ADOLESCENT LITERACY GUIDE

Meeting the Literacy Needs of Students in Juvenile Justice Facilities

Second Edition

Terry Salinger

The National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth

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Suggested Citation

This *Adolescent Literacy Guide* will provide guidance to both administrators and teachers who want to increase opportunities for students in juvenile justice facilities to improve their literacy skills. A secondary audience is neglected and delinquent coordinators at the local and State levels.

Recognizing the Challenges and Finding Opportunities

The law requires that juvenile justice facilities must provide education to all school-age students, and these facilities often do so despite challenges that would baffle most high school administrators and teachers. Many students arrive at their assigned facility well in advance of their prior school records, which would help support staff and teachers plan the most effective educational program for the newly placed youth. A lack of records means that immediate screening procedures are essential to help staff identify students' physical, academic, and emotional needs. Problems may be relatively easy to address, such as getting students glasses if vision screening determines need (Sparks & Harwin, 2018), ensuring that students who have been consistently truant now attend class regularly, or providing meals routinely to students who have experienced food insecurity.

Other conditions present far greater challenges. Although a wide range of abilities often are represented in any cohort in a juvenile justice facility, a substantial number of the students most likely will perform below expectations for their age in key content areas such as reading (Davis et al., 2014). Gaps in skills at the basic levels of phonological processing, oral reading fluency skills, and low levels of comprehension are not uncommon. Although some students may have mastered these reading basics, they may lack proficiency for critical reading, have low levels of the academic vocabulary needed for content-area reading, and lack the general or content-specific background knowledge that helps them make sense of what they read and what teachers teach (Houchins, Gagnon, Lane, Lambert, & McCray, 2018).

Strong evidence also indicates that many students who are suspended or expelled from school and subsequently consigned to juvenile justice facilities have long histories of learning disabilities, inadequate oral language skills, anxiety disorders, and other emotional and mental health disturbances that have either not been adequately addressed or never previously identified (Government Accountability Office, 2018; Houchins et al., 2018; Snow, Sanger, Clair, Eadie, & Dinslage, 2015). Students with anxiety disorders and emotional and mental health issues often are treated with psychotropic drugs (Houchins et al., 2018).

Many of these students have been enrolled in intervention classes, often since the early grades, but frequently the interventions have been only minimally effective (Denton et al., 2013; Houchins et al., 2018; National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction, 2010; Wexler, Pyle, Flower, Williams, & Cole, 2014). Further, removal from the mainstream of classroom work (Tier 1 instruction in a multi-tiered system of support) may have communicated to students who are struggling that they are different from their peers, somehow "on the fringe" of mainstream school life because of their lagging skills. Such feelings can lower students' sense of themselves as capable learners; decrease their efforts to expend cognitive energy to master challenging skills; and lead to behaviors that result in suspensions, expulsion from school, and often—sadly— juvenile detention. In short, students' goals and beliefs about the value of reading have diminished to the point where they have given up trying to improve their reading skills or read to learn in content-area instruction.

Using This Guide

This guide contains four recommendations, each of which is explained and then followed by action-oriented strategies for implementation.

- **Recommendation 1:** Ensure that juvenile justice facilities have the infrastructure necessary to provide students and teachers with the academic and social supports needed for their success.
- **Recommendation 2:** Use data for decision making in a comprehensive approach that assesses students' needs on entry and as they progress through the program.
- **Recommendation 3.** Provide a comprehensive literacy program that seeks to meet the needs of all students in the juvenile justice facility.
- **Recommendation 4:** Provide intensive interventions to students who need them to address their specific areas of weakness and build areas of strength.

These recommendations are grounded in educational research and best practice. The guide also includes an annotated list of valuable resources for additional support.

Many students require extended, focused instruction to improve their reading skills. But the reality of many juvenile justice facilities is that students often stay only a relatively short amount of time. Thus, the recommendations and strategies in this guide have been designed to be flexible so that they can be applied in both short-term and long-term detention and juvenile justice facilities.

Implementing these recommendations may require some changes to instruction in content-area classes and to schools' infrastructure; together, these changes can give students immediate help, even during their relatively short time in detention. For many adolescents, incarceration presents new, positive opportunities, especially educational ones, that may make the difference in whether they recidivate. Once in secure care, many adolescents find themselves in an environment in which classes are small and teachers can provide direct instruction and individualized attention. Attendance is mandatory, and adolescents who may not have attended school regularly for years are suddenly students again. If their classroom experiences are positive and they recognize that their skills are becoming stronger, these students may find themselves engaged in and enthusiastic about learning. Such an experience can contribute to a successful transition back to regular education programs when they are released.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Ensure that juvenile justice facilities have the infrastructure necessary to provide students and teachers with the academic and social supports needed for success.

Teachers and administrative staff who work in juvenile detention programs face many challenges, some common to those in mainstream secondary education settings and some unique to their programs. The common challenges include insufficient staff knowledge of the literacy needs of students and limited capacity to change instruction, inadequate financial resources, and high turnover of both staff and students. The following strategies can be the start of a planning process to make infrastructural improvements within a facility to address chronic problems of adolescents who are struggling readers.

A. *Establish a literacy-focused culture that demonstrates to teachers and students the importance of reading and writing.*

All the strategies mentioned in this guide have the potential to contribute to establishing a literacy-focused culture, such as asking new residents about their "reading histories," including vocabulary and comprehension instruction in content-area classes, making a wide range of print and electronic material available so that students have opportunities to use reading for both learning and leisure, and offering specialized interventions. One suggestion is to include questions about reading during the intake interview process or the first day of school orientation with new students who are entering the facility school for the first time.

Physical artifacts are part of the development of a literacy-focused culture. When students have access to print and digital print material, when magazines and newspapers are part of the environment, and when students can select books from a facility library, these activities reinforce that all staff, administrators, and teachers alike value literacy and expect that even students who struggle the most will engage in some literacy pursuits. A focus on increasing students' literacy skills reinforces the message that the juvenile justice facility is a place for learning, where rehabilitation and skill development are important goals. Such an atmosphere bridges the high rate of teacher mobility in many juvenile justice centers and is quickly apparent to the youth.

B. *Establish and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the facility to demonstrate high expectations and encourage students to take an active role in their learning.*

Some adolescents do not think of themselves as learners; they assume that they cannot set meaningful learning goals or achieve success in school (Dweck, 2015; Yudowitch, Henry, & Guthrie, 2008). They may never have had a teacher or a school official help them believe in themselves or see the value of learning. However, the more they learn about their own learning patterns, strengths, and weaknesses, the better able they will be to set and meet individual learning goals. Small classes and required attendance may provide students with their first opportunities to think proactively about themselves as learners. Adolescence is the time when the human brain is increasing and developing at a phenomenal rate, when individuals' cognitive abilities are becoming more powerful (Harper, Waite, & Loschert, 2018). Small, ideally supportive classrooms in juvenile justice facilities can be the ideal environments for this development to occur.

Helping students begin to take control of their learning often is a three-step process. Controlling learning does not always come automatically. The first step is the interview

or survey mentioned in Recommendation 2, and the second is setting clear expectations for the kind of behavior that is expected in class. Teacher-set expectations may seem very top down—the kind of learning environments that students have found frustrating in the past. However, combining personal interviews and clear behavioral expectations communicates the value facility staff places on all students as individuals and the confidence staff have that students can reach those expectations.

The third step concerns the activities that students are asked to complete and the kinds of feedback that teachers provide. Many adolescents who are struggling readers assume that they will not do well in school, and many teachers reinforce this assumption through their actions or through direct or indirect feedback that decreases motivation and engagement—and, ultimately, learning. It is, of course, important that students are asked to engage in activities that challenge and engage them and that students see their classrooms as safe places where they can make mistakes without embarrassment or reprisal. Especially in reading, teachers need to be aware of the limits of students' skills and that some tasks, such as asking some weaker readers to read orally, may push them outside their comfort zone and reinforce their sense of themselves as being incapable of keeping up with their peers.

Praise for students' educational performance should focus on their learning processes and on the effort they put forth, not on their products. This kind of encouragement helps students see the value of effort and acknowledges that they have tried to accomplish academic goals. Comments such as "You did a great job explaining the author's perspective in this paper, so let's talk about how you can state your own ideas more persuasively" give a strong and productive message to students. It recognizes accomplishments and challenges them to keep getting better.

Creating positive interactions with adolescents can be difficult; doing this with students in juvenile justice facilities can be especially challenging, in part because many of these students may never have been able to form a trusting and supportive relationship with teachers and other school officials. This can be especially true for students from minority backgrounds, who often think their teachers see them only through the lens of negative stereotypes. However, experimental research has shown that cycles of wariness can be broken when teachers learn to provide feedback that focuses proactively on students' efforts, encourages students to keep trying because of their innate capabilities, and continually reinforces high expectations

(Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013; Yeager et al., 2014). The Mindset Scholars Network (2015) summarized the research under a title that epitomizes what a positive learning environment must show: *Students Need to Know Our* [their teachers] *Only Bias Is for Them to Succeed.*

C. *Provide professional development opportunities to strengthen teachers' strategies for teaching comprehension within their content areas, managing the classroom, and enhancing motivation and engagement.*

Very few secondary administrators and content-area teachers have been trained to consider the literacy needs of their students, especially those who struggle to make sense of text and express themselves in writing. They can all benefit from professional development that provides them with the following knowledge:

- Insight into the literacy demands in each content area (e.g., attention to text structure in history, cause and effect in science, and thematic development in English)
- Information about the special needs of readers who are struggling and students who are learning English
- A repertoire of skills and strategies for teaching reading in the context of their content-area instruction

The professional development should present clear models for the shifts that teachers need to make to accomplish this goal (e.g., identifying vocabulary to highlight or posing the kinds of questions that engage students in discussions). These professional development sessions need to encourage teachers to practice new strategies, such as verbalizing their comprehension processes as they think aloud about a piece of text. Professional development on using assessment data to guide instruction and developing progress-monitoring tools also is essential.

Another important area of professional development is classroom management. No matter where they teach, secondary teachers often prefer a lecture or transmission style of teaching, wherein teacher control is tight and students are not encouraged to participate other than to receive what teachers say. Such an environment rarely engages or motivates students, so Recommendation 1 advises teachers to "open up" their classrooms in ways that will welcome and involve students and help them think of themselves as learners. Teachers need clear directions for making such a shift, and they need support as they try out strategies that can open their classrooms.

If teachers are to shift their classroom management styles, they need to deepen their understanding of the interpersonal aspects of teaching and learning; the result can be greater student engagement and motivation. Components of this understanding include identifying and overcoming stereotypes they may have (Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013) and the ability to handle the routine pressures of classroom life. Opening the classroom for more discussion, peer interaction, individualized attention, and self-directed learning, which will be discussed in Recommendation 3, not only increases motivation and engagement but also gives students opportunities to "push their teacher's buttons." Teachers need to learn that a key to classroom management is staying calm under stress and setting expectations related to peer interaction and discussion activities.

Finally, professional development should encourage teachers to talk with and learn from each other. Teachers, even in relatively small schools or facilities, may not automatically form professional learning communities, at least not without structures that encourage and allow them to do so. Professional development can give teachers common time for planning and opportunities to discuss student performance, their own teaching, and learning in general. These opportunities should not be underestimated. Teachers need to spend time together if they are to learn from one another, and professional development sessions give them a start at doing this.

D. Reallocate funding, as needed, to support changes in instructional practice.

Administrators in detention facilities can play a leadership role in demonstrating the value they place on carrying out the recommendations in this guide by reallocating funding toward professional development for teachers; providing classroom materials at various reading levels, books, and other print materials for students' independent reading; using technology as a resource, and making available screening or diagnostic testing and reading interventions for those students who need them the most. Establishing a school or dorm library contributes to the literacy-focused culture discussed earlier. Title I, Part D Federal dollars may be used for many of these suggested activities.

If detention and long-term secure facilities find it difficult to offer extensive professional development on-site, administrators and teachers should be encouraged—and given release time—to attend relevant professional development sessions provided in nearby districts or take

advantage of online resources. Although training for staff in juvenile justice facilities should in most cases be specialized, sessions that focus on literacy across the content areas are quite common for mainstream educators; they can offer practical information that teachers in facilities can make their own as they apply the training or strategies.

Recommendation 2: Use data for decision making in a comprehensive approach that assesses students' needs on entry and as they progress through the program.

Title I, Part D requires that students be assessed when entering a juvenile justice facility so that their level of academic achievement, especially in reading and mathematics, can be determined prior to the start of instruction. Ideally, the tests should align with state academic standards—the same as their non-system-involved peers. But these assessments are only part of the process of learning about students and administering them should not necessarily be the first step in this important process.

A. Assess students on entry to learn as much as possible about them as learners and individuals.

One of the most critical steps when a young person arrives at a juvenile justice facility should be to gain as much information as possible about the person through informal methods such as interviews and surveys and more formal screening and assessment processes that will help determine any mental, emotional, and behavioral issues and identify academic strengths and weaknesses. Administering a short survey or interview as part of the intake process is one way to quickly get to know new arrivals. The survey or interview might ask about interests, general learning goals, and the sense of themselves as learners. Getting to know students' interests and past academic experiences makes it easier for teachers to direct students toward materials that will engage and challenge them without frustrating them because of inappropriate difficulty levels.

B. Review existing data on students as soon as prior records become available.

It is important to learn about prior enrollment in special education programs or reading intervention classes; the nature of those classes; and students' perceptions of their effectiveness. Intervention programs vary considerably. Sometimes, they are commercial programs; others may be "home-grown," pull-out classes or instructional routines offered by classroom teachers (Denton et al., 2013;

Houchins et al., 2018; National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction, 2010; Wexler et al., 2014). In addition, programs vary in their focus, with some designed for students who are only a few years below grade-level expectations and some for students with much more severe deficiencies. Although research has documented the positive impact of some of these programs, many have not shown positive results with adolescents who are struggling readers (Denton et al., 2013). Mounting evidence indicates that attendance in these programs can further alienate readers who are struggling by consigning them to classes that offer no course credit and often deprive them of various elective courses that would engage them and make them feel part of the regular school community (Learned, 2016).

The information discovered at this point can help administrators and teachers develop a plan to serve the new resident efficiently and well during his or her stay at the facility. But testing and interviewing, while essential, should be only part of the procedures to learn about students as they enter the juvenile justice facility; this is especially true if the intake process is conducted in an impersonal or rote manner. This intake time can be critical in communicating to adolescents that adults in the juvenile justice facility will really listen to them and take a genuine interest in who they are as young adults and as learners.

It is important to review students' past academic records, which can provide important information, such as the presence of an individualized education program and eligibility for special programs. Assessment records also can be valuable. For example, if students have complained during an interview that reading assignments have always been "too hard" or that reading "takes too much effort" and their records show consistently low scores on standardized reading assessments, the possibility is high that the students have severe reading difficulties that need to be investigated further.

Although this required testing should take place soon after entry into a facility, testing students immediately on arrival can skew the results because they are still acclimating to their new surroundings. Scheduling academic testing after conducting the interviews and surveys discussed in Recommendation 2 may provide far more accurate measures of what students know and are able to do. Use

screening or diagnostic testing to identify and document specific reading difficulties.

When existing records or intake procedures, such as the interview, show evidence that students' academic performance has been below expectations and that they need specialized help, the next step should be to administer screening or diagnostic assessments to determine the extent and nature of their reading difficulties or disabilities. Most often, these instruments are administered individually and ask students to demonstrate both oral and silent reading. Oral reading helps identify weaknesses in fundamental skills, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and other word analysis strategies, but it is not a foolproof strategy for determining a student's reading level because hesitant oral reading may mask adequate levels of comprehension when reading silently. The assessments also may include a subtest to gauge the depth and range of students' vocabulary knowledge, and they will include passages for silent reading to measure students' ability to comprehend texts that are read independently. The profile of what students know and can do rounds out the information that was gained in the initial, more informal intake interview and survey procedures. Such information is essential for planning an instructional program that addresses students' weaknesses and builds on their strengths.

Many different diagnostic and screening tests are available for use, ranging from fairly simple informal reading inventories to complex clinical instruments that require specialists to administer and interpret.[1] The simplest screening measure is an oral reading task that asks students to read a succession of passages ranging in difficulty from very easy to difficult. Standardized, validated inventories offer such passages, often accompanied by some diagnostic information. When new students stumble over simple words, read haltingly, or cannot answer simple literal or factual questions about the text, these students are likely disabled in reading and need specialized help.

Individually administered diagnostic reading tests provide more detailed information about exact areas of reading difficulty. They often require a reading specialist or a psychologist to administer and interpret, but they provide data that can point to interventions that will be most beneficial—ones starting with the basics of letter-sound correspondence, decoding, or fluency or ones that aim to increase vocabulary and comprehension strategies. Many

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[1] See http://www.adlit.org/article/23373#IRIs for a discussion of informal reading inventories and a list of those that are commercially available, with their characteristics.

facilities are not able to support a specialist on staff, but itinerant specialists (with reasonable caseloads) should be part of the overall educational structure of the juvenile justice system.

C. Include a system of progress monitoring in all content-area classes.

Determining students' level when they enter a class and then monitoring their progress are important in juvenile justice facilities, even if students will not be in attendance for a full academic year. Monitoring progress for youth who are engaged in Title I, Part D services also is a requirement of the statute, typically completed via a pre-post testing effort and ultimately reported to the U.S. Department of Education annually. Information from a brief content-specific quiz or inventory when students enter a class will tell teachers quickly where students fall on a continuum of learning in a content area, that is, what they do and do not seem to know. Checking up on and keeping track of students' learning in a systematic way throughout a course of study facilitates the process of using real-time reports of students' learning to make instructional decisions.

Whether teachers use quizzes and performance tasks that they develop themselves or standardized, commercial progress monitoring tools,[2] administering and studying the resulting data allows teachers to individualize lessons as needed and group students for effective instruction and practice. Sharing progress-monitoring results with students brings them into the learning process. Further, if teachers who administer progress-monitoring tests share results for students they teach in common, all participants in the discussions can gain a deeper understanding of areas of strength and weakness and collaboratively seek ways to provide instruction and review tailored to individual needs.

At the end of the semester, teachers can use the cumulative progress-monitoring data for two important purposes. The first is to document students' progress for the permanent records that will follow them after release. The second is for teachers to reflect on students' achievement and identify any areas where they, the teachers, might need to strengthen their pedagogical skills. Honest reflection on what has and has not worked can help teachers grow as professionals and better meet their students' needs (Gulamhaussein, 2013).

D. Ensure that students' records are complete when they leave a juvenile justice facility.

Even if a student does not stay in a detention facility long enough to receive intensive reading help (see Recommendation 3), the results of diagnostic testing should be included within the documentation that accompanies that student when he or she leaves. The information provided can make a difference when students return to a mainstream school setting or are transferred to a long-term facility.

Accurate documentation of students' academic work while in detention is essential. For example, it is important to document interventions or other supports that students have received while in detention, along with the progress they make with these programs. Such records mean that, ideally, those efforts can be continued in new settings. Any tests that students take as they prepare to leave a facility also should be included with their records, to give receiving schools and counselors as full a picture of the academic experiences and progress these students have made while in the juvenile justice facility.

Recommendation 3. Provide a comprehensive literacy program that seeks to meet the academic needs of all students in the juvenile justice facility.

A comprehensive literacy program not only teaches reading and writing skills in all content areas but also provides intensive, sometimes individualized, instruction to students whose skills are far below expectations for their grade level. This recommendation discusses the components and attributes of a comprehensive program, and Recommendation 4 provides information on services for students who struggle the most with reading and writing. This recommendation begins with the attributes of a strong comprehensive literacy program—features that will engage and motivate students to participate more fully than they have in their previous content-area classes.

A. Make learning experiences relevant to students' expressed interests, universal themes, or important current events and ensure that students have opportunities to interact with and learn from each other.

Relevancy comes from bridging students' interests and emotions and their lives inside the classroom and the broader juvenile detention/correctional facility. Teachers

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[2] For more information, see http://www.studentprogress.org or http://www.rti4success.org.

can give students opportunities to express what they think is relevant and use these ideas and important themes to the greatest extent possible as the foundation of instruction and learning activities. Bringing current events into the classroom keeps students connected to what is happening outside the facility and gives them opportunities to comment on important issues. In many ways, this can be thought of as "civics" education, which demonstrates to students that teachers value their opinions about social events (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsburg, 2017). Integrating universal thematic issues—such as social justice; the causes of poverty; adolescent health and sexuality; music; or even fashion, romance, and sports—into instruction also makes learning more relevant and can spur higher order thinking.

Giving students some choices regarding the books or other print they read, their reading and writing activities, and the topics they investigate demonstrates to students that teachers recognize their rights to study relevant information. This can be highly motivating and can move students toward self-directed learning and autonomy as learners. Gradually, students begin to take ownership of and become more engaged in their learning (Klaudia & Guthrie, 2015; Lampert, 2017; Noguera, Darling-Hammond, & Friedlaender, 2017). When they know they are responsible for making choices, students often find their personal path to learning. Allowing choice does require some balancing, however, because teachers must be mindful that students will still be held accountable for meeting external achievement goals.

Students also need to learn how to talk with each other in "academic" ways. Instructional approaches such as small-group activities, cooperative learning, paired reading, peer conferences, and discussion require students to work together, yet this kind of classroom interaction may be completely new to students in juvenile justice facilities. Of course, many teachers may be reluctant to permit much student interaction because they fear losing control of the class. Allowing any kind of openness and discussion requires teaching skills that are quite different from those needed for lecturing or leading students in structured recitation or drills. Strong evidence shows that interactive approaches can increase both engagement and reading proficiency; doing so gives students opportunities to learn new kinds of discourse, that is, the give and take of listening to others and forming and defending one's ideas (Kamil et al., 2008; Noguera et al., 2017).

Self-expression is important to adolescents, and many young people who find themselves in juvenile justice

facilities may not have had previous opportunities to express themselves proactively within a school context. Verbalizing ideas in group discussions is one important outlet; however, writing also can be an outlet. Successful verbal interactions take careful planning; they also require patience on the teacher's part as students learn the routines (Beck & McKeown, 2006). The planning can provide good models for students. Carefully planned and implemented instruction of this type will lay out the following for students:

- The importance of having a goal for the interaction
- The amount of time to be allocated for the interaction
- Key questions to be discussed but not necessarily answered definitively
- "Rules of engagement" in how students will interact with each other

Other ways to allow students to express themselves involve frequent writing in journals, either private journals or ones they share with their teacher. Journals—and other modes of expression such as poetry—give students opportunities to reflect, question, and ponder in healthy ways, without the threat of a grade hanging over them. Some students may prefer to express themselves through drawing or illustrating in the comic book style known as manga, in cartoons, or even in full graphic novels. These may seem unconventional in school settings and more indicative of popular culture, but they can provide all students, especially struggling readers and writers, far more opportunities to express themselves than more traditional written modes.

B. Integrate explicit literacy instruction into content-area teaching to strengthen students' vocabulary and background knowledge.

Content-area teachers rarely provide explicit and systematic instruction of vocabulary and comprehension because they do not think of themselves as "reading teachers." Yet, as content experts, they are in an excellent position to present these skills and strategies to the content "novices" in their classes and explain and model how they, as content "experts," apply these strategies. Teachers also may not recognize the importance of checking students' background knowledge and filling in missing knowledge as needed before instruction. This kind of teaching will not happen unless content-area teachers are encouraged to do so—and given the professional development that equips them with instructional approaches to use with their students (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Noguera et al., 2017).

Vocabulary and background knowledge are presented first in this section, followed by a discussion of how content-area teachers can build and reinforce students' comprehension skills.

High-quality content-area reading instruction starts with an awareness of the importance of academic vocabulary, that is, words and terms that are traditionally used in academic dialogue and texts. These words may be technical vocabulary or common words that are used in specific ways in content areas. Academic vocabulary also can refer to words and expressions used in talking about content areas, such as "theme" in a literature class or "slope" in a mathematics class. Mastering academic vocabulary helps students understand oral directions, classroom instructions, and classroom discussions, as well as comprehend text across different subject areas (Kamil et al., 2008). Students learn academic vocabulary through direct instruction and consistent attendance in classes that have a lot of oral discourse and collaborative discussion.

The actual time for vocabulary discussion can be very brief, just a few minutes at the beginning of a class period to review previously taught vocabulary and concepts and preteach new or technical words and terms, jargon, and concepts that students may find unfamiliar or challenging. Even though preparing for this brief instruction involves primarily thinking about the extent to which students may already know the vocabulary and concepts, teachers may feel uncertain identifying the words to target for explicit instruction. Fortunately, there are some simple criteria to follow, including the importance of the word or term for students' understanding of subject matter content in general, an understanding of what students are being asked to do, and comprehension of what students need to read.

A second criterion is to use familiar words or terms in discipline-specific ways. For example, students may know the meaning of the word *rational* as a general term meaning "reasonable" or "sane." But these meanings will not help a student understand the meaning of "rational numbers" in a mathematics class.

Further instruction and reinforcement come when teachers use new vocabulary as often as possible during oral explanations and discussions and encourage students to use the vocabulary as they answer and discuss content-area subjects. Repeated exposure to new words increases students' learning, but the accurate use of vocabulary will not happen immediately. A quick review of vocabulary and concepts in each class session and throughout an instructional

unit is beneficial, as is the posting of a "word wall" with relevant vocabulary for each unit the class is studying.

Reviewing and preteaching vocabulary contributes to students' background knowledge, but teachers must do more if their instruction is to make sense to students who have had poor school attendance and who come from many different educational settings. A few minutes spent assessing, activating, and building new knowledge before every class session is time well spent.

Teachers often use a K-W-L chart to review what students know about a topic, help them activate background knowledge, and then engage them by brainstorming what they might want to learn. This process, which takes only a few minutes at the beginning of class, involves asking and answering questions about what students already know. Then as students read, they try to answer the questions independently. At the end of the lesson, students share and compare what they have learned to build a common knowledge base for further learning. A K-W-L chart also involves periodically helping students summarize what they have learned throughout a unit. Such a chart consists of three columns but can be customized to meet teachers' and students' needs. Initially, teachers may fill charts out with class input, but, eventually, students should complete them on their own to access prior knowledge, develop questions to guide their learning, and then summarize what they have learned. The following is a model of a K-W-L chart.

K What I know	W What I would like to know	L What I have learned
Facts, information, and vocabulary about the topic—some of which may be incorrect	*What students would like to know about the topic or questions they would like to have answered*	*A summary of what has been learned, including new vocabulary*

The value of K-W-L charts is that they help students organize and keep track of their ideas and begin to get them acclimated to tracking their thinking and growing knowledge. Other graphic representations of knowledge are discussed in the next section.

C. *Model comprehension strategies explicitly as part of content-area instruction and give students specific ways to track their learning.*

Comprehension instruction, often through teachers' explanations and modeling, gives students insight into the

strategies that expert content-area readers use and expands the range of strategies that students can use themselves. Having these skills helps students engage with text more readily, feel more successful as readers, and become better positioned to acquire content-area knowledge.

Explicit instruction need not take long: Five minutes at the start of each lesson and short instructional periods during otherwise ordinary instructional interactions can pay off in both the short and long term. The following strategies can help teachers follow this recommendation.

Even if they are not planning to use a K-W-L chart, teachers should start by thinking about what students know or need to know so that they can engage students in a preview of each day's lesson. But previewing also has some very practical aspects, such as helping students become familiar with the actual materials that will have to be read. Students may not know how to use indices, glossaries, review questions, marginal notes, vocabulary help, or charts and graphics that supplement information presented in continuous text. Some of these terms are prime examples of the types of academic vocabulary that students need to master to make the most from their instruction; students might need to be introduced to aids such as glossaries or marginal notes. Helping students understand how mastering these many skills and strategies will better prepare them for reentry into mainstream schools and achieving their long-term educational goals. This understanding can motivate them to make the skills and strategies their own.

In addition to becoming familiar with actual texts in various content areas, students need to be aware of the structural characteristics that epitomize the different disciplines. Material used in science instruction displays a very different structure from that which students encounter in history or social studies texts. Science most often uses a procedural approach, showing, for example, how steps in a process depend on one another. Historical material may be presented chronologically, often without attention to the interrelationships of one event to another. Novels, poems, essays, and plays each have their own structural patterns that are different from those in other content areas. And mathematics texts and problems have their own way of presenting information. Paying attention to these structural characteristics increases students' ability to comprehend what they read because they can recognize the patterns

authors have used to introduce and develop a plot, support ideas, build arguments, and convey information. Content-area experts attend to structural characteristics automatically, but often it is only through direct instruction that students gain insight into how experts read materials related to their respective fields. Teachers can use a "think-aloud" approach as part of this direct instruction. A history teacher might, for example, read a dense passage orally to students, stopping to model how key terminology or statements of facts contribute to the teacher's emerging comprehension of what is being read. This modeling also serves the purpose of letting students know that reading difficult, fact- or concept-rich material often requires pausing, thinking about meaning, rereading text, and checking one's understanding.

Students also can use other strategies to help them learn, understand, and retain information that teachers present orally and that they read themselves. These basic comprehension strategies include the following:

- Writing **summaries,** a shortened version of the most essential ideas presented in a text or in some part of a text, such as a section in a chapter, written without detail, elaborations, or personal opinions.
- Writing **paraphrases,** a version of the main ideas that may express the ideas in a different order or in different ways; paraphrases maintain and include the author's ideas but are restated in a student's own words.
- Completing premade **graphic organizers**[3] or designing and filling in their own.

Preparing written summaries and paraphrases allows students to review what they have read or heard and identify areas of confusion or misconceptions, in addition to confirming what they know. Eventually, some students may feel comfortable enough with the process of summarizing and paraphrasing that they will engage in these behaviors mentally and make only bare notes to remind them of what they have read.

Graphic organizers in the form of diagrams or pictorial displays can help students remember what they read, discover relationships among ideas, reinforce attention to structural differences, plan what to write, demonstrate learning, or review what has been learned. The K-W-L chart, discussed earlier, is one example of this valuable learning support.

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[3] Many educational Web sites provide examples of graphic organizers for teachers in all content areas to use and adapt.

Graphic organizers may be as simple as an outline used to help English or literature students track the characters, setting, problem, and resolution to the problem in a short story; students who enjoy graphic novels are in many ways familiar with a complex kind of graphic organizer. Organizers also may be as complex as a diagram showing interactions of the multiple decisions that led to a historical event. As students become familiar with this approach, they can develop their own graphic organizers as a reminder of what they have learned. In addition, a student-developed graphic organizer, such as a briefly written but accurate flowchart showing situations, actions, or decisions leading to a historical event can give teachers far more insight into students' learning than a multiple-choice quiz or a poorly written essay.

D. Encourage students to think critically about what they read.

Regardless of their reading levels, students should be encouraged to think critically about what they read, that is, to read actively and engage deeply with what they have read. In critical reading, students analyze, interpret what authors say, and often evaluate by asking questions about authors' premises, points of view, and accuracy. Some content-area teachers may think that the primary reading goal for their students should be knowledge acquisition, such as learning facts, dates, or formulas, but this view is shortsighted for many reasons. The Common Core State Standards and the standards of many states emphasize the importance for students of all ages to learn to be critical readers and thinkers, that is, to be able to evaluate and make wise assessments of what they hear and read.

From a practical perspective, learning to be critical readers and thinkers is essential for students in juvenile justice facilities who plan to take the general equivalency diploma (GED) exam rather than return to complete high school. The GED was revised in 2014 to align more fully with the demands of the Common Core and other college- and career-ready standards. The result is an assessment that requires high levels of reading in all content areas and the ability to think critically about what one reads. For example, the reading component of the test is called *Reasoning Through Language Arts*. Test takers may be asked to read single passages and answer questions or read two passages about related topics, such as Americans' reliance on imported food and the global recession and its impact on food imports. Some questions target the individual passages, and others ask test takers to compare two passages. This section of the GED also requires test takers to write an essay.

The *Mathematical Reasoning, Science,* and *Social Studies* sections are equally challenging. Many of the mathematical items present word problems that must be thoroughly comprehended before an answer can be determined. So, too, many science and social studies items require test takers to read and understand information in content-specific passages and interpret graphic material such as maps and diagrams. Although most of the items in these sections are multiple choice, test takers must write an essay for the *Social Studies* test.

E. Model and explain "fix-up" strategies for when students encounter challenging content.

Students who struggle with reading often have a limited range of strategies with which to figure out unfamiliar words or make sense of complex text. For example, when these students hit a word they do not recognize or a difficult passage, they give up, convinced that they are not good readers. What they need to help them overcome these obstacles is a battery of strategies to help them "fix up" their comprehension and continue reading. Stronger readers often intuit the strategies they need, by reflecting on what seems to work for them, and subsequently develop a set of effective reading behaviors from which to select as they read new material. Many fix-up strategies are relatively easy, such as the following:

- Rereading a difficult sentence or paragraph
- Consulting a dictionary or other resource to find the meaning of an unfamiliar word or term
- Consulting a resource to learn more about an unfamiliar topic, especially if the resource presents the content in a visual format or at a lower readability level
- Marking one's text with sticky notes or other means to remind oneself to go back to reread
- Reading a difficult text subvocally or even out loud
- Asking a peer for help
- Asking the teacher for help

Content-area teachers might think that they should not need to tell their students to apply these strategies or—worse yet—that doing so during content-area instruction crosses into the line of teaching reading. But the truth is that content-area teachers probably use some of these strategies themselves, so affirming that even expert readers need fix-up strategies can provide the boost that readers need to keep reading and not give up in frustration.

F. Select materials carefully to reinforce and support student learning and provide opportunities for practice.

Many students find textbooks boring, often because they are written in an awkward, pedantic style and lack the kinds of learning resources or supports that can make a huge difference for students who find reading challenging. Providing a diverse set of materials for each content class is a very sound investment. Trade publications, materials from Web-based sources, and resources such as dictionaries and encyclopedias can help spark and maintain students' interest. Appropriate materials should meet three main criteria:

1. Difficulty levels should span a wide range, from very easy to more sophisticated, so that all students have a chance to participate in current instruction.
2. Materials should cover the subject area broadly so that students have opportunities to fill in gaps in their background knowledge while also learning new information. If a text seems overly technical or advanced, supplementary materials should be available to fill in any gaps.
3. Content and presentation should be such that they stimulate thoughtful discussion and even debate.

As stated previously, discussion can be a valuable component of content-area instruction, and it can be the means for modeling and reinforcing comprehension strategies. One kind of discussion focuses on the information needed for content learning. A second and very valuable kind develops deep understanding, often by building from shared reading experiences. A third kind may involve critically analyzing and perhaps challenging an author's conclusions through reasoning and/or applying personal experiences and knowledge. Discussions are most effective when they allow students to engage in sustained

Tips for Effective Classroom Discussions

1. Start with questions that elicit students' reactions and opinions.
2. Model reasoning and comprehension processes by thinking aloud.
3. Propose counterarguments or positions and encourage students to do the same.
4. Acknowledge good reasoning and explain why it is sound.
5. Provide a summary as the discussion starts to wind down or ask students to provide their own summaries.
6. Insist throughout that students are courteous and model respect and civil discourse.

exchanges with others, present and defend points of view in a neutral way, use text content and background knowledge, and listen to others' points of view. Discussions reinforce for students that their ideas and opinions are credible and have value.

In addition to actual instructional materials used in content-area classes, students in detention and long-term secure care centers benefit from access to a broad range of leisure reading material at different levels. Newspapers and magazines continue students' connections to current events and the broader world. Some, such as topical magazines—sports, cars, fashion, food, teen health, and so forth—can engage students who never considered reading a leisure activity. Informational materials, such as preparation material for drivers' license tests, disease prevention brochures, and GED preparation guides, also can be valuable.

Keeping books, magazines, and so forth in a centralized place, perhaps in an actual library or in an area of a computer lab, makes it easy to find something to read and emphasizes that spending time reading is an acceptable afterschool activity. Having a separate library in a dormitory increases students' access to books and reinforces the idea that reading is a worthwhile and valued leisure pursuit.

Many juvenile justice facilities try to limit students' access to the Internet, but electronic media can provide potentially powerful ways to motivate and engage students and give them the opportunity to expand their background knowledge in positive ways. Even sites such as Wikipedia can become invaluable sources of easy-to-read supplementary information for readers who are struggling.

G. Give students opportunities to write to support their reading and express themselves in a risk-free environment.

Adolescents, even those who may not struggle as readers, often struggle to express themselves in writing, especially in formal, academic settings. Improving students' writing can take a long time and in many ways is beyond the purview of secondary content-area teachers, even in mainstream schools. English language arts teachers in

juvenile justice facilities can provide students with encouragement and feedback on their written work, but that is only one way in which writing development can be supported. Two other important approaches that all teachers can integrate into their classes are having students write about the texts they read and increasing the amount of writing that students do (Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham et al., 2016).

Students can write about what they read in a variety of ways. As discussed earlier, students can write summaries and paraphrases to review what they have read; write briefly to track their comprehension processes in K-W-L charts and other graphic organizers; and keep "learning logs" to record their questions and answers, as well as their progress. Even simple note taking gets students to write about what they read. These modes of writing are not formal and structured, but they can increase students' confidence as writers and give them ways to review what they have been learning.

A more formal way for students to write about what they read is for teachers in content classes—not just English language arts—to assign collaborative writing projects. It is important, of course, that teachers understand that the written products may not be as "polished" as they might want. Collaborative writing, done by pairs or small groups, can work well to encourage formal writing because it relieves both teachers and students of the burden of producing a highly developed essay or report. Together, the group of collaborators can follow three important steps of the writing process: prewriting or generating and noting ideas to be included; drafting; and revising the draft to develop a written product. As they work, they consider one another's contributions, help and correct one another, and pool their shared learning. The teacher should monitor, prompt, and praise as the work progresses.

The second approach—increasing the amount of writing that students do—also is important but in different ways. This guide has already mentioned encouraging students to keep journals of their experiences and record their thoughts and ideas. Allowing students to engage in creative writing, including creating dramatic performances, short stories, or poetry, gives them other outlets that help them reflect on their experiences and increases their writing skills. Practical writing, such as writing letters of application for jobs, also is important. According to a report of the National Commission on Writing, more and more employers in service- or knowledge-based industries

consider letters of application in making hiring decisions (National Commission on Writing, 2005).

All these ideas for student writing, both informal and more formal, can be most effective when they are offered in a risk-free environment. The reality of learning to write is that it takes a long, long time as emergent writers (of any age) learn to handle the mechanics of spelling and grammar and the more sophisticated aspects of audience awareness, tone, genre, and stylistic convention. But are stylistic conventions really the best criteria for evaluating the writing of students in a juvenile justice facility? And should teachers demand strict adherence to traditional models of discourse? The answer to these questions ought to be a resounding no! Two complementary goals should guide the encouragement of writing in this context:

1. Give students additional means for expressing their thoughts and emotions and for recording their ideas.
2. Provide ways that students can "rehearse" and rethink what they are learning in their content-area instruction.

Giving students opportunities to write without fear of criticism for low-level mechanical errors can introduce them to a powerful means of self-expression and learning. Composing with a computer that checks spelling and grammar can raise students' awareness of their writing strategies and make the process of writing less daunting.

Recommendation 4: Provide intensive interventions to students who need them to address their specific areas of weakness and build on areas of strength.

Many adolescents who are suspended or expelled from high school and who ultimately enter the juvenile justice system struggle academically, and some have learning disabilities (Government Accountability Office, 2018; Houchins, Jolivette, Krezmien, & Baltodano, 2008; Houchins et al., 2018; Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). Some students may have been enrolled in reading interventions previously, but strong evidence indicates that even high-quality, evidence-based interventions will not work for all students (Denton et al., 2013; Learned, 2016; Wexler et al., 2014).

Students who are incarcerated and have severe reading deficits need intensive, specialized instruction to accelerate their development by reinforcing areas of strength and focusing on the critical elements of knowledge and skills that are weak. Even the most thoughtfully planned classroom instruction cannot provide specialized and carefully sequenced instruction, offered through systematic, evidence-based interventions. Models for

intervention include intensive individual or small-group instruction that supplements or replaces regular instruction. For example, students with the severest needs may be pulled out for specialized help, rather than participating in regular English language arts instruction. Sometimes interventions are offered after regular instruction ends, such as in an afterschool setting.

Although very little empirical evidence documenting the effectiveness of most interventions with youth who are incarcerated has been accumulated (Wexler et al., 2014), some key characteristics of interventions have, at the very least, shown promise with this population (Houchins et al., 2018). The most important characteristic is the comprehensiveness of the program, which means that the program includes the following:

- Instruction is geared toward students' actual needs, as identified by screening tests, rather than a generic program that assumes all readers who are struggling have the same needs.
- Age-appropriate and engaging materials are available for students to read for instructional purposes and independent practice; ideally, materials are in print and digital format and have audiovisual support and vocabulary assistance.
- Mechanisms for assessing and monitoring student progress are available so that small-group and individual work is always targeted to students' specific instructional needs.
- Carefully sequenced, often programmed instruction relieves teachers of the burden of finding or developing individualized instructional and practice materials for each student or small group.
- Students have opportunities to work in large and small groups and independently.

Houchins et al. (2018) suggests that programs mounted on a technology platform may be the most effective in providing the types of personalized, rich instructional experiences that can accelerate students' skills development. They also allow teachers to track students' progress in highly effective, "real-time" ways.

Of course, comprehensive reading interventions, especially those that are technology based, often come with a high price tag. In addition, the most effective users of comprehensive programs are teachers who have been trained to implement the program carefully and thoughtfully and understand the data the program yields about each student. Overcoming these challenges is important enough to make administrators consider the

reallocation of funds from Title I, Part D or other supplemental State and local funding sources.

The payoff is that even a small amount of time in an intensive intervention class can make a difference for students, especially when their content-area instruction features the strategies included in Recommendations 1–3. The time in an intervention will be even more beneficial if students returning to mainstream school settings continue to receive help that bolsters their skills and encourages them to use their skills in all content-area classes (Houchins et al., 2008; Wexler et al., 2014).

Selected Resources for Teachers and Administrators: Valuable Books for Reference and Discussion

What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides

Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., . . . Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf

This practice guide provides four recommendations that address what works for English learners during reading and content-area instruction.

Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C. M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., & Tilly, W. D. (2008). *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

This practice guide offers five specific recommendations to help educators identify readers who are struggling and implement evidence-based strategies to promote their reading achievement.

Graham, S., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Greene, K., Kim, J., & Olson, C. B. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_secondary_writing_110116.pdf

This practice guide presents three evidence-based recommendations for helping students in grades 6–12 develop effective writing skills. The guide also summarizes and rates the evidence supporting each recommendation, describes examples to use in class,

and offers the panel's advice on how to overcome potential implementation obstacles.

Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., & Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: An IES practice guide* (NCEE 2008-4027). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

This practice guide provides recommendations for teachers at the secondary level, along with a discussion of the roadblocks to implementing the recommendations and strategies for overcoming these obstacles. All the recommendations are grounded in research on students' reading, and the relative strength of the research base also is discussed. The focus of the practice guide is on mainstream secondary schools.

Other Valuable Resources

Boulay, B., Goodson, B., Frye, M., Blocklin, M., & Price, C. (2015). *Summary of research generated by Striving Readers on the effectiveness of interventions for struggling adolescent readers.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20164001/pdf/20164001.pdf

The Striving Readers program aimed to raise the literacy levels of middle and high school students reading below grade level and build a strong research base on effective adolescent literacy interventions. This report summarizes the results of a systematic review of evaluations of the 10 different interventions funded by the Striving Readers grant program in 2006 and 2009.

Boyles, N. (2018). *Reading, writing, and rigor: Helping students achieve greater depth of knowledge in literacy.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

What does rigor, a word that frequently pops up in conversations about education, really mean? More specifically, what does it mean for literacy instruction, and how does it relate to challenging standards-based assessments? In this informative and practical guide,

literacy expert Nancy Boyles uses the framework from Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to answer these questions, offering experience-based advice along with specific examples of K–8 assessment items. Boyles defines rigor and shows how it relates to literacy at each DOK level and explains the kind of thinking that students will be expected to demonstrate. She then tackles the essence of what teachers need to know about how DOK and its associated rigors are measured on standards-based assessments. Specifically, readers learn how each DOK rigor aligns with standards, text complexity, close reading, student interaction, the reading-writing connection, and formative assessment. Teachers, coaches, and administrators will find clear guidance, easy-to-implement strategies, dozens of useful teaching tools and resources, and encouragement to help students achieve and demonstrate true rigor in reading and writing.

Callihan, L., Kiggins, S., Mullins, L. G., & Reiss, S. (2014). *Total solution for the GED test.* Piscataway, NJ: Research and Education Association. Retrieved from http://www.rea.com/downloads/ged/GED2014Online Practice.pdf

This guide presents a full GED sample test, with authentic passages and items and scoring information. Teachers can use the passages and items instructionally because they are all geared to high levels of critical thinking.

Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success.* New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535318.pdf

This report compiles research on adolescent literacy and associated best practices.

Levin, H. M., Catlin, D., & Elson, A. (2010). *Adolescent literacy programs: Costs of implementation.* New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535296.pdf

This paper reviews the literature on the implementation of educational reforms, examines differences in implementation and costs among a sample of schools that have each adopted one of three well-known (READ 180, Questioning the Author, and Reading

Apprenticeship) reforms, and concludes with a few recommendations—simple procedures that the authors believe will improve schools' chances for achieving positive results with literacy reform.

Moje, E. B., & Tysvaer, N. (2010). *Adolescent literacy development in out-of-school time: A practitioner's guide.* New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/97/16/971 64f61-a2c1-487c-b5fd-46a072a06c63/ccny_report_2010_tta_moje.pdf

This guidebook identifies four types of out-of-school programs that address literacy activities. The activities can be incorporated into the daily school routine or made available after school.

Literacy Leadership Briefs:
https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/position-statements

Web sites:
- All About Adolescent Literacy: http://www.adlit.org/for_teachers/
- Council of Chief State School Officers: https://ccsso.org/
- Keys to Literacy: https://keystoliteracy.com
- National Literacy Project: http://nationalliteracyproject.org/
- Scholastic: http://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/key-findings.htm
- What Works Clearinghouse: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW
- Free reading passages and resources: https://www.commonlit.org/
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Literacy and Reading Blog: https://blogs.ifla.org/literacy-reading/
- Global Learning & Literacy
- International Literacy Association: Lesson plans, podcasts, booklists, awards, and grants
- National Literacy Directory
- National Education Association: Lesson plans, teaching strategies, advice, and support for literacy
- readwritethink.org/
- Reading Rockets: Research, guides, webcasts, literacy apps, classroom resources, and so forth
- Young Adult Library Services Association: Booklists, handouts, PowerPoint files, and webinars

A Google search of GED yields numerous Web sites with information about the test and valuable practice activities that teachers can use to improve students' critical reading and writing skills. GED's publisher is Pearson. The Web site has information about the test and suggestions for ways to help students prepare for it.

Relevant Articles From Professional Journals

Allen-Deboer, R. A., Malmgren, K. W., & Glass, M.-E. (2006). Reading instruction for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders in a juvenile correctional facility. *Behavioral Disorders, 32*(1), 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F019874290603200101

This study examined the effects of a systematic, phonics-based reading intervention on the oral reading fluency and accuracy of adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders who were receiving educational services in a juvenile correctional facility. A multiple-baseline design across four participants was used to calculate the effect of daily, one-on-one, 30-minute reading instructional sessions provided in a 9-week period. Oral reading fluency increased markedly, and error rates decreased for each participant in the intervention phase. Participants also experienced improvements in reading as measured pre- and postintervention on a standardized reading assessment. The findings underscore the promise of systematic reading intervention for improving academic outcomes for adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders confined to juvenile correctional facilities who also are struggling readers.

Calderone, C., Homan, S., Bennett, S., & Dedrick, R. (2009). Reaching the hard to reach: A comparison of two reading interventions with incarcerated youth. *Middle Grades Research Journal, 4*(3), 61–80.

The purpose of this quantitative study, funded by the Florida Department of Education through Just Read, Florida!, was to investigate the use of Tune into Reading, an innovative reading intervention, with adolescent readers in the juvenile justice system who were struggling to read.

Harris, P., Baltodano, H., Bal, A., Jolivette, K., & Malcahy, C. (2009). Reading achievement of incarcerated youth in three regions. *Journal of Correctional Education, 60*(2), 120–145. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/23282721

The reading achievement of 398 incarcerated male juvenile offenders was measured at three long-term correctional facilities in three distinct regions of the United States. Participants were assessed in the areas of word identification, word attack, and comprehension. The results were analyzed by age, ethnicity, and special education status. Overall, reading achievement was in the low-average range, but significant differences were found by analyzing ethnicity and special education status.

Houchins, D., Gagnon, J., Lane, H., Lambert, R., & McCray, E. (2018). The efficacy of a literacy intervention for incarcerated adolescents. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth, 35*(1), 60–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/0886571X.2018.1448739

This article examines treatment effects using curriculum-based measures of comprehension, oral reading fluency, and spelling and standardized diagnostic reading and language assessments.

Houchins, D., Jolivette, K., Shippen, M., & Lambert, R. (2017). Advancing high-quality literacy research in juvenile justice: Methodological and practical considerations. *Behavioral Disorders, 36*(1), 61–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/019874291003600107

The purpose of this article is to review juvenile justice literacy studies and provide juvenile justice personnel and researchers with methodological and practical considerations for improving the quality of juvenile justice literacy research.

Swanson, E., Wanzek, J., Vaughn, S., Fall, A.-M., Roberts, G., Hall, C., & Miller, V. L. (2017). Middle school reading comprehension and content learning intervention for below-average readers. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 33*(1), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2015.1072068

This study aimed to determine the efficacy of a content knowledge and reading comprehension treatment implemented by 8th-grade social studies teachers during one school year.

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Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. L. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved from https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LitCon.pdf

Houchins, D. E., Gagnon, J. C., Lane, H. B., Lambert, R., & McCray, E. D. (2018). The efficacy of a literacy intervention for incarcerated adolescents. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth, 35*(1), 60–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/0886571X.2018.1448739

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