

Reading Boosters

Reading Role Models

Overview and Tips

Role models are advocated for in sport, science, and the arts, so why not also for reading?

The place of the teacher as a reading role model should not be discounted. Research has shown that many students have no idea if teachers enjoy reading recreationally, so there is a strong chance that teachers are not talking about their own reading in the classrooms at your school. Do you or your colleagues regularly discuss what you are reading with your students? Is this happening beyond the English faculty or library?



Photograph by Pierre Vignau
retrieved from <https://flic.kr/p/5rdWwY>

Michael Lockwood, Senior Lecturer in English and Education at the University of Reading starkly warns that “the kiss of death for promoting reading enjoyment is the teacher who says, ‘I’m not a great reader myself, but...’” - Young people will imitate the reading they see around them... and will also mimic the reading they don’t see around them!

Consider ways that you can really exploit the use of reading role models to promote reading across the whole school, for instance:

- Incorporate reading role models or reading into your high school orientation program. We know that reading declines as teens age, so why not reinforce things early?
- Ask your students to interview their reading role model for a homework task. If they don’t have one, this gives them a chance to seek one out, and perhaps even have an earnest conversation with their parents about reading habits at home.
- Make senior students visible as reading role models for younger students. Perhaps using student leaders, or even those who excel in sport or other endeavours to

appeal to a particular demographic.

- Hold a parent information night about the far-reaching impacts of modelling reading at home, and the importance of reading for pleasure more generally.
- If your school runs reading competitions such as the Premier's Reading Challenge, have parents, teachers and other school staff get involved in the reading as a shadow challenge. Reward participants at school assemblies - make it a big deal!
- Feature different school faculties in each school newsletter with vox-pops about what they are reading. Imagine the impact that the Principal, PE or Maths teacher may have on students if their reading is visible!

Further Reading

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