

What are Oral Reading and Silent Reading Techniques?

Oral reading is the act of reading printed or written text aloud, and is often used by teachers to track and measure a student's overall reading ability including reading accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and understanding of punctuation. Oral reading can allow a teacher to directly observe a child's reading skills, including decoding, fluency, and prosody (tone and expression). Many teachers frequently employ silent reading to build fluency. Sustained silent reading is the practice of having students read silently for a specified period of time each day. Some schools include adults in this practice, which may be known as DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time.

Is A Combination of Oral and Silent Reading Practices Optimal?

A highly regarded study conducted at Arkansas State University, focused on the techniques of oral reading and silent reading for students who struggled with reading comprehension. The study found that, despite many professionals in the field almost exclusively favoring silent reading over oral reading, a combination of both oral and silent reading, based on the individual needs of the students, is potentially the best way to increase fluency and comprehension of struggling students. In addition, the research concluded that purposeful, intentional oral reading should be given more emphasis in elementary classrooms than it has been in the past. Ultimately this study, along with additional resources focusing on the benefits of oral and silent reading, points to the a combination of oral and silent reading as optimal. Silent reading can increase a student's understanding of a text and motivation to read, while oral reading allows educators to track the fluency, pronunciation, accuracy and overall progress of their struggling readers.

