

**The Social Side of Engaged Reading**  
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**Effects of Focusing on Engaged Reading (Ivey & Johnston, 2013)**

- A shift to active, engaged, strategic reading, generating and sharing their own strategies, with increased stamina.
- Massive increase in reading volume.
- Improved test scores and a decrease in differences across sub-groups.
- An increase in student-to-student dialogical conversation about the books inside and outside of class, with symmetrical power arrangements and lowered need for closure.
- Improved social imagination and increased empathy.
- Improved social relationships, including engaging new people (valuing diversity), expanding trust, and engaging parents and family in new ways.
- Increased sense of moral agency - less judgmental of people, but prepared to call out problematic behavior.
- Increased emotional, behavioral and academic self-control .
- Increased social and academic agency.
- More productive identities and agentive narrative trajectories.
- Increased happiness.

**When readers are engaged we expect they might report the following:**

**Gay Ivey & Peter Johnston (in preparation)**

- Kept reading in class after the bell rang
- Kept reading after teacher moved onto another topic/activity
- Forgot to eat
- Forgot to go to the bathroom
- Put off a friend who wanted to talk in order to keep reading
- Kept book open on desk in order to keep reading when the teacher wasn't looking
- Kept thinking about the book even when not reading it
- Read in other class (social studies, math, etc.) when supposed to be doing something else
- Desperately wanted to talk to a friend about a book
- Talked to a teacher about a book without being asked
- Talked to a family member about an issue that came up in a book
- Had conversations with someone else about how you or they would handle a decision faced by a character

**Finding and reading the books that engage students (Ivey, 2011)**

- Read recently published books (written within the past decade)
- Read outside of your own comfort zone with diverse students in mind
- Keep in mind that students' figuring out what they like is a process. Expect false starts. Remember that a student is not the sum of their likes and dislikes. Take into account the complexities of individual lives.
- Trouble-shoot to help students find strategies for high interest books that are initially too difficult
- A students' next book doesn't have to be just like the one they just enjoyed. Help students find unexpected connection.

### Inviting Dialogic Engagement Within Texts

- *I suspect [this character] is thinking...*
- *I am really frustrated with [this character]...*
- *I am feeling [this character's] sadness...*
- *Is that what you're recommending to [the character]?*

### Inviting Dialogic Engagement Within and Between Texts

- Ask what a peripheral character is thinking/feeling (What do you think so-and-so's mom is thinking/feeling?)
- What advice could a character from one book give to a character in another?
- What could a character from one book learn from a character in another?
- If so-and-so could step into this book, what would he say/do?

### Getting Conversations Started in Reading Conferences

- *How's it going?* (C. Anderson)
- *Catch me up*
- *What problems are you encountering in your reading today?* (P. Johnston)
- *So far, is this book what you hoped it would be? How so or not?*

### Getting Students to Talk to Each Other

- Assign a partner for each student. Challenge them to **talk to their partner about the book they are reading until they find a common point/feature**. This point of commonality should transcend superficial elements (e.g., the main character is a boy) and get to the nitty-gritty (e.g., both books have a main character that is struggling with a bad decision). After a few minutes, ask students to find new partners, and so on...
- **Turn specific students toward each other**. For instance, "Jesse has read that book, and she has a good sense of it. Jesse, will you talk to Will and help him figure out if that's a good book for him to read?"
- Conduct reading **conferences in threes**. Even if only one student is talking at first, the opportunity is there for others to join in. For instance, "Listening to Jeffrey talk about that book, what are you thinking, Jose?"
- At the end of sustained reading times, have students **turn and talk** to someone near them for a few minutes about their reading for that day.

### References and other suggested reading:

- Ivey, G. (in press). The social side of engaged reading for young adolescents. *The Reading Teacher*.
- Ivey, G. (2011). What not to read: A book intervention. *Voices from the Middle*, 19, 22-26.
- Ivey, G., & Johnston, P. (2013). Engagement with young adult literature: Outcomes and processes *Reading Research Quarterly*, 48(3), 255-275.
- Johnston, P. (2012). *Opening minds: How classroom talk shapes children's minds and their lives*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Johnston, P., Ivey, G., & Faulkner, A. (2011). Talking in class: Remembering what is important about classroom talk. *The Reading Teacher*, 65, 232-237.
- Lysaker, J., & Tonge, C. (2013). Learning to understand others through relationally oriented reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 66, 632-641.

## Engaging books to inspire engaging talk

### **Picture Books**

14 Cows for America by Carmen Agra Deedy  
A Name of the Quilt by Jeannine Atkins  
A Picnic in October by Eve Bunting  
An Angel for Solomon Singer by Cynthia Rylant  
Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier  
Birmingham, 1963 by Carole Boston Weatherford  
Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco  
Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes  
City Dog, Country Frog by Mo Willems  
Do Like Kyla by Angela Johnson  
Elephant's Can Paint Too! by Katya Arnold  
Erika's Story by Ruth Vander Zee  
Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting  
Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles  
Getting' Through Thursday by Melrose Cooper  
Goal! by Mina Javaherbin  
Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog by Pamela S. Turner  
Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild by Mem Fox  
Henry's Freedom Box by Ellen Levine  
If the World Were a Village by David J. Smith  
Julias, the Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes  
Miz Berlin Walks by Jane Yolen  
Mr. Putter and Tabby by Cynthia Rylant  
Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Polacco  
My Friend John by Charlotte Zolotow  
Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan by Jeanette Winter  
No David! By David Shannon  
One by Kathryn Otoshi  
One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference by Katie Smith Milway  
Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam by Walter Dean Myers  
Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats  
Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco  
Rose Blanche by Christophe Gallaz  
Say Something by Peggy Moss  
Shadow by Suzy Lee  
Sheila Rae, the Brave by Kevin Henkes  
Something Beautiful by Sharon Dennis Wyeth  
Stealing Home: Jackie Robinson: Against the Odds by Robert Burleigh  
The Bracelet by Yoshiko Uchida  
The Composition by Antonio Skarmeta  
The Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals, People, and War by Yukio Tsuchiya  
The Hickory Chair by Lisa Rowe Fraustino  
The Librarian of Basra by Jeanette Winter  
The Memory String by Eve Bunting  
The Moon Was the Best by Charlotte Zolotow  
The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson  
The Pain and the Great One by Judy Blume  
The Story of Rosy Dock by Jeannie Baker

The Stranger by Chris Van Allsburg  
The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst  
The Three Questions by Jon J. Muth  
The Watertower by Gary Crew and Steven Woolman  
The Tower by Richard Paul Evans  
Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts  
Tight Times by Barbara Shook Hazen  
Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival by Kirby Larson  
Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne  
Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa by Jeanette Winter  
Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes  
When Marion Sang by Pam Munoz Ryan  
William's Doll by Charlotte Zolotow  
Wings by Christopher Myers  
Zen Ghosts and Zen Ghosts by Jon J. Muth

### **Wordless Picture Books**

A Circle of Friends by Giora Carmi  
Mirror by Suzy Lee  
No! by David McPhail  
Unspoken by Henry Cole  
The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney  
The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg  
The Red Book by Barbara Lehman  
Trainstop by Barbara Lehman  
Wave by Suzy Lee  
Why? by Nikolai Popov

### **Great Chapter Books (grades 3-5)**

Bird in a Box by Andrea Davis Pinkney  
Bluefish by Pat Schmatz  
Boys Without Names by Kashmiri Sheth  
Camo Girl by Kekla Magoon  
Chickadee by Louise Erdich  
Crunch by Leslie Connor  
How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O'Connor  
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai  
One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia  
One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street by Joanne Rocklin  
The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate  
Sadie and Ratz by Sonya Hartnett  
Summer of the Gypsy Moths by Sara Pennypacker  
The New Kid by Mavis Jukes  
The Other Half of My Heart by Sundee Frazier  
The Year of the Book by Andrea Cheng  
The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin  
Topping by Sally Murphy  
Tua and the Elephant by R. P. Harris