GCC First Year Reading Intervention 2023
Information for Parents

Why are we doing a reading intervention?

Due to school closures during the pandemic, our first year students have missed out on developing some literacy skills in reading and writing that are essential for their academic success at secondary school.

As a school, we have identified this issue, researched best practice and are putting in place a first year reading intervention to assist our students to get back on track and set them up for success going forward.

Students will be assessed before February mid-term break to assess where they are with their reading comprehension skills. The whole first year cohort will then embark on a reading intervention which will run from after February midterm break to the end of the first term in second year.

What does the research say?

- 25% of 15-year-olds have a reading age of under 12 years (GL Assessment Report, Read All About It, 2020)
- By TY the reading skills of disadvantaged students are almost three years behind their peers (Jerrim, J and Shure, N 2016)
- Students need to know 90-95% of the vocabulary of a text to understand it well (Nagy and Scott, 2000)
- Reading for 19-24 minutes per day leads to substantial reading age growth. (Renaissance Learning study)
- Simply reading challenging, complex novels aloud and at a fast pace in each lesson repositioned 'poorer readers' as 'good' readers. (Westbrook et al 2019)

GCC First Year Intervention: Just Reading

- Class groups will read a whole class novel, four times a week ,for forty minutes- this adds up to nearly three hours reading a week.
- This will run for twelve weeks from the 13th February through to the end of the summer term. Classes will be aiming to read up to ten novels in this time which should greatly improve reading skills.
- Ten novels have been chosen and purchased through the School Literacy Grant for their engaging story and their cross-curricular links to the junior cycle wellbeing curriculum.
- This intervention will continue during the first term of second year.

Read Theory

- Read theory is a digital reading comprehension app that is designed to improve students reading comprehension, background knowledge and vocabulary.
- All students in first year will be set up on this application and will be asked to use it for at home, four times a week, for ten minutes.
- On this application, students will read short non-fiction texts and answer multiple choice questions to check for understanding and comprehension. These short texts mirror the types of texts they will come across in examinations at junior cycle.

Library Visit & Lunchtime Book Club

- The Meitheal team will run a lunchtime book club for first year students who want a quiet space to read and talk about books. Begins after Feb mid-term break
- The Meitheal team will take first year groups on a well-being morning which will include a visit to the library in Glanmire where they will have an opportunity to join the library
- The Meitheal team will promote and encourage reading with first years through display boards and a inter-class leader board to track progress during the Just Reading intervention

Information about the New Group Reading Test (NGRT)

What is NGRT?

New Group Reading Test (NGRT) is a formative assessment that is used to assess a student's level of reading. Formative means that it does not count towards any final grade or result but is used to find out your child's current ability level as compared to the national average and allow for the identification of students who may benefit from interventions or from being stretched further. The test can be taken again later in the school year to assess progress and see whether interventions have been successful.
The content is designed to reflect the language of today and the way that reading is taught in schools. It is a short multiple-choice test that can be used to assess the reading skills of children as young as 5 and monitor progress up to the age of 16.
Tasks include sentence completion and reading comprehension, and the test should take 30-50 minutes.

How is NGRT used?

Reading skills are a key aspect of a students' ability to access the school curriculum. NGRT can quickly and accurately inform teachers of a student's level of reading, and therefore provide support to those who need it, or stretch those who can be pushed for further development. It allows for more personalised interventions that are appropriate for the individual student, with the aim of raising a student's abilities in reading and, by extension, their ability to access other areas of the curriculum.

How does NGRT compare to an exam?

NGRT is a formative assessment, which means that it does not count towards any formal mark or grade. It is however taken in controlled conditions, to ensure individual responses. Students will be monitored to ensure that they are working through the questions on their own. Assistance can be given to explain how to take the test and how to use the online testing platform (if using NGRT digital), but students cannot receive help in choosing answers or having the text explained to them.
The test should take approximately 30-35 minutes to complete the digital version.

Should my child revise or train for NGRT? Can I get practice tests?

We advise against any practicing or training in order to get a fair assessment of the student's reading abilities at that moment in time. There are practice questions in the assessment to get students familiar with the task they are being asked to do.

Who should I contact with questions about the test?

If you have any concerns or questions about the test, please contact glanmirecc@corketb.ie.