

Harmon, J.M., Keehn, S., & Kenney, M.S. (2004). Tutoring struggling readers: A program investigation. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 44, 46-74.

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Summary: This study examined a tutoring program for struggling adolescent readers. Graduate students and preservice teachers tutored over a period of 12-13 sessions. Lessons generally followed a pattern of discussing at-home independent reading, reviewing previous material, modeling comprehension strategies, reading new text together, examining word structures, and summarizing the lesson.

Assumptions:

- Schools should provide expert teachers and reading intervention programs for struggling adolescent readers. Preservice teacher preparation programs should include more literacy training for secondary teachers.
- The most important feature of reading tutoring for older students is comprehension strategy acquisition.

Results:

- Struggling readers took metacognitive stances as they read.
- Readers made individual choices about strategies.
- The most prevalent strategies students used were questioning, predicting, and making inferences.
- The majority of tutors noted the following program components as motivational: creating interpersonal relationships, student choice, individualized instruction, high interest books, and the use of interesting analogies for the think alouds.
- Program restraints included some students' negative attitudes toward reading, students' reluctance to talk, distractions, and tutor confidence.

Conclusions:

- Tutoring for adolescents must include explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- Tutors need to know (or to be taught) about comprehension, metacognitive awareness, etc.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Plan and support tutoring programs with the following components:
  - . A positive, collaborative relationship between teacher and student
  - . Student commitment to the program
  - . Structured, research-based frameworks for improving reading

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- In addition to positive and collaborative tutor/tutee relationships and student commitment, tutoring programs for struggling adolescent readers should include explicit comprehension strategy instruction as part of the instructional framework.
- Tutor training and support should focus on strengths and needs of students to be tutored, in this case struggling adolescent readers.
- Literacy tutoring programs for adolescents should also be an essential part of school-wide programs.