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INDEPENDENT READING IS KEY TO BUILDING LIFELONG READING HABITS

International Literacy Association highlights benefits of reading practice and volume

Newark, Del. (January 31, 2019) — In an era of technological distractions, instilling a love of reading in students has become increasingly difficult for teachers. The solution, according to a new brief from the International Literacy Association (ILA), is deceptively simple: Give students control over their reading lives through independent reading.

In *Creating Passionate Readers Through Independent Reading*, the organization draws on research that demonstrates how independent reading builds student competence, confidence and joy.

“We have decades of studies proving the power of independent reading,” says ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “It’s why we advocate for independent reading that is truly independent.”

Post describes independent reading as an activity driven by student selection and motivation that’s free from assessment and accountability, but not support. ILA’s definition of independent reading includes the important role teachers play in the practice, such as offering suggestions about text selection based on students’ self-identified interests, initiating conversations with students about what they’re reading and facilitating similar discussions among peer groups.

To heighten reading motivation, ILA recommends that educators not only ensure choice, but also provide texts that reflect topics of interest and stories that are representative of all students in the classroom and beyond. An added benefit? Diverse and inclusive classroom libraries help foster a love of reading.

Due to increased emphasis on test preparation, assigned reading and other curricular requirements, many teachers struggle to carve out time for quality independent reading. But, as ILA points out, when independent reading isn’t prioritized or encouraged in the classroom, students miss out on important benefits, such as improved reading stamina, vocabulary and background knowledge.

Additionally, teachers lack valuable opportunities to coach, instruct, provide feedback and assess the effectiveness of independent reading.

The brief includes a list of takeaways to help educators boost student interest in and engagement with books.

Access the full text [here](#).

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 146 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA’s Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and

evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. ILA publishes The Reading Teacher, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy and Reading Research Quarterly, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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