

## Adolescent Literacy: Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies - Why, What, and How

*(All links are listed at the end of this document and are hyperlinked to the words highlighted in blue.)*

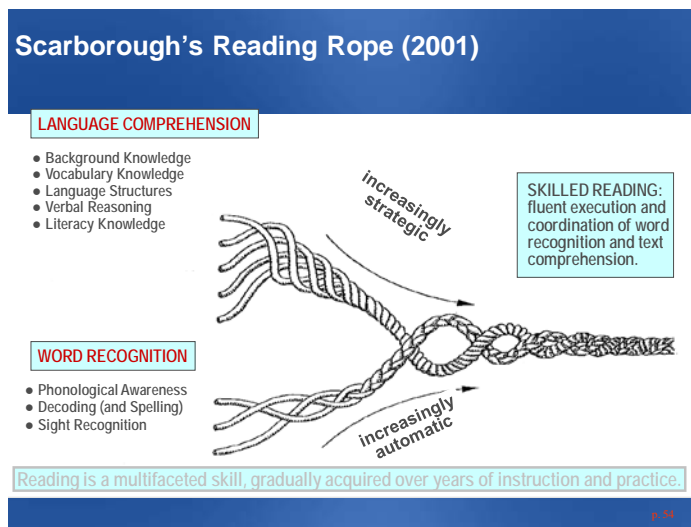
Reading achievement among adolescents has become a national concern highlighted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results reported over the last 10 years ([NAEP, 2009](#)). These data show little progress in fourth- and eighth-grade reading comprehension skills over the past decade, with 30% of students in eighth grade reading two or more grade levels below their enrolled grade ([Alliance Fact Sheet, September 2010](#)). The most recent [OECD Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA; 2009\)](#) results mirror these concerns, with the United States ranked 14<sup>th</sup> among all participating nations in reading skills.

On a more local level, [data from the Virginia Standards of Learning](#) (SOL) assessment indicate that only two-thirds of Virginia students with disabilities in grades 4 through high school meet the required minimal level of mastery of grade-level reading standards. While improvement has been noted, and **multiple measures** (i.e., Virginia Grade Level Alternative -VGLA) have been provided, students with disabilities continue to be challenged in meeting the minimal standards in reading across the state and nation. This dismal situation has prompted questions about the future capacity of this group to assume productive leadership roles within an increasingly global culture.

Experts have weighed in with instructional recommendations to address this area of ever-growing concern. Pivotal reports outlining instructional and systemic recommendations for improving adolescent literacy have been published, beginning with the [National Reading Panel's report](#) in 2000 and continuing with [Reading Next](#) in 2004. The [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (2008), through the [Institute for Educational Sciences](#) established in 2002 to measure educational outcomes, has published five recommendations for improving adolescent literacy. Likewise, [The Center on Instruction](#) (2007) has published a set of recommendations. Further, the PISA report (2009) provides guidance for instruction, including (a) quality of instruction outweighs quantity, and (b) metacognitive competencies are critical to moving students forward in developing higher level skills. In addition, [Dr. Don Deshler from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning](#) (2009) has prioritized the recommendations from these reports and others to focus educators' work with this age group. The chart below summarizes the recommendations from these reports and presentations.

<a href="#">What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) – Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices (August 2008)</a> Each recommendation is linked to a PowerPoint provided through the University of Oregon, 2009 Conference Follow-Up: Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices; presentation highlights, audio clips, and handouts from the main author, Michael Kamil.	<a href="#">Center on Instruction (COI) – Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction (March, 2007)</a>
<a href="#">Recommendation 1:</a> Provide explicit vocabulary instruction (Strong Evidence)	Recommendation 1: Provide explicit instruction and supportive practice in the use of effective comprehension strategies throughout the school day
<a href="#">Recommendation 2:</a> Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction (Strong Evidence)	Recommendation 2: Increase the amount and quality of open, sustained discussion of reading content
<a href="#">Recommendation 3:</a> Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation (Moderate Evidence)	Recommendation 3: Set and maintain high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary
<a href="#">Recommendation 4:</a> Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning (Moderate Evidence)	Recommendation 4: Increase students’ motivation and engagement with reading
<a href="#">Recommendation 5:</a> Make available intensive and specialized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists (Strong Evidence)	Recommendation 5: Teach essential content knowledge so that all students master critical concepts
<a href="#">Deshler’s Summary of Recommendations:</a> 5 Questions for Moving the Needle on Adolescent Literacy (2009)	
Explicit vocabulary instruction	
Direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction	
Sustained discussion of subject matter content	
Emphasis on mastery of essential content	
Increased engagement in literacy experiences that motivate	

The ultimate goal of all reading events is to make meaning of what we have read. Comprehending text involves a complex process of intertwining skills as visually demonstrated through [Scarborough's "Reading Rope" \(2001\)](#).



(Hennessey, 2009)

Language Knowledge:	Word Knowledge:
Background Knowledge (facts, culture, concepts)	Phonological Awareness
Vocabulary Knowledge (breadth; i.e., # of known words), precision (morphology, usage), links/depth)	Decoding and Spelling
Language Structures (semantic and syntax)	Sight Recognition
Verbal Reasoning (comprehension skills, such as inferencing and metaphors)	
Literacy Knowledge (genres, conventions of print, etc.)	

Comprehending the text being read involves the interplay of a variety of skills (e.g., background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, decoding skills, and verbal reasoning). These skills work together at various levels of intensity depending on the requirements of the task at hand. Comprehending text is a process, not an end product (Carlisle & Rice, 2002), and it is not accomplished through a precise formula of equally interacting skills. When reading a passage concerning Mexico, for example, prior knowledge of aspects of this topic would be helpful in comprehending the passage. If the passage is at the seventh-grade level, but the reader struggles with vocabulary at that grade level, the level of comprehension of the passage is diminished. If, further, the student struggles with decoding at even the fourth-grade level, the speed and accuracy with which the student reads the passage and then comprehends it will be significantly compromised.

Considerations Packet: Adolescent Literacy

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Instructional practices to target adolescent literacy in general education classrooms focus on the Language Knowledge strands whereas intensive interventions for adolescents focus on the Word Knowledge **and** Language Knowledge strands. Throughout the literature on literacy instruction specific to reading, before, during and after reading strategies are encouraged to intensify and organize reading events, and to ensure a successful outcome – comprehension and application of the text information.

Before, during, and after reading strategies are discussed throughout the literature on literacy strategies and skill acquisition; they may be summarized as having the following purposes.

Before Reading Activities	During Reading Activities	After Reading Activities
Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Generate questions</li> <li>• Discuss vocabulary</li> <li>• Build background knowledge</li> <li>• Make predictions</li> <li>• Establish a purpose for reading</li> </ul>	Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the text</li> <li>• Self-monitor comprehension</li> <li>• Summarize text</li> <li>• Integrate new information with prior knowledge</li> <li>• Verify and formulate predictions</li> <li>• Construct graphic organizers</li> <li>• Use mental imagery</li> </ul>	Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the content of the lesson</li> <li>• Examine questions that guided reading</li> <li>• Respond to text through writing</li> <li>• Evaluate predictions</li> <li>• Respond to text through discussion</li> <li>• Retell or summarize</li> </ul>

[Alabama Reading Initiative Secondary Team \(2008\)](#)

A variety of instructional strategies are available at each point of the reading event to address the needs of struggling students. The chart below provides descriptions of strategies that support the recommendations and “reading rope” strands presented earlier.

(The Before, During, and After Strategy Links may be accessed at <http://adolescentliteracyconsiderationpacket.pbworks.com/>.)

Before Reading Instructional Strategy	Expert Recommendation That Supports the Instructional Strategy	“Reading Rope” Strand Supported by the Instructional Strategy
<a href="#">Anticipation Guide</a> (Beers, 2003; Gallagher, 2004; Rozzelle & Searce, 2009; Tovani, 2001, 2004)	WWC – Recommendation #2, COI – Recommendation #1, and Deshler’s Recommendation for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction	Language Knowledge: Background Knowledge
<a href="#">Frontloading Vocabulary</a> (Stowe, 2009)	WWC – Recommendation #1, COI – Recommendation #2 and #5, and Deshler’s Recommendation for explicit vocabulary instruction	Language Knowledge: Vocabulary

Considerations Packet: Adolescent Literacy

[T/TAC W&M](#)

Updated: 6-19-14

<a href="#">Scavenger Hunt and Variations</a> (Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2007; Rozzelle & Scarce, 2009)	WWC – Recommendation #2, COI – Recommendation #1, and Deshler’s Recommendation for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction	Language Knowledge: Literacy Knowledge: scavenger hunt variation might target other reading strands such as vocabulary
<a href="#">Tea Party</a> (Beers, 2003)	WWC – Recommendation #3 and #4, COI – Recommendation #2 and #4, and Deshler’s Recommendation for Increased engagement in literacy experiences that motivate	Language Knowledge: Background Knowledge
<a href="#">Use of Lexile Levels</a> (TTAC WM, 2008)	WWC – Recommendation #4, COI – Recommendation #4, and Deshler’s Recommendation for increased engagement in literacy experiences that motivate	Language Knowledge: Vocabulary, Language Structures, Verbal Reasoning, and Literacy Knowledge Word Knowledge: Decoding and Spelling
<a href="#">Teaching Morphology</a> (Birsh, 2005; Soifer, 2005; Wilson, 2005; Yoshimoto, 2009)	WWC – Recommendations #1 and #5; COI – Recommendations #1 and #5; and Deshler’s Recommendation for explicit vocabulary instruction and emphasize on the mastery of essential content	Language Knowledge: Vocabulary Precision Word Knowledge: Decoding and Spelling

<b>During Reading Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>Expert Recommendation That Supports the Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>Reading Rope Strand Supported by the Instructional Strategy</b>
<a href="#">Collaborative Strategic Reading</a> (Klinger, Vaughn, Dimino, Schumm, & Bryant 2001)	WWC – Recommendation #3, COI – Recommendation #2, and Deshler’s Recommendation for sustained discussion of subject matter content	All Language Knowledge strands
<a href="#">Modeling with Think Alouds</a> (Schumaker 1989)	WWC – Recommendation #2, COI – Recommendation #1, and Deshler’s Recommendation for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction	All Language Knowledge strands and all Word Knowledge strands
<a href="#">Wordsalive</a> Vocabulary Acquisition Model (Virginia Department of Education)	WWC – Recommendation #1, COI – Recommendation #3, and Deshler’s Recommendation for explicit vocabulary instruction	Language Knowledge: Vocabulary Knowledge

<a href="#">Magnificent Seven Comprehension Strategies</a> (Rozzelle & Scarce, 2009)	WWC – Recommendation #2, COI – Recommendation #1, and Deshler’s Recommendation for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction	Language Knowledge: Verbal Reasoning
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<b>After Reading Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>Expert Recommendation That Supports the Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>“Reading Rope” Strand Supported by the Instructional Strategy</b>
<a href="#">Writing to Read</a> (2010) <a href="#">Carnegie Corporation document</a>	WWC – Recommendation #3, COI – Recommendations #2 and #4, and Deshler’s Recommendations for sustained discussion of subject matter content and increased engagement in literacy activities that motivate	All Language Knowledge strands
<a href="#">Efferent Discussion – Questioning the Author</a> (Beck & McKeown, 2006; Kamil, 2011; Murphy et al., 2009; Wilkinson, 2010)	WWC – Recommendation #3, COI – Recommendation #3, and Deshler’s Recommendation for sustained discussion of subject matter content	Language Knowledge: Verbal Reasoning
<a href="#">Rereading with a Purpose</a> (Beers, 2003, Gallagher, 2004)	WWC – Recommendations #2 and #4, COI – Recommendations #1 and #4, and Deshler’s Recommendations for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction and increased engagement in literacy experiences that motivate	Language Knowledge: Verbal Reasoning and Literacy Knowledge
<a href="#">Save the Last Word for Me</a> (Gallagher, 2004)	WWC – Recommendations #2 and #3; COI – Recommendations #1, #2, and #3; and Deshler’s Recommendations for direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction and sustained discussion of subject-matter content	Language Knowledge: Background Knowledge and Verbal Reasoning
<a href="#">Paired Summarizing</a> (Alabama Reading Initiative, 2008)	WWC – Recommendations #2, #3, and #4; COI – Recommendations #1, #2, and #4; and Deshler’s Recommendations for direct and explicit comprehension strategy	Language Knowledge: Vocabulary Knowledge, Language Structures, and Verbal Reasoning

Considerations Packet: Adolescent Literacy

[T/TAC W&M](#)

Updated: 6-19-14

	instruction, sustained discussion of subject-matter content, and increased engagement in literacy experiences that motivate	
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(Before, During and After Reading Strategies' references cited with the description of the strategy.)

Recommendations #5 from both the What Works Clearinghouse and the Center on Instruction as well as Deshler's recommendation for mastery of critical content may be addressed through intense intervention in reading. Students who struggle with the basics of reading need intervention time scheduled during the school day.

Moving students forward in their acquisition of reading skills is critical to their personal success as well as our nation's position in the world. Students who are unprepared in reading are not able to succeed in science and math ([ACT, 2008](#)). Reading is considered foundational to moving forward in all content areas. Students of the United States now rank 14<sup>th</sup> in reading, 23<sup>rd</sup> in math, and 17<sup>th</sup> in science compared to other countries (PISA, 2009). By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require a college degree ([Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010](#)). The United States has moved from first to 12<sup>th</sup> in the world with students completing degrees – 27% from community colleges and 55% from four year institutions ([NGA, 2010](#)).

Reports presented within this packet contain recommendations supported by consensus data or evidence-based data to guide instruction for struggling adolescent readers. In addition, national and international assessments (NAEP and PISA) are aligning target cognitive traits to provide a clear focus for the work of moving adolescents to successful acquisition of reading skills and higher-order thinking skills as follows:

#### NAEP 2009

Locating/recalling

Integrating/interpreting

Critiquing/evaluating

#### PISA 2009

Accessing/retrieving

Integrating/interpreting

Reflecting/evaluating

(Kamil, 2011)

Additional Resources:

[Suffolk County Public Schools](#) – Instructional strategies aligned with state standards

<http://www.sedl.org/reading/framework/> – Framework for reading skills with accompanying lesson plans and instructional strategies

*Reading in the Disciplines* – Document from the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, outlining comprehension instructional strategies by core content - [http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/tta\\_Lee.pdf](http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/tta_Lee.pdf)

Considerations Packet: Adolescent Literacy

[T/TAC W&M](#)

Updated: 6-19-14

*Bringing Literacy Strategies into Content Instruction* – <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/bringing-literacy-strategies-into-content-instruction>

Alliance For Excellent Education Webinar: *Education News from Washington, DC – A Primer on High School Graduation Rates* (September 8, 2010) – <http://www.all4ed.org/events/WebinarEdNews090810>

Hyperlinks throughout this *Consideration Packet*:

1. NAEP 2009 – <http://nationsreportcard.gov/>
2. Alliance Fact Sheet, September 2010 – <http://www.all4ed.org/files/AdolescentLiteracyFactSheet.pdf>
3. OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – [http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3746,en\\_32252351\\_32235731\\_46567613\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3746,en_32252351_32235731_46567613_1_1_1_1,00.html)
4. Data from the Virginia Standards of Learning – <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/>
5. National Reading Panel 2000 Summary Report and Report of the Subgroups – <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm>
6. *Reading Next* – <http://www.all4ed.org/files/ReadingNext.pdf>
7. What Works Clearinghouse: *Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* Practice Guide – [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/#&&Filter=6%2c7%2c8%2c9%2c10%2c11%2c12%2c1%2c@%2c3%2c4%2c5%2c13%2c14%2c15%2c16%2c17%2c18%2c19&SortDir=Descending&AvSEx=&SortExp=Release\\_Date&PGIDRq=8](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/#&&Filter=6%2c7%2c8%2c9%2c10%2c11%2c12%2c1%2c@%2c3%2c4%2c5%2c13%2c14%2c15%2c16%2c17%2c18%2c19&SortDir=Descending&AvSEx=&SortExp=Release_Date&PGIDRq=8)
- Institute of Educational Sciences – <http://ies.ed.gov/aboutus/>
8. Center on Instruction: *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction* – [http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=reading&subcategory=materials&grade\\_start=4&grade\\_end=12#153](http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=reading&subcategory=materials&grade_start=4&grade_end=12#153)
9. Don Deshler, University of Kansas Center on Research for Learning – <http://www.kucrl.org/presentations/details/5-questions-for-moving-the-needle-on-adolescent-literacy/>
10. Michael Kamil, Presentation Highlights, Audio Clips, and Handouts from – <http://ctl.uoregon.edu/pd/cf09/strands/adolescent-literacy>



11. Hollis Scarborough's "Reading Rope" (Presentation by Nancy Hennessey, 2009) – <http://www.dyslexia-az.org/uploads/azida3.ppt>
12. The Before, During, and After Strategy links within the charts may be found on the wiki site: <http://adolescentliteracyconsiderationpacket.pbworks.com/>
13. Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, *Writing to Read* from – <http://www.all4ed.org/files/WritingToRead.pdf>
14. *The Forgotten Middle: Ensuring that all students are on target for college and career readiness before high school* – <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddle.pdf>
15. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018* – <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018>
16. *Complete to Complete* from the National Governors' Association – <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/10GREGOIREBROCHURE.PDF>

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- Hennessey, N. (2009, February). *Tools for success in literacy*. Session presented at the Arizona Branch of the International Dyslexia Association.
- Kamil, M. (2011, May). *Adolescent literacy: 16 recommendations from research*. Session presented at the Center on Development and Learning: Plain Talk About Reading, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Considerations Packet: Adolescent Literacy

[T/TAC W&M](#)

Updated: 6-19-14

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This *Considerations Packet* was prepared by Mary Stowe, August 2011