Challenging All Elementary Readers with the SEM-R

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Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading (SEM-R)
http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/semr

Free Video Overview of the SEM-R Available at –
http://gifted.uconn.edu/semr-overview/

Genre Appointments	
Fiction	
Non-Fiction	
Poetry	

Seasonal Appointments	
Winter	
Spring	
Summer	
Fall	

The Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model:
The Intersection of Interests and Meaningful Challenges

Given the diverse skills with which students enter a reading classroom, teaching all students using the same techniques and the same materials cannot foster increased reading achievement for everyone. These practices result in work that is too easy for talented readers—and too difficult for struggling readers—to provide opportunities for continuous growth. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading Framework (SEM-R) was developed to increase reading challenge and enjoyment for all students, but one important goal of this reading framework is to challenge talented readers.

The SEM-R includes three general categories of reading instruction that are dynamic in nature and designed to enable some flexibility of implementation and content in response to both teachers' and students' needs. This approach is based on Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model and includes three levels of enrichment: broad exposure to areas in which students might have interests, training and methods instruction, and opportunities to pursue self-selected topics of interest to students. The three distinct phases of the SEM-R are described in more depth below.

Phase I - Exposure

Teachers select literature to read aloud to students, interspersed with higher-order questioning and thinking skills instruction. These "book hook" sessions are initially 10 to 20 minutes in length, and teachers are encouraged to share high interest, challenging books with their students. A variety of genres can be selected for this phase including mysteries, poetry, historical and science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and other non-fiction. The program emphasizes helping students to enjoy the process of reading; and selections are made based on student engagement with content and reactions to initial selections. Teachers are provided with bookmarks that feature guiding questions involving higher order thinking skills to help them frame the class discussion for the read aloud.

Phase II – Training and Self-Selection

The development of students' capability to engage in a structured silent reading time of self-selected high interest books is emphasized in this phase. Students are supported with individualized, differentiated reading conferences, termed Supported Independent Reading (SIR). Teachers coach students to select books that are slightly above their current reading level and the appropriate match is continually assessed through regular conferences with each student two to three times each week. While all students read independently, the teacher provides one-on-one instruction in strategy use, including phonics and vocabulary, as well as a higher-level discussion of the students' choice of books.

Phase III – Interest and Choice Components

Students are encouraged to move from teacher directed opportunities to self-choice activities over the course of the school year. Activities include (but are not limited to) opportunities to

- •exploring new technology

- •engaging in discussion groups

- •writing activities

- •creativity training in language arts

- •learning centers

- •interest-based projects

- •continuation of self-selected reading

- •book chats.

The intent of these experiences is to provide time for developing and exploring student interest in reading. In addition, students engage in creative and critical thinking training and advanced training in the use of the Internet to find information about various literary genres, such as biographies and autobiographies. Options for independent study are also made available for students during this phase.
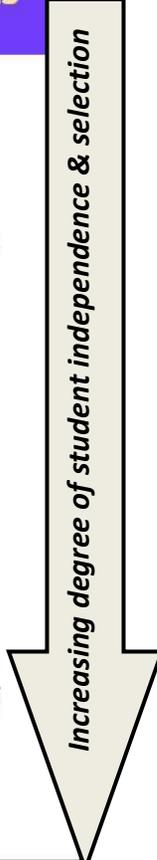
Summary

As an enrichment-based program, the SEM-R offers challenge and choice as well as opportunities for imagination and creativity. In essence, our research suggests that tapping into student interests through formal and informal assessments and then providing choice in reading materials can make tackling an appropriately challenging book more palatable for many students at all performance levels (Eckert, 2004; Reis, McCoach, Coyne, Schreiber, Eckert, & Gubbins, 2007). In describing how the SEM-R allowed her to find the "literacy sweet spot" for many more of the readers in her classroom, one teacher explained:

> "In the beginning, I did not realize how much middle of the road reading instruction I did and how few of my kids I really challenged . . . . I had not thought about the stagnation in reading that occurred for kids at the middle and the top."

The Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model (SEM-R)

Phase 1 - Exposure	Phase 2 - Training & Self-Selected Reading	Phase 3 - Interest & Choice Components
• High-interest books to read aloud and expose students to a variety of topics and genres • Modeling responses to higher-order thinking questions & discussions about literature • Bookmarks for teachers with questions about literary devices, reading strategies, and other topics relevant to the exploration of literature	• Discussions about book selection and self-regulation • Supported Independent Reading • One-on-one teacher conferences providing differentiated reading instruction • Bookmarks for students posing higher-order questions regarding character, plot, setting, genre, and other topics for examining texts in a scholarly manner.	• Introducing creative thinking • Exploring the Internet • Genre studies • Literary exploration • Investigation centers • Book Clubs • Buddy reading • Books on tape/CD • Literature circles • Creative or expository writing • Type III investigations
Type I Activities	**Type II Activities**	**Type II & Type III Investigations**

Increasing degree of student independence & selection

Character

What gift would you like to give the main character? Why?

Illustrate some of the similarities between two or more characters.

How might you rewrite this story to include one of your friends as a character?

If you were the author, what further episodes, events, or discoveries would you have the characters participate in?

Setting

List all the places that the story took place.

Think of six words that describe a setting from the story.

Why did the author place the story in this location?

Do you think the setting for this story was real or imaginary? Why?

Locate the probable location for the story on a map. If the setting is imaginary, draw it.

Setting

Why was the setting an appropriate place for this story to take place?

Do you think the author would enjoy writing a story that took place where you live? Why?

Would you want to live in a setting similar to the story location?

How might your parents or friends react to living in the story setting?

SEM-R Phase 1 Planning Template

Book Information:

Goal / Objective / Standard:

Book Hook Pages:	**Target Audience:**

Possible Discussion Questions:

Reading Strategies Addressed:

___ Synthesizing   ___ Making Inferences   ___ Metacognition   ___ Questioning

___ Visualizing   ___ Making Connections   ___ Determining Importance

___ Vocabulary Development   ___ Other:

Connecting Resources or Themes:

Brief Summary of Text:

SEM-R Phase 1 Planning Template

Book Information:

The Great Piratical Rumbustification by Margaret Mahy with pictures by Quentin Blake (www.godine.com, 2001)

Goal / Objective / Standard:

To build interest in reading (for boys in particular) and provide practice in the use of textual clues to define unfamiliar words and terms (rumbustification)

Book Hook Pages:	**Target Audience:**
Chapter 5 – pgs. 15-17	Grades 2-4; Early Readers, Struggling Readers

Possible Discussion Questions:

- How would you feel if you were one of the characters in the book? Explain your answer using details from the story.

- Based on what we know about the "babysitter", what do you think a "rumbustification" is?

Reading Strategies Addressed:

_X_ Synthesizing   _X_ Making Inferences   ___ Metacognition   ___ Questioning

___ Visualizing   ___ Making Connections   ___ Determining Importance

_X_ Vocabulary Development   ___ Other:

Connecting Resources or Themes:

- *Why couldn't the 10 year old get in to see the pirate movie? It was rated "ARGH!"*

- Non-fiction and fiction about pirates, Roald Dahl, *Treasure Island*, *Tom Sawyer*

Brief Summary of Text:

Three children have mischievous fun when a piratical baby-sitter arrives and a rumbustification ensues.

Useful Internet Resources for SEM-R Implementation

To learn more about the SEM-R and to access additional classroom resources including "booklists on the web," more bookmarks, and a family connection section with tools to encourage summer reading –

http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/semr/

Visit Beth Newingham's website (sponsored by Scholastic) for advice and tools to set up classroom libraries. Although Beth's organization may seem a bit overwhelming at first, she willingly shares tons of resources and creative ideas that make SEM-R in a classroom a little bit easier. (Check out her regular blog posts with useful ideas, also at scholastic.com.) -

http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/beth-newingham-classroom-tips-strategies

Book Trailers for Readers was started by a librarian doing an independent graduate study about young adult literature. Since then the site has blossomed into a safe space on the web where teachers and students can share, view, and learn to create book trailers. *What a great Phase 3 opportunity!*

http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com

Investigate a wonderful site that is user-friendly and includes search engines, color pictures, and books in dozens of different languages at the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL)

http://en.childrenslibrary.org/

Created by The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, this site provides a variety of free children's reading resources, including online classics and author interviews.

http://www.read.gov/kids/

To find tested lesson plans, links to standards, and web-based activities to spice up your reading and language arts classes, visit Read, Write, & Think -

http://www.readwritethink.org/

Library Thing provides free tools for cataloguing what you're reading – or your entire classroom library. You can also join social groups of readers with similar interests from all over the world, and check out lists of popular choices categorized in a variety of ways!

https://www.librarything.com/

Looking for a fun, interactive way to build interest for literacy activities both in and out of your classroom? Check out the daily postings and short video clips at Wonderopolis, a website created by the National Center for Family Literacy –

http://wonderopolis.org/

The Book Report Network has been connecting readers with books and authors since 1996. This link provides 8 editorial websites with help for finding a book to suit all kinds of readers. (e.g., KidsRead & Teens Read)
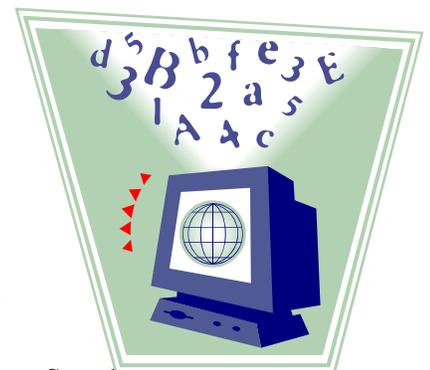
http://www.tbrnetwork.com

Helpful Print Resources for Using the SEM-R

- ***Making the Match: The Right Book for the Right Reader at the Right Time: Grades 4-12*** by Teri S. Lesesne, Stenhouse Publishers (2003)

- ***Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*** (2nd edition) by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis, Stenhouse Publishers (2007)

- ***Some of My Best Friends are Books*** (3rd edition) by Judith Wynn Halsted, Great Potential Press (2009)

- ***Conferring with Readers*** by Jennifer Serravallo & Gravity Goldberg, Heineman (2007)

- ***Best Books for Kids Who (Think They) Hate to Read: 125 Books That Will Turn Any Child into a Lifelong Reader*** by Laura Backes, Prima Lifestyles (2001)

- ***The Joyful Reading Resource Kit: Teaching Tools, Hands-On Activities, and Enrichment Resources, Grades K-8*** by Sally Reis, Jossey-Bass (2009)

- ***Educational Leadership: Reading the Core Skill*** (March 2012 – Vol.69, No.6) The entire volume of this research-based publication from ASCD is devoted to instructional decisions that support meaningful reading experiences. Learn more and read sample articles at www.ascd.org.

Other books mentioned this week that I want to remember:

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