

PINPOINTING READING DIFFICULTIES: THE IF-THEN CHART

If...	Then...
<p>the student avoids reading whenever possible...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent daily independent reading time. • Allow students to choose what they want to read but offer support to find reading materials that they can read with ease. • Teach students how to preview texts so they can independently find materials that are interesting and accessible. • Build confidence with easy reading. This is not the time for difficult texts.
<p>the student lacks adequate background knowledge to understand texts, whether academic or literary...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that students have many opportunities for wide reading and listening to reading. • Provide text introductions for assigned reading. • Discuss what background knowledge is necessary for understanding ideas in the text. • Read aloud to students from texts that they would not be able to read on their own.
<p>the student chooses books for independent reading that seem too difficult ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students find engaging reading materials that they are able to read. • Teach techniques for judging appropriate level of difficulty • Have a repertoire of materials to recommend or book talk.
<p>the student chooses books for independent reading that seem too easy...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax! Allow students to read easy books to build confidence and encourage enjoyment of reading.
<p>the student can read the words, but doesn't remember or understand what s/he read...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach self-monitoring strategies • Practise reading short chunks of text and retelling. • During reading instruction, pause frequently to discuss and analyze reading. • Encourage students to track their thinking with sticky notes. • Provide graphic organizers and other written response prompts which require students to record their thinking about their reading.
<p>the student has a basic understanding of what is read, but fails to grasp inferences or read between the lines...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model what readers do when they draw inferences or interpret texts. • Provide oral guided practice in higher level thinking with read-aloud texts. • Make the process of inference more explicit by analyzing clues from the text and background knowledge required. • Mark <i>pause points</i> in the text for students to stop and record their inferences at that point.



<p>the student doesn't repair comprehension break-downs and may not even realize when s/he doesn't understand what s/he reads...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students build strategies for self-monitoring comprehension. • Teach students to pause regularly to consider whether the text is making sense. • Have students practise asking themselves questions, then anticipating the answers and reading on for confirmation. • Making personal connections to the text during reading.
<p>the student offers only literal or superficial responses to reading...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and demonstrate how to provide a thorough response • Provide plenty of opportunities for discussion. • Ask questions which encourage higher level thinking. • Encourage students to elaborate on their responses and to provide support from the text.
<p>the student reads very slowly and hesitantly...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model fluent, expressive oral reading every day. • Ensure that the student is reading texts at his independent reading level. • Provide opportunities for repeated reading of texts, with one-on-one coaching to improve fluency. • Offer shared, paired and choral reading opportunities. • Engage readers in performance reading, such as reader's theater plays with plenty of time to practise and rehearse.
<p>the student relies too heavily on "sounding out" words...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide practice so that students can read high-frequency words automatically. • Offer explicit instruction and practice in other word-solving strategies, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chunking words into segments such as prefixes, roots and suffixes. - Using context clues. - Using resources such as dictionaries and pronunciation keys.
<p>the student makes miscues that interfere with meaning and doesn't self-correct them...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students develop a repertoire of self-monitoring strategies, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pause frequently to think about whether your reading makes sense. ○ If it doesn't make sense, stop and reread or read on for clarification. ○ Try another word that makes sense in the passage. ○ Use word-solving strategies.
<p>the student has trouble getting the gist of what s/he is reading...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to retell, then teach them to combine details into a summary. • Have students use sticky notes to mark key ideas in a text. • Use graphic organizers to record main ideas and supporting details.
<p>the student offers weak written responses to reading...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish expectations that ideas, opinions and responses must be supported with evidence from the text. • Model and demonstrate what effective responses look like. • Teach students to always explain "why" even if it is not asked. • Have students practise scanning the text for specific details.

