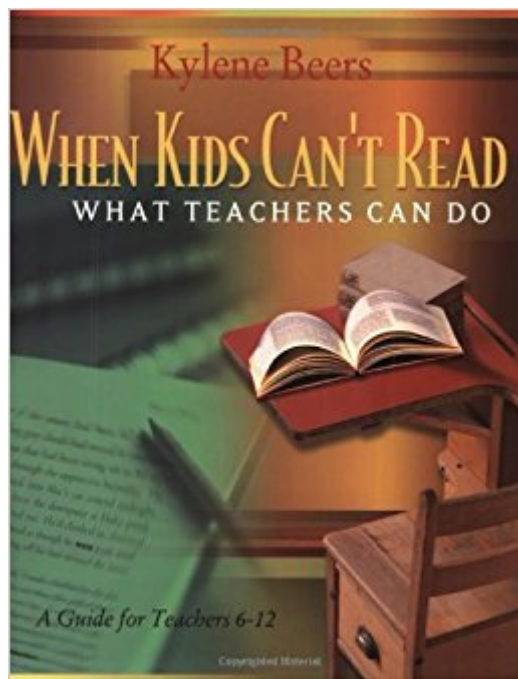




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When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do: A Guide For Teachers 6-12



Synopsis

For Kylene Beers, the question of what to do when kids can't read surfaced abruptly in 1979 when she began teaching. That year, she discovered that some of the students in her seventh-grade language arts classes could pronounce all the words, but couldn't make any sense of the text. Others couldn't even pronounce the words. And that was the year she met a boy named George. George couldn't read. When George's parents asked her to explain what their son's reading difficulties were and what she was going to do to help, Kylene, a secondary certified English teacher with no background in reading, realized she had little to offer the parents, even less to offer their son. That defining moment sent her on a twenty-three-year search for answers to that original question: how do we help middle and high schoolers who can't read? Now in her critical and practical text *When Kids Can't Read - What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12*, Kylene shares what she has learned and shows teachers how to help struggling readers with comprehension vocabulary fluency word recognition motivation. Here, Kylene offers teachers the comprehensive handbook they've needed to help readers improve their skills, their attitudes, and their confidence. Filled with student transcripts, detailed strategies, reproducible material, and extensive booklists, this much-anticipated guide to teaching reading both instructs and inspires.

Book Information

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Age Range: 11 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

“If I had to recommend just one book to middle and secondary teachers working to support struggling readers, this would have to be the book. When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do is a comprehensive handbook filled with practical strategies that teachers of all subjects can use to make reading skills transparent and accessible to adolescents. Blending theory with practice throughout, Kyleene Beers moves teachers from assessment to instruction from describing dependent reading behaviours to suggesting ways to help students with vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, word recognition, response to text, and so much more. But it's not just the strategies that make this book so valuable. It's the invitations to step inside a classroom and eavesdrop on teacher/student interactions. It's the student profiles, the if/then charts, the extensive booklists and, of course, the experiences of a brilliant reading teacher. This is simply the best book published to date to support struggling adolescent readers!”
Gilda Leitenberg, District-wide Coordinator, English/Literacy Toronto District School Board

Kylene Beers, Ed.D., is a former middle school teacher who has turned her commitment to adolescent literacy and struggling readers into the major focus of her research, writing, speaking, and teaching. She is author of the best-selling *When Kids Can't Read/What Teachers Can Do*, co-editor (with Bob Probst and Linda Rief) of *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*, and co-author (with Bob Probst) of *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading and Reading Nonfiction*, *Notice & Note Stances*, *Signposts*, and *Strategies* all published by Heinemann. She taught in the College of Education at the University of Houston, served as Senior Reading Researcher at the Comer School Development Program at Yale University, and most recently acted as the Senior Reading Advisor to Secondary Schools for the Reading and Writing Project at Teachers College. Kylene has published numerous articles in state and national journals, served as editor of the national literacy journal, *Voices from the Middle*, and was the 2008-2009 President of the National Council of Teachers of English. She is an invited speaker at state, national, and international conferences and works with teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools across the US. Kylene has served as a consultant to the National Governor's Association and was the 2011 recipient of the Conference on English Leadership outstanding leader award. Kylene is now a consultant to schools, nationally and internationally, focusing on literacy improvement with her colleague and co-author, Bob Probst.

I have always purposefully chosen to work at schools with a student population who struggled academically (and with reading, especially). And though I've had the best of intentions to try and

help the students, I've always felt as though I've been taking stabs in the dark to try and successfully teach, despite all of my teacher certification classes (which all seemed to think that by the time a student hit middle school, the student should actually know how to read and comprehend). This book, however, has changed all of that. It explains what to do when, and why. It even goes beyond just "reading" with helpful ideas about spelling and classroom management. I can't fully explain how helpful this book has been, except that it should be required reading for all English teachers. I've flagged so many super-helpful pages to return to, and this will definitely be a book I reach toward often. With public schools increasingly populated with struggling readers, this is a must-read. My only criticism of the book is how some of the strategies are presented. Some of the strategies are given full coverage, with examples, explanations, potential pitfalls, etc. After covering about 3 strategies in depth (in a chapter), Beers will then do strategy "snapshots." These snapshots are sufficient, but not nearly as illuminating as the full coverage she provides the others. So in a future edition, I would recommend everything getting full coverage. But this book was so engagingly written, so clear and well-developed, that even with this flaw, I still give it 5 stars.

I'm a Title 1 teacher in Oregon, and I work with the types of readers that Kylene Beers talks about in her book "When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do". I found her book to be loaded with practical, "use in your classroom the next day" ideas that are easy to implement. Now, my school is an elementary school, and initially I avoided this book due to the "Guide for Teachers 6-12" label on it. Boy, was I wrong. While the focus of her book is for middle and high school teachers, most of her techniques are excellent techniques for the younger learners as well, especially the fifth grade students that I'm working with. She has taken many of the concepts we use in elementary school and upgraded them for older kids; but good teaching is good teaching, no matter what you are trying to do. This book is so practical, on the inside front cover, you are given a simple chart that lists reading problems that kids have, and the chapter that you can immediately turn to in order to get ideas! It can't get any friendlier than that. However, I also suggest a more thorough read through of this content. Beers talks throughout the book of a student named George that she taught early in her career, before she knew much about teaching. Sprinkled through the text, before and after each chapter, Beers writes lovingly to George about how she failed him time and time again, in direct relation to the content of the chapter. As a teacher, looking back on my own career, I can totally relate to that. If I knew then what I know now... the letters become Beers' "mea culpa", and they are a beautiful addition to the text. I highly recommend this book for ANY teacher struggling to teach struggling readers reading. It's practical, easy to use, and loaded with great ideas.

I teach 4th grade, so I'm not exactly the target audience. I'm about to start my third year teaching, and I wanted some new strategies to try for my struggling readers. This book is exactly what I needed. I can see these strategies working as low as 4th grade. (Not K-3) I love that the book sticks to traditional wisdom, but it tells you exactly what to do in the classroom. It is extremely practical. It tells you what to do for them before, during, and after reading to support the reader, but the author has teachers to get the students to do the comprehending. The author helps teachers to see how to help without doing the work for the students. The book also addresses vocabulary, fluency, spelling, and choosing the right books. I also enjoyed the style of the book. It is full of stories, so I had no trouble reading several chapters in one sitting.

Beers frames each chapter with a brief letter to a former student, expressing a generous regret for the ways she feels she failed him when she was a new teacher. These letters strike to my heart, as the weaknesses she identifies in her own early teaching strategies echo every concern I've had as a student of English education. Beers not only explains how to remedy these concerns by telling you HOW to teach better, she models the strategies for you by providing transcripts of actual teaching experiences (both the good and the bad) to SHOW you how much difference these strategies make. She covers everything in this book, it seems. This is a must read for any English teacher, whether preparing to enter the field or already practicing.

This book stays on my desk. I am a reading specialist, Ed.S. gained 18 years ago, but assigned to regular classroom situations for most of the years since. Last spring, I was asked to accept a position in my middle school as a real reading specialist, working with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students who are struggling readers. A colleague loaned me this book, which I studied through the summer, and ended up using to guide my planning. This book brought back into focus all the skills I had studied during my graduate career, with good suggestions and resources for putting lessons together. Of all my library, this is the most user-friendly and sensible guide to designing lessons for my clients. It does not solve every problem or plan your lessons, but it surely points you in the right direction.

This is the best book. I teach 5th and I wish I would have read it when I taught 2nd and 4th. Use for all levels! One of the most frustrating things as a teacher is trying to figure out how to get struggling kids to become better readers. This book addresses it all.

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