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**Independent Instructional Approaches-** a form of student-led teaching in which, students are allowed to peruse content on their own with less direct instruction from teacher and peers. Students are held responsible for what knowledge they gain. Sometimes students are allowed to choose the content or method of learning. Some examples of independent approaches are learning centers, computer software programs, contracts, independent reading and other independent studies.

I am writing about independent instructional approaches in teaching. At the beginning of the week, the students were asked if they wanted to do independent reading on Friday February 15 or if they wanted to continue, reviewing and studying for the upcoming EOC test (end of course exam) in which all Missouri sophomores that have satisfactorily completed the course are required to take. The class has not had independent reading time at all this semester due to the daily class reading of the novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormick. This semester the class is concentrating on the close reading of two novels *Sold* and *Night*. The class took a vote, and all but one student voted for independent reading. The one student who voted against independent reading has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and struggles with reading. When Friday came around this student was absent from class. During independent reading students are given approximately half of the class period to read by themselves from a book of their choosing. On Monday when the students voted for independent reading they were told to either pick a book from the school library, bring one they were currently reading at home, or they could choose one from the classroom library, but no one would be allowed out of the classroom to get a book during reading time. When Friday came around, we began the class with the normal think/write prompt, in which the independent approach, the social approach, and the indirect instructional approach are utilized. We then finished a brief vocabulary lesson that had been started the previous class period. After a brief review by the teacher and me, the students were instructed to finish the vocabulary packet on their own, then move on to independent reading. Before we allowed the students to continue however, the teacher asked the students to explain the rules and regulations of independent reading to the new student and myself. The students are encouraged to find a comfortable spot in the classroom for independent reading. They are not required to stay in their assigned seats. The students explained that to obtain full points for their independent study, they must be in the “Zone” which means they are reading attentively and not bothering others at all. They also explained how they could earn partial points, by reading some but having to be reminded by others to do so, and they explained if they were disruptive or failed to read they would earn zero points. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher left the classroom and left me in charge. I walked around the classroom while students were finishing the vocabulary packet and picked up individual student’s books that they had chosen. I had a short discussion with those that had already chosen books while they worked on their packets. I asked questions about the contents of the book, why they had chosen it, and what genre it was. This helped me to see some of the student’s individual interests. Many students stayed in their regular seats but a few moved to the floor with cushions and books, and one sat in the rocking chair located in the teacher’s classroom office space. Four students chose classroom library books. I conferred with these students after they had finished the vocabulary packet and chosen a book. Of these four students, only one chose a book he had already read, but he could not tell me much about the book. This student also has an IEP, but he also voted for independent reading. Of the eleven students in attendance, (there are only sixteen students in all) this student is the only student who did not earn full points for independent reading. I caught him drawing several times, and gently reminded him that we were supposed to be reading. Each time he would put the drawing away, and pretend to read for a few minutes, then when he thought I was not paying attention he would pull the drawing back out again. I would catch him again and gently remind him it was reading time not drawing time. I asked him why he had chosen a book he had already read if he did not want to read it again. He just shrugged. I offered him the chance to select a different book he instead finally opened the book he had chosen. This cat and mouse game went on for the rest of the class period he eventually stopped trying to draw and just sat there watching me, watching him, pretending to read.

This is an example of Independent Instructional Approaches because the students were given very little direct teacher instruction and they were allowed to choose the activity and the content. I enjoyed watching the students engage in reading. All the students in class, but one, were engaged and very well behaved during the lesson. I only had to report to the teacher about the one student who did not read. I believe the lesson went well. I would like to see all the students engaged in reading, but ten out of eleven is a decent result. Next time we have independent reading, I may go with this student to the classroom library and help him choose a book that might spark his interest. I also sat and read (while I observed the students) from the book *Night*, which will be part of the unit I will teach by myself in a few weeks.