WHAT DOES A READER LOOK LIKE?

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The Reading Landscape (described by teachers)

- engaged
- actively acquiring information from text
- not about key words, but situations and patterns needed to solve situations
- create mental movie
- takes pleasure in reading
- engages in texts even when it is not a high interest topic
- actively seeks reading material
- value a literate lifestyle
- able to give sustained attention to reading
- makes inferences and draws conclusions
- uses strategies to comprehend
- accesses background knowledge
- predict, question, and summarize
- makes connections to text, self, and beyond
- can comprehend fluidly at different developmental levels
- successful decoder
- use tone and inflection to express story vividly
- able to read in class with teacher, peer, or self
- visual imagery
- able to "get lost in a book"
- has an internal voice while reading
- gains knowledge or enjoyment from written language

Add a little bit of body text
I asked several teachers from around the country (Dallas, TX, Denton, TX, Brooklyn, NY, and Salem, OR) to respond to the question, “What does a good reader look like?” I compiled five responses and they were extremely similar. Each wrote of using decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies to connect with written text. A couple of them detailed specific comprehension skills (predicting, questioning, and summarizing) while others included the value of accessing background knowledge and reading in different environments (with a teacher, peer, or independently). Surprisingly absent was any discussion of students selecting their own texts, even when the teachers wrote how good readers give sustained attention to and interest in reading. Reflecting on my personal experiences as a maturing reader through upper grades, as well as the teacher responses today, I question whether teachers understand the value of incorporating student choice in reading material. As noted in the article, Seven Rules of Engagement, What’s Most Important to Know about Motivation to Read, in “bounded choice... students still get to choose what they want to read; however, the range of materials is narrowed to text at the appropriate reading level” (Gambrell, 2011, 175). Perhaps this is a natural bridge for teachers to trek so that our great starts continue to make progress in developing literate individuals, reading for knowledge, work, and pleasure.