

IES Research Summary - Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

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* Rate level of implementation 1-5 (5 is high)

Checklist for carrying out the recommendations

Recommendation 1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction

- Dedicate a portion of regular classroom lessons to explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Provide repeated exposure to new words in multiple contexts, and allow sufficient practice sessions in vocabulary instruction.
- Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.
- Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.

Recommendation 2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction

- Select carefully the text to use when beginning to teach a given strategy.
- Show students how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts.
- Make sure that the text is appropriate for the reading level of students.
- Use a direct and explicit instruction lesson plan for teaching students how to use comprehension strategies.
- Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that students are learning.
- Talk about comprehension strategies while teaching them.

Recommendation 3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation

- Carefully prepare for the discussion by selecting engaging materials and developing stimulating questions.
- Ask follow-up questions that help provide continuity and extend the discussion.
- Provide a task or discussion format that students can follow when they discuss text in small groups.
- Develop and practice the use of a specific "discussion protocol."

Recommendation 4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning

- Establish meaningful and engaging content learning goals around the essential ideas of a discipline as well as around the specific learning processes used to access those ideas.
- Provide a positive learning environment that promotes student autonomy in learning.
- Make literacy experiences more relevant to student interests, everyday life, or important current events.
- Build classroom conditions to promote higher reading engagement and conceptual learning through such strategies as goal setting, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning.

Recommendation 5. Make available intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by qualified specialists

Use reliable screening assessments to identify students with reading difficulties and follow up with formal and informal assessments to pinpoint each student's instructional needs.

Select an intervention that provides an explicit instructional focus to meet each student's identified learning needs.

Provide interventions where intensiveness matches student needs: the greater the instructional need, the more intensive the intervention. Assuming a high level of instructional quality, the intensity of interventions is related most directly to the size of instructional groups and amount of instructional time.

Within an Intentional Context of Active/Accountable Student Engagement

(**Note:** this section is implied but not stated by the IES, added by Dr. Kevin Feldman)

- All teachers have been trained in and understand the use of the **Active Engagement Tool Kit** (e.g. use of choral, partner, written, individual responses).
- Teachers do **not** structure discussions using hand-raising (i.e. *T poses a question and students raise their hands to respond*), they **do** structure the engagement/responding of ALL students (Everyone Does Everything – No Bystanders).
- Academic language, use of target vocabulary, etc. is structured using sentence frames, teacher modeling, prompting, etc. - Academic discourse is evident.
- “Precision partnering” is evident; e.g. designating who speaks first, providing sentence starters, accountable listening, teacher monitoring, etc.
- Task-based accountability built in for every lesson task/activity – there is clear accountability such that every student is **doing** every task (e.g. Students all required to say, write and/or do something as an “evidence check” of engagement).

Summary Comments & Suggestions: