

TOP TEN

Moves to Help Students Advocate for Themselves

- 1.** Help students understand what reading is and what readers do. Help them develop their own identity as readers, aware of their strengths and challenges with reading plans and goals.
- 2.** Help kids develop a quiver of comprehension strategies and track their use to ensure they are constructing meaning when they read independently and come to difficult parts—and know what to do when they lose track of meaning. Understand that all readers miscue; self-monitor for miscues that interfere with meaning; otherwise, keep going!
- 3.** Develop an intellectually vibrant classroom environment in which you honor your students' thinking; invite them to make their thinking audible and visible by routinely sharing examples of their questions, problem solving, and engagement with texts and inquiry projects.
- 4.** Urge students to speak up for themselves. Model the language that communicates that awareness to others. Examples: "I really enjoy (specific genre) and understand how to read it, but sometimes I find (other genre) confusing. When books look really dense and long, I sometimes have difficulty getting into them."
- 5.** Help kids develop strategies—when faced with complex text about a topic they care about or need to know about—to locate more accessible information by going online, listening to audiobooks or podcasts, viewing videos, interviewing specialists, etc.
- 6.** Seek kids' opinions about books to procure for and weed out of the classroom library. Honor their suggestions.
- 7.** Teach kids how to check out, reserve, and renew books from school and public libraries. Make sure they know library resources are theirs to borrow!
- 8.** Model and teach kids how to participate in lively discussions about books and ideas; for example, how to express a different opinion using phrases such as, "I heard what _____ was saying. Here's another idea," "I beg to differ," "To me, it looks as if . . .," "I look at that a little differently . . ."
- 9.** Create a socially/emotionally safe classroom in which students feel free to solicit help when they need it, by speaking up and using language that communicates their needs such as, "I understand how to . . . but I need a little help with . . . Is there a time we can meet?" "I get this part, but am confused by this next part . . ." "I'm feeling a little overwhelmed; can we talk?"
- 10.** Help students every day experience the joy and power of the Reading Zone.