

NEW BOOK FROM IRA DRAWS LESSONS FROM ONCE-CHALLENGED, NOW-SUCCESSFUL READERS

Early in her career, Rosalie Fink noticed that many of the children who struggled with reading were very bright and achieved at high levels in other areas, such as mathematics. As she went on, becoming a reading researcher, speaker, and writer, Fink's inquiries led her to study 66 men and women who had overcome their reading problems and succeeded in challenging professions such as medicine, law, art, and science—professions that require high levels of reading ability.

Although there is broad agreement about the major components of good reading instruction, many students continue to struggle with reading, and some never achieve high levels of literacy. To address this concern, *Why Jane and John Couldn't Read—And How They Learned: A New Look at Striving Readers* presents an interest-driven model of reading that focuses on students' strengths and abilities, not their deficits. The model, which is based on Fink's study of striving readers who became highly successful individuals, will help you conceptualize striving readers in a new way by focusing on what they can do. Specifically, the model will help you make the most of students' passionate, personal interests; avid, topic-specific reading; background knowledge; use of reading strategies; and relationships with mentors.

The chapters not only offer stories of how some striving readers overcame their struggles but also highlight instructional strategies and materials that you can use to develop activities and lessons for your striving readers.

Chapter 1, "Promoting Success With an Interest-Driven Model," presents an overview of the study and its major results. It presents the following topics: the Interest-Based Model of Reading, the timing and mechanisms involved in striving readers' fluency development, the evidence for these striving readers' high level of reading achievement, and the evidence for three distinct subgroups of striving readers.

Chapter 2, "Bilingual Readers: Marvelous Mentors and Cultural Pride," presents case studies of two Latino Americans who struggled with reading: a Nobel Prize-winning immunologist and an early childhood educator. Two key elements highlighted in this chapter are pride in diverse languages and cultures and marvelous mentors at home, school, and work. The chapter describes activities, materials, and strategies to help students develop deep cultural knowledge and pride in their heritage. Also emphasized is the role of mentoring by families, teachers, specialists, and peers.

Chapter 3, "Learning to Read Through Multiple Intelligences," presents the case

study of a renowned scientist whose abilities in science, compared with his abilities in English, history, and French, showed enormous disparities. Topics in this chapter include multiple intelligences, disparate abilities, sociocultural support, content area reading, "hands-on" learning experiences, and the mechanisms underlying content area variations in reading fluency.

Chapter 4, "Debunking Some Myths About Gender and Reading," explores similarities and differences between the reading skills, attitudes, and experiences of boys and girls, men and women. Highlighted here are case studies of a filmmaker, a lawyer, a gynecologist, and others. The chapter focuses on boys' and girls' preferences for certain types of texts, boys' and girls' different reading experiences, and strategies that help students explore alternative concepts of gender and the world. The chapter emphasizes reading lessons that incorporate creative and critical questioning, discussion, drama, writing, and art.

Chapter 5, "Identifying Striving Readers," deals with assessment issues at all developmental levels. The chapter provides an overview of several types of assessment tools—their strengths, caveats, and limitations—and the use of ongoing assessment to inform instruction. The importance of early intervention is

stressed, as well as the need to consult a reading specialist when in doubt about a student's progress. Also noted is the need for continuing assessment and systematic reading instruction through middle school and high school.

Chapter 6, "Conclusions and Implications: Striving Readers CAN Succeed!" addresses the results of this study for policy and practice. In addition to addressing issues for teachers, reading specialists, administrators, and policymakers, the chapter connects findings from the study to programs and legislation related to reading instruction today.

This book is an indispensable resource for teachers, reading specialists, parents, and others working to promote academic resilience and success in both children and adults.

Available March 1, 2006, from the International Reading Association, *Why Jane and John Couldn't Read—And How They Learned* can be ordered for a prepaid cost of US\$18.36 for members, US\$22.95 for nonmembers. Order publication number 592-448. See ordering information on page 30 of *Reading Today* or visit the IRA Marketplace at www.reading.org. This book is the April Book Club selection. ❖