



# **ADOLESCENT LITERACY**

## **INCREASING ADOLESCENT LITERACY IN THE CONTENT AREAS**

An important function of the Literacy Leadership Team (LLT) in a school is to support the development of adolescent literacy across the various content areas. In order to address that important function, individuals on the LLT must have an understanding of the current research on adolescent literacy and ways to put the research into action. This activity is designed to increase the knowledge base of the team members regarding the actions that school teachers can take to increase the literacy levels of their students.

# ADOLESCENT LITERACY

## INCREASING

# ADOLESCENT LITERACY

## IN THE CONTENT AREAS

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Explain the purpose of the activity. Knowing the most effective ways to build literacy levels in the various content areas will help team members refine their own practice and, in turn, support their colleagues in coming up with successful ways to address this issue in various classroom settings.

**Step 2:** This activity will require the use of the following document: “Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices”. This document, which is a practice guide written by the Institute of Education Sciences and published by the What Works Clearinghouse, outlines 5 evidence-based recommendations which teachers can use to support literacy in their classrooms. Pages 11-36 outline the specific interventions along with tips for implementation in the classroom. The entire document (see attached) can be provided to the team electronically, but a packet containing hard copies of pages 11-36 can be provided to each member.

**Step 3:** A jigsaw activity can be held with the team members to cover the information in pages 11-36. Each participant will be asked to read one section focusing on a particular intervention. This can be an assigned reading that takes place prior to the meeting, or participants can take a few minutes during the meeting to read the assigned sections.

## A SIMPLE PROTOCOL TO STIMULATE DIALOGUE

It is critical that a SIM

Professional

Developer or

someone very

knowledgeable about

adolescent literacy

lead this session.

This is a development

activity that is

foundational to the

function and purpose

of the team.

Purpose of activity: To begin a dialogue about literacy in content areas

Time to allow for activity:  
45 – 60 minutes

Materials needed: Article entitled “Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices” and blank frames.

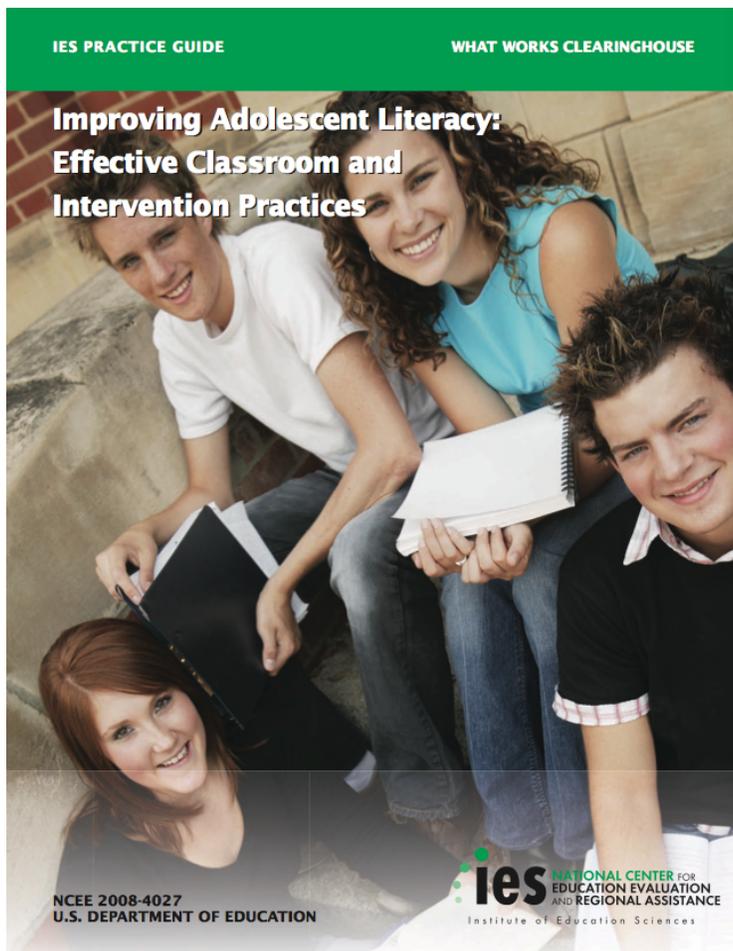


**Step 4:** After reading their assigned parts, participants will be asked to come together as a full group to share what they learned. Using a frame to capture the information discussed can serve two purposes:

- The frame will give structure to the discussion.
- The completed frame will provide a useful overview sheet of the key points in the article.

(A sample frame is below.)

**Step 5:** Participants will be asked to reflect on ways the information in the article might impact their own teaching.



DOCUMENT CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM: [IES.ED.GOV/NCEE/WWC/PDF/PRACTICEGUIDES/ADLIT\\_PG\\_082608.PDF](http://IES.ED.GOV/NCEE/WWC/PDF/PRACTICEGUIDES/ADLIT_PG_082608.PDF)

## Reading in Content Classes

is About ...

Seriously considering the role that every teacher needs to play in working towards higher levels of literacy among all adolescents, regardless of their reading abilities.

	<b>Provide explicit vocabulary instruction</b>	<b>Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction</b>	<b>Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation</b>	<b>Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning</b>	<b>Intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers</b>
<b>Evidence</b>	There is strong evidence to support that vocabulary development helps supports student skills to construct meaning from text.	There is strong evidence to support that this approach helps adolescents' comprehension of narrative and informational text.	There is moderate evidence to support that sustained exchanges between teachers and students impact students' understanding of text.	There is moderate evidence to support that creating a positive environment and providing informational feedback fosters literacy growth.	Strong evidence exists to support providing supplemental, intensive individualized support for struggling readers
<b>Application</b>	Provide direct instruction in word meaning and teach strategies that help student analyze semantic, syntactic or context clues.	Teach multiple strategies to get kids active such as questioning, predicting, paraphrasing & drawing inferences.	Provide opportunities for students to have high-quality discussions of the meaning and interpretation of texts in various areas.	Help students set meaningful learning goals. Develop activities that are collaborative, relevant, and empower students to make decisions.	Provide a program that focuses on word recognition, sight vocabulary, fluency, and strategies.
<b>Roadblocks</b>	Textbooks have too much specialized vocabulary and jargon. Deciding which words to focus on seems overwhelming. Time is also a factor.	Students need guided practice in how to use strategies. Some gen. ed. teachers feel uncomfortable leading these activities.	Students are hesitant to share ideas. Discussions take time and sometimes behavior management issues can interfere with the process.	Some teachers may confuse motivating activities with "fun" activities. The end result should always be meaningful learning.	This intervention requires personnel, time and resources. A reliable screening process is needed to identify the students who need the program.

**So What??** In today's world, many of our students are unprepared for the literacy demands of the workplace and postsecondary educational settings. The need for improved literacy instruction is critical for the success of our kids.

SAMPLE FRAME 1