Evidence-Based Facilitator Guide: Improving Intermediate Literacy

Recommendation 4: Motivation and Engagement in Literacy Learning

September 2020
An important insight

Texts young adults are asked to read in postsecondary settings, including community colleges, the workplace, and the military are significantly more demanding than high school textbooks.

(Williamson, 2008)
The literacy challenge is real
1 in 4 children in America grow up without learning how to read
Overall, 53 percent of fourth-graders read recreationally “almost every day” compared with only 20 percent of eighth-graders.

(Planty et al. (National Center for Educational Statistics), 2009)
Students who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times likelier to drop out of school

(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011)
A close relationship between illiteracy and crime

“Eighty-five percent of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.”

(WriteExpress Corporation)
Teaching reading: If not me, then who?

“Learning to read is critical to a child’s overall well-being. If a youngster does not learn to read in a literacy-driven society, hope for a fulfilling, productive life diminishes.”

G. Reid Lyon

Former Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Why focus on improving literacy instruction?

The teacher is the most important factor in student learning. If not me, then who?
Good instruction is powerful

“Good instruction is the most powerful means of developing proficient comprehenders and preventing reading comprehension problems.”

(Snow, 2002)
Idaho’s four key shifts in English language arts (ELA)/literacy standards

1. Students will build knowledge and academic language through a balance of content-rich, complex nonfiction and literary texts.

2. Students will participate in reading/writing/speaking that is grounded in evidence from a variety of texts across the curriculum.

3. Students will use digital resources strategically to conduct research and create and present materials in oral and written form.

4. Students will collaborate effectively for a variety of purposes while also building independent literacy skills.
Grades 6–12 literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects (examples)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10
By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

(National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)
Vertically aligned standards (example)

**READING STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE**

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

**Standard 2**

| CCRA.R.2 | Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. |

*(National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)*
## Grades 4 – 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI.4.2</td>
<td>Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI.5.2</td>
<td>Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.</td>
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<td>RI.6.2</td>
<td>Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI.7.2</td>
<td>Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI.8.2</td>
<td>Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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Skilled readers

What are some essential components of being a skilled reader?
Scarborough’s reading rope

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION
- BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (facts, concepts, etc.)
- VOCABULARY (breadth, precision, links, etc.)
- LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (syntax, semantics, etc.)
- VERBAL REASONING (inference, metaphor, etc.)
- LITERACY KNOWLEDGE (print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION
- PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS (syllables, phonemes, etc.)
- DECODING (alphabetic principle, spelling-sound correspondences)
- SIGHT RECOGNITION (of familiar words)

SKILLED READING: Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Simple view of reading (SVR)

**Word Reading**

Strong Poor

- Adequate WR
  - Adequate LC
  - Poor WR
  - Poor LC

-LC: Language Comprehension

1 X 1 = 1
0 X 1 = 0
1 X 0 = 0

WR x LC = C

WR: Word recognition (phonological awareness, decoding, and encoding skills)

LC: Language Comprehension (skills related to language comprehension)

(Gough & Tunmer, 1986)
A collection of the best available evidence

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide

(Kamil et al., 2008)
Five recommendations for improving literacy

1. Provide *explicit* vocabulary instruction
2. Provide *direct* and *explicit* comprehension instruction
3. Provide opportunities for *extended discussion* of text meaning and interpretation
4. **Increase student motivation and engagement** in literacy learning
5. Make available *intensive and individualized* interventions for struggling readers provided by trained specialists

*(Kamil et al., 2008)*
Recommendation 4: Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning
Targets for today

» Describe the importance of motivation and engagement in literacy learning

» Explain how motivation and engagement are different and what this means for literacy learning

» Discuss four or more strategies for increasing motivation and engagement in the classroom

» Practice and apply strategies for engagement to current core materials
Partner discussion

» Picture yourself back in your middle school days.

» Next, think about what it would be like to struggle with reading and writing. How would you feel in your classes? What might you do because of your struggle?

» Finally, what do you think might have motivated you in literacy learning?
In classrooms where students are motivated to engage with literacy learning

★ What would teachers be doing?
★ What would students be doing?
★ What would the classroom environment be like?
★ What strategies, resources, and activities do you use in your classroom to increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning?
Why are motivation and engagement important in adolescent literacy?
What’s the difference between motivation and engagement?

**Motivation:** the desire, reason, or predisposition to become involved in a task or activity

**Engagement:** the degree to which a student processes text deeply through the use of active strategies, thought processes, and prior knowledge

*(Kamil et al., 2008)*
School for the struggling learner

“It’s like having to show up for a race every day, knowing that you’re going to come in dead last.”

(Eighth grade student)
Shut-down learner signs

- Increasingly disconnected, discouraged, and unmotivated (shut down)
- Fundamental skill weaknesses with literacy, leading to lowered self-esteem
- Increased avoidance of school tasks such as homework
- Dislike of reading
- Hatred of writing
- Little to no gratification from school
- Increasing anger toward school

(Selznick, 2008)
Connection between motivation, engagement, and achievement

“Motivation and engagement are critical for adolescent readers. If students are not motivated to read, research shows that they will simply not benefit from reading instruction.”

(Kamil, 2003, p. 8)
School for the struggling learner

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(Kamil, 2003, p. 8)
Strategies to motivate and engage students

- Establish meaningful and engaging content learning goals
- Provide a positive learning environment that promotes autonomy
- Make literacy experiences more relevant
- Build in certain instructional conditions
Strategies to motivate and engage students: Establish goals

- Establish meaningful and engaging content learning goals
  - Clear purpose — the “why” of learning goals
  - Checks for understanding
  - Metacognition
  - Feedback on learning
Immediate and corrective feedback

Feedback is when a teacher directly imparts their evaluation of a child, a child’s strategies and skills, or a child’s achievement (often in relation to goals) and provides information about that evaluation.

(Askew, 2000)
Immediate and corrective feedback

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluative feedback = Judgmental</th>
<th>Formative feedback = Descriptive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Giving rewards and punishments</td>
<td>Telling students they are right or wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressing approval and disapproval</td>
<td>Describing why an answer is correct or incorrect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Telling students what they have and have not achieved</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Specifying or implying a better way</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helping students develop ways to improve</td>
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Strategies to motivate and engage students: Provide a positive environment

Provide a positive learning environment that promotes autonomy

- Choice and flexibility
- Autonomy
- Appreciation of differing perspectives
Benefits of the Socratic method

» Student motivation
» High engagement
» Content learning
» Literacy
» Thinking skills
How do Socratic circles work?

Opposing thoughts and objections:
How would you answer someone who said …? What might these people say? How could someone else look at this? Why? Why do you think your way of looking at it is better?

The origin or source:
How did you come to believe that?

The belief, statement, or conclusion:

The implications and consequences:
Are you implying that …? If that’s true, then what else must be true? How would we put that into action? What happens when you act on that belief?

Support, reasons, evidence, and assumptions:
How do you know? Are you assuming that …? Is this a good assumption? What evidence do you have? Why is that relevant? How do you know your evidence is true? How are you conceiving of, thinking about the issue? Why?
Strategies to motivate and engage students: Make things relevant

- Relatedness and meaning
- Connections to real life
- Student interests
Designing surveys

Online survey tools such as Socrative, Poll Everywhere, Kahoot, and Survey Monkey can make creating surveys easy.

LET’S TRY IT!

1. Take the survey on your phone or device: Poll Everywhere Interest Survey
2. Let’s look at the results together.
3. Core Curricula Connection: While teaching students the required skills and academic standards in your current curriculum, in what ways can you center one or more of these survey answers as a topic in your unit of study? *(Work alone or with a partner, and then share out.)*
Strategies to motivate and engage students: Build in instructional conditions

- Student goal setting
- Self-directed learning
Activity: Conditions for engagement

1. Read the vignette in handout 5.
   - Underline any descriptions of students’ engagement.
   - Circle specific literacy tasks.
   - Highlight any descriptions of a motivating and supportive learning environment coupled with effective instruction.

2. Discuss the activity with a partner.

3. How might the examples of engagement, motivation, and supportive learning environment coupled with effective instruction be integrated into a lesson in your classroom?
Reflections: Think, write, share

» What information was new? What was a good reminder?
» What implications does this information have for your classroom?
» What is one thing you would like to try with your students?
» How might you use this information when planning a lesson?
Annie E Casey Foundation. (2011, April 8). Students who don’t read well in third grade are more likely to drop out or fail to finish high school [News release]. https://www.aecf.org/blog/poverty-puts-struggling-readers-in-double-jeopardy-minorities-most-at-risk/


References (continued)


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