to provide students with countless books and online literacy development tools, too many students still struggle to read and too few discover the joys of becoming life-long readers.

According to a recent study in *Reading Research Quarterly*, despite substantial investments by educators in reading technology, the results have been disappointing. When reading independently, today's students are struggling more and comprehending less than their peers in 1960.

But one company has an approach that can help reverse the trend. Based on more than 80 years of research, Reading Plus believes the opportunity lies in integrating the three domains of reading: physical, cognitive, and emotional. When all three domains are developed simultaneously in one program, students become more efficient, proficient, and engaged readers, according to a white paper released by the company.

Dr. P. David Pearson, the first chairman of the International Literacy Association's Literacy Research Panel, says, "It's not only about becoming faster and more efficient in independent silent reading. It's doing it with comprehension, and with the ultimate goal of acquiring knowledge and enhancing personal interests."

Here is an overview of the three domains, according to the white paper:

- **Physical.** Reading begins with a physical skill - the visual processing of text. Students who labor to read have not yet developed this skill. They spend their



energy trying to process words and have little left to understand what they've read. Unless physical skills are developed, students continue to labor, fall behind, and ultimately lose interest in reading.

- **Cognitive.** Vocabulary and comprehension have long been the focus for reading development. Most approaches assume that improvement results from student practice with increasingly complex texts. However, research shows that vocabulary is the best indicator of text complexity, yet readability measures emphasize sentence length. Matching students with the text levels that allow them to develop skills at the pace they need is critical.

- **Emotional.** Tapping into students' interests builds confidence and motivation. Students who read what they like are more interested and engaged in reading; more interested and engaged students become better readers; and better readers become lifelong readers. It's essential to let students choose to read what they like.

The bottom line: when students read independently, they don't engage with each domain of reading in isolation from the others; instead, they engage with all three domains simultaneously and to build lifelong readers, so should their reading development.

For more information on the study and Reading Plus, visit www.readingplus.com.