

# Adolescent Literacy

A POSITION STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION



Developed by the Adolescent Literacy Committees (2008–2011)  
and the Adolescent Literacy Task Force (2011–2012)  
of the International Reading Association

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# Executive Summary

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The 21st century has brought with it a tremendous evolution in how adolescents engage with text. As adolescents prepare to become productive citizens, they must be able to comprehend and construct information using print and nonprint materials in fixed and virtual platforms across disciplines. The International Reading Association (IRA) offers this updated position statement as a guide for supporting adolescents' ongoing literacy development.

## ***Who are adolescent readers and writers?***

Internationally, adolescents representing a diverse range of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds engage in multiple forms of literacy throughout their day. For adolescents, these literacy experiences may include the use of traditional print materials, the Internet, social media, instant messaging, texting, and video games, all of which can be used as tools for understanding academic content as well as forming social relationships.

## ***What is adolescent literacy?***

In the 21st century, adolescent literacy is understood as the ability to read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across multiple contexts. For example, it is expected that 21st-century adolescents will do the following:

- Read a variety of texts including, but not limited to, traditional print text and digital (multimodal) text.
- Author words and images in fixed domains as well as multimodal settings.
- Talk about a variety of texts with others, including teachers, peers, members of their own communities, and the larger world population.
- Interact with text in discipline-specific ways within and across all subjects inclusive of, but not limited to, electives, career and technical education, and visual and performing arts.

## ***Why are we spotlighting adolescent literacy?***

Adolescents have many opportunities to work with print and nonprint materials to make meaning and build relationships in their academic and social worlds. Understanding how to best support these students' literacy development is essential.

## ***What do we need to provide to successfully support adolescent literacy development?***

Adolescents need access to engaging and motivating content and instruction to support their continued development. Areas to consider include the following:

- Provide opportunities for adolescents to work with text that is inclusive of print and nonprint materials.
- Offer Web-based learning experiences.
- Implement multiple assessment methods that demonstrate students' strengths as well as needs.
- Expand the focus on disciplinary literacies.
- Increase the number of middle and high school literacy specialists.
- Offer access to relevant resources.
- Provide appropriate professional development for educators.

## ***What do adolescents deserve?***

1. Adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline.
2. Adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools with a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement for all.
3. Adolescents deserve access to and instruction with multimodal, multiple texts.
4. Adolescents deserve differentiated literacy instruction specific to their individual needs.
5. Adolescents deserve opportunities to participate in oral communication when they engage in literacy activities.
6. Adolescents deserve opportunities to use literacy in the pursuit of civic engagement.
7. Adolescents deserve assessments that highlight their strengths and challenges.
8. Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of print and nonprint materials.

The downloadable PDF of this revised position statement and additional adolescent literacy resources from IRA can be accessed online at [www.reading.org/Resources/ResourcesbyTopic/Adolescent/Overview.aspx](http://www.reading.org/Resources/ResourcesbyTopic/Adolescent/Overview.aspx).

# Adolescent Literacy

In May 1999, the IRA Board of Directors approved the work of the then Commission on Adolescent Literacy as its position statement on adolescent literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). In her introduction to that position statement, former IRA President Carol Minnick Santa (1999) noted, “Adolescents are being short-changed” (p. 1). It is now 2012, and in the 12 years since IRA’s first position statement on adolescent literacy there has been more research, and important adolescent literacy initiatives have been implemented. This revised statement builds on the work of the 1999 Commission on Adolescent Literacy in an effort to align the tremendous growth in the field of adolescent literacy that Moore et al. (1999) called for with current policy and pedagogy (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; IRA, 2010; National Association of State Boards of Education, 2005; National Governors Association, 2005; National Middle School Association, 2010; OECD, 2010).

This updated position statement reflects the work of IRA’s Adolescent Literacy Committees (2008–2011) and Adolescent Literacy Task Force (2011–2012), who share the goal of encouraging positive actions to support adolescent literacy development. Never before have we had so much knowledge about adolescent literacy. The time to develop a concerted and collaborative effort to improve adolescent literacy around the world is now.

## Who Are These Adolescent Literacy Learners?

There is wide variability in the experiences and motivations of the more than 28 million youth enrolled in schools around the world (OECD, 2010). All deserve teachers who will help them become proficient readers and writers of print and nonprint materials and who have the literacy skills to achieve their full learning potential to meet their own goals in school and beyond.

Despite their cultural, linguistic, and economic differences, nearly all adolescents have interests and experiences involving print and nonprint texts. Students navigate cities on public transportation, participate in slam poetry events, engage in instant messaging, play videogames, look up information on the Internet, read and write on the job as well as for pleasure, and so on. All of these activities involve some form of literacy. The literacy practices in adolescents’ lives, however, often are disconnected from the academic literacy demands students are required to meet in school. Reading/literacy specialists or literacy coaches in middle and high schools are still sorely needed; Santa observed in the 1999 position

statement, “Reading specialists have become history in too many middle and high schools” (p. 2). Unfortunately, this trend continues. The development of the Common Core Standards in the United States highlights the need to consider literacy as a tool for learning across disciplines and grade levels. These reforms need to be coupled with the necessary resources and professional development to implement this vision.

## Questions and Answers About Adolescent Literacy

This updated version of the position statement begins by raising new questions and returning to those posed in the 1999 statement to discuss progress.

### *What is adolescent literacy?*

While there are many definitions of adolescent literacy, the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which regularly assesses the reading performance of 15-year-olds from multiple countries, suggests the following in its 2010 report:

- Innovative concept of “literacy”, which refers both to students’ capacity to apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas and to their ability to analyse, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, interpret and solve problems in a variety of situations. (p. 3)
- PISA’s conception of reading literacy encompasses the range of situations in which people read, the different ways written texts are presented, and the variety of ways that readers approach and use texts, from the functional and finite, such as finding a particular piece of practical information, to the deep and far-reaching, such as understanding other ways of doing, thinking and being. (p. 6)

While PISA is focusing primarily on reading, it is the position of the IRA Adolescent Literacy Task Force that this definition can be broadened to be inclusive of the range of situations in which students construct and comprehend print and nonprint text using words and images.

### *Shouldn’t adolescents already be literate?*

In the 1999 position statement, the response was that “adolescents generally have learned a great deal about reading and writing, but they have not learned all they need” (Moore et al., 1999, p. 3). In the United States, there has been continued growth in this area, as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores in reading and writing continue to climb. The scores still remain lower, however, than the first iteration in 1992. It

is interesting that for 12th graders, the framework used in 2009 changed to reflect the diversity of texts adolescents encounter and a more systematic study of vocabulary. Internationally, the 2009 PISA results suggest some general improvements in adolescent literacy, but there continues to be room for growth:

In many countries, improvements in results were largely driven by improvements at the bottom end of the performance distribution, signalling progress towards greater equity in learning outcomes. Among OECD countries, variation in student performance fell by 3%. On average across the 26 OECD countries with comparable data for both assessments, 18% of students performed below the baseline reading proficiency Level 2 in 2009, while 19% did so in 2000. (OECD, 2010, p. 19)

This gradual growth internationally is encouraging as children increasingly have more opportunities to experience a range of print and nonprint materials from infancy through adolescence. The ability to understand and use these materials helps prepare adolescents to become productive and engaged citizens in the 21st century.

In fact, the 1999 position statement predicted the following:

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed. (Moore et al., 1999, p. 3)

In 2012, as this work and these words are recalled, adolescents are indeed immersed in the literacy demands that the Commission on Adolescent Literacy predicted. It is the position of IRA that incorporating these literacy demands into the policy and pedagogy of middle and high schools is important for adolescents' continued literacy development.

### ***Couldn't the problem be solved by focusing on reading in the early grades?***

Reading success in the early grades continues to be essential. In 1999, Moore and his colleagues responded to this question as follows:

Just as children pass through stages of turning over, sitting up, crawling, walking, and running as they develop control of their bodies, there are developmental stages of reading and writing. During the preschool and primary school years, children learn how written language can be used for

purposes such as telling stories and recording facts, how print is arranged on a page, and how letters and sounds combine to form words. These are major accomplishments, but they are only the first steps of growth into full literacy.

When all goes well, upper grade youth increase their reading fluency and adjust their reading speed according to their reasons for reading. They discern the characteristics of different types of fiction and nonfiction materials. They refine their tastes in reading and their responses to literature. Middle and high school students build on the literacy strategies they learned in the early grades to make sense of abstract, complex subjects far removed from their personal experiences. (pp. 3–4)

In 2012, as texts become increasingly complex, multimodal, and necessary for discipline-specific learning, middle and high school students must adapt by using more advanced, specific strategies for deeper understanding and composing (Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). We build on Moore et al.'s (1999) observation that "the need to guide adolescents to advanced stages of literacy is not the result of any teaching or learning failure in the preschool or primary years; it is a necessary part of normal reading development" (p. 4) to include an expanded understanding of the multiple literacy strategies adolescents need to successfully engage with the range of print and nonprint materials available in the 21st century. Adolescents who engage with these multiple text types need support in making use of appropriate strategies to mine the content for meaning and understand how the different print and nonprint structures influence understanding. For example, there are different strategies needed when moving from comprehending and composing information located on the Internet to reading and writing different genres in bound books, and then moving to still and moving images for information and/or entertainment, and so on. Educators need to help adolescents learn how to link the appropriate literacy strategies with the specific text structures.

### ***What types of literacy instruction do adolescents experience?***

In 1999, Moore and colleagues noted, "Exemplary programs of adolescent literacy instruction certainly exist, but they are the exception because upper grade goals often compete with reading development" (p. 4). At that time, literacy instruction was often located within the English language arts classroom with often inadequate connections to the disciplines. Change is gradual, and in 2012 adolescents are expected to understand and use print and nonprint resources across the disciplines. Many content area teachers, however, continue to feel ill-prepared to support the literacy demands within their discipline. The recently adopted Common Core State Standards in grades 6–12 for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects calls for

set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. Literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 3)

*complex material now and in the future.” (Moore et al., 1999, p. 5)*

In 1999, Moore and colleagues introduced Kristy and Nick, fictional adolescents, to demonstrate the multiple academic literacy demands adolescents were expected to negotiate then and in the future. Now in 2012, as predicted, text complexity and type have grown with the use of digital technologies, the development of specialized technological fields, and a general increase in academic expectations (Buehl, 2011; Draper, 2010).

In 1999 there was a call for expert teachers of adolescents across the curriculum. Adolescents continue to need general comprehension and study strategies that can be used across a broad range of texts (understood here and throughout this statement as both print and nonprint materials) in all disciplines (Draper, 2010; Lapp & Moss, 2012). As observed by Moore and colleagues in 1999 (p. 5), these include

- Activating their prior knowledge of the topic and text
- Predicting and questioning themselves about what they read
- Making connections to their lives and other texts and to their expanding worlds
- Summarizing key ideas
- Synthesizing information from various sources
- Identifying, understanding, and remembering key vocabulary
- Attending to text cues and features to recognize how a text is organized, then using that text organization as a tool for learning
- Organizing information in notes, graphs and charts, or other representations of key ideas
- Searching the Internet and other resources for related information
- Monitoring and judging their own understanding
- Evaluating authors’ ideas and perspectives

All teachers can effectively support adolescent learners as they learn from all kinds of texts by teaching these general strategies through the discipline-specific print and nonprint materials that continue to expand rapidly (Moje, 2007b, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

The content of subject-matter coursework continues to become more discipline-specific. The disciplines of history, literature, mathematics, science, physical education, art, music, and so on have different purposes and rely on different ways of viewing and studying the world. Differences in purpose, methodology, and language use encountered in these disciplines pose unique challenges to learners (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

The 1999 position statement acknowledged the value of infusing literacy into the content areas, and many educators nationally and internationally took up this call through research and practice that investigated the literacy demands of the specific disciplines. The recent adoption of the Common Core Standards by many has created a U.S. mandate to explicitly link this to curriculum and pedagogy. There is a greater focus globally on how literacy is used within the multiple disciplines students engage in within school and, ultimately, to successfully operate as informed and active citizens. Educators and adolescents need support to ensure appropriate literacy instruction is implemented throughout the school day and subject areas to provide continued learning within and across the disciplines and continued and appropriate literacy development in adolescence (Moje, 2007b, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

### ***So is there a solution?***

There were “no easy answers or quick fixes” (Moore et al., 1999, p. 4) in 1999, and the same is true in 2012. The goal of this updated position statement is to continue to build on what is known to best support the adolescents of today. IRA recommends the following principles for developing programming that supports adolescents’ literacy development.

## **What Adolescents Deserve**

### ***1. Adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline.***

*“Kristy and Nick Araujo tackled their assignments with a few basic reading and writing strategies. Outlining text passages and looking up an unfamiliar word like dispel in the dictionary are some of the strategies Nick and Kristy used in their studies. However, these teens will need to expand their strategies to handle increasingly*

A reading/literacy specialist or coach has the knowledge to help students with general literacy strategies. It is most likely the discipline area teacher, however, who will understand how to help students implement specific literacy strategies that are unique to the content. It is the content teacher who understands what kinds of information are important, what kinds of questions need to be asked, how texts specific to the discipline are structured, and how to evaluate the accuracy, credibility, and quality of an author's ideas. Content area teachers play a key role in building the disciplinary knowledge and strategy use that will help students learn from complex discipline-based print and nonprint materials (Draper, 2010; Moje, 2007a, 2008).

Each discipline has a unique knowledge structure. For example, those who study biological, chemical, and physical systems understand that knowledge of these systems is gained from empirical evidence gathered through hypothesis testing or systematic observation. In mathematics, knowledge is gained by applying the rules of mathematical reasoning to the solution of real-world or theoretical problems. Those who study literature do so through interpretive lenses (e.g., feminist, psychological), note literary elements of setting, character, and plot (e.g., rising action and climax), and study the author's craft (such as symbolism and irony). They make claims about elements such as authorial intent (theme), characterization, and problems of narration to explore social or moral issues that are part of the human condition. In music, listening to or constructing a musical composition requires a specific understanding of the knowledge structure of the discipline as well as an understanding of audience and purpose. Understanding these knowledge structures will equip adolescents to be more engaged and involved with the content, deepen comprehension, and enhance recall.

Unfortunately, some content area teachers who wish to include general and discipline-specific literacy instruction in their curriculum are often hampered by insufficient knowledge of literacy, just as literacy instructors may lack the disciplinary knowledge within those content areas. For that reason, IRA suggests teachers with expertise in literacy collaborate and work with all content area teachers inclusive of the academic disciplines, the performing arts, and the technical subject areas.

IRA also advocates ongoing professional development for content teachers in literacy and encourages each content field to develop literacy standards for students that are specific to the subject matter students must learn. As noted in the IRA position statement *Investment in Teacher Preparation in the United States* (2003), it is important for institutions that prepare teachers to include literacy standards with those that guide content preparation. To support this teacher preparation, IRA offers many resources for preservice and inservice instruction.

## **2. Adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools and a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement.**

*Aban, Hazar, and Rana go to the same school and are in the same grade, but their experiences are very different once they walk through the doors. Hazar is doing fairly well in English language arts but cannot seem to learn science. Aban struggles in everything, and his standardized achievement scores show that he is three years behind his normally reading peers. Rana is a good student in all subject areas. The differences among them are complicated by differences in their levels of English language learning. Despite their differences, these students deserve a school that understands their cultural experiences and is dedicated to meeting their literacy needs—each of them deserves a school with strong literacy leadership.*

In the 21st century, school leaders play an important role in supporting efforts across disciplines to integrate appropriate adolescent literacy instruction. Effective leadership is important for creating a safe school climate that nurtures adolescent literacy development and provides an encouraging, culturally responsive climate that supports students like Aban, Hazar, and Rana. Effective leaders engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy plan for helping striving readers catch up to their peers while at the same time challenging good readers to flexibly use and adapt literacy skills and strategies to meet their needs in changing contexts. These leaders also create opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines and provide teachers with a variety of job-embedded professional development opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities.

When teachers are afforded the time to talk to each other within collaborative learning communities, they can better navigate this complex web of adolescent literacy learning in the 21st century. Reading/literacy specialists or literacy coaches should be integral members of these learning communities, as noted in the *IRA Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006), prepared in collaboration with the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association, and the National Council for the Social Studies. School leaders play a vital role in creating the infrastructure that supports this level of collaboration (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Principals serve a primary role as instructional leaders of their schools. Effective upper-grade principals target literacy as a school priority and communicate a vision for

embedding literacy across disciplines—a vision where, every day in every classroom, adolescents are reading, writing, and talking about print and nonprint materials. To achieve this vision, principals build learning communities and structure opportunities for schoolwide collaborative learning. Effective principals carve out and protect time during the day for learning teams of teachers to study student achievement data and to design effective lessons and materials that are implemented, analyzed, and refined. Principals encourage teachers to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, schedules, professional development, and student achievement issues.

### **3. Adolescents deserve access to and instruction with multimodal, multiple texts.**

*Janelle begins her day at breakfast with a quick check of her e-mail and text messages. As she munches on cereal in her apartment kitchen, she receives and responds to a text message. As Janelle notes the time on her cell phone, she updates her Facebook page with some recent pictures, reviews the contents of her bookbag, and remembers she needs to bring in a fact about Jane Austen's life. Janelle quickly does an Internet search on her phone, jots down an idea in her notebook, and is out the door.*

In the 1999 position statement on adolescent literacy, there was a call for adolescents to engage in a variety of reading materials, but fictional adolescents Kristy and Nick did not encounter the variety available to adolescents like Janelle in 2012. Today, adolescents engage with increasing amounts of online text on a daily basis. Some people think of digital literacy as a new extension of literacy. For others, it is one of the new literacies—not *new* as in a replacement metaphor, but *new* in the sense that social, economic, cultural, intellectual, political, and institutional changes are continually at work (along with technology), changing how adolescents read and write texts.

Young people experience daily how new technologies and media are changing their literacy practices and the way they think about reading in general (Alvermann, Hutchison, & DeBlasio, in press; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). The modes of communication that adolescents use as they work with these new media enable them to navigate and create fixed and moving images, contribute to online discussions, author webpages, and participate in virtual communities, often simultaneously and with the same digital device. Indeed, in many schools traditional textbooks have been replaced by e-books accessed via e-readers, tablets, or laptops, inviting a different type of reading experience. To engage fully in these new literacies, adolescents need teachers who are sensitive to the

competencies that young people bring to comprehending and producing texts of many forms and functions. At the same time, they need teachers who can help them develop into ever more competent readers and writers.

When asked to learn about something new, many adolescents will first turn to an Internet search engine. According to a recent large-scale research project, 93% of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 report going online occasionally, and 63% report doing so daily (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). What they find are multiple kinds of 21st-century texts, including videos, blogs, still photography, lyrics, games, and transcriptions of written dialogue that capture virtual conversations. These texts, among many others, are accessed with the click of a mouse or the touch of a finger, often in hyperlinked fashion. They contain multimodal images, sounds, and words that adolescents use to construct and share meaning about a topic that interests them in a Web 2.0 interactive environment.

The advent of virtual social networking is transforming how adolescents use literacy to construct both their online and offline identities, as well as form social relationships with others, some of whom they may never meet in person. Between these meeting “places” and “spaces,” adolescents instant message, text message, and occasionally e-mail each other about common interests in graphic novels, video games, fan fiction, music, and any number of other texts. What implications might young people’s digital literacies have for classroom instruction in a time when attention, unlike information, is inherently scarce? What unspoken, unexamined assumptions cause us to see as “natural” the dominance of print in a world that is growing more multimodal by the second?

While adolescents are engaging in these new literacies with ever increasing frequency, neither they nor their teachers typically view this kind of participation as reading and writing. For example, 85% of teens report engaging in some type of online written communication at least occasionally, yet only 60% describe this activity as writing (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Rankin Macgill, 2008). At the same time, the multimodal texts that engage youth outside of school may not be available during the school day. This mismatch may contribute in part to why some young people view school literacy as being irrelevant to their everyday lives. It may also explain why 78% of teens believe they would be more motivated to engage in writing in school if there were more multimodal tools available (Lenhart et al., 2008).

*As Janelle settles into fourth period, she is reminded why social studies is her favorite class this year. In this class, students can use their cell phones to access the Web. Sometimes, they even have texting discussions. Janelle typically only*

*engages in that type of conversation with friends about topics that have nothing to do with what they are studying in school.*

*Ms. Ortiz begins the class with an Internet clip of an American soldier's experience overseas. After a brief interlude of journal reflection, Ms. Ortiz introduces a similar clip of a soldier from another region of the world who describes her experiences. Janelle and those in her cluster begin talking about the similarities and differences in the soldiers' perceptions as they prepare to read a series of recent articles, as well as view images and clips posted online about military service at the soldiers' respective stations. The students have been asked to access this information to develop a position statement about the benefits and drawbacks of military service. As Ms. Ortiz circulates, she reminds herself how fortunate she was to have landed the computer lab this year for instruction.*

Ms. Ortiz's ability to capitalize on her students' motivation to use reading, writing, and imagery to convey and construct meaning has rich opportunity for classroom learning (Gee & Levine, 2009). Research suggests that about 20% of teens remix multimodal content (pictures, written text, video, music) to create hybrid texts (Lenhart et al., 2010). These so called "mash-ups" represent the kinds of 21st-century texts that carry meaning for today's youth. The advent of e-zines and other digital spaces for adolescent authors widens opportunity for audience. Students can author webpages or use a blog, for example, as a vehicle for demonstrating understanding of a particular content area topic or idea. In school, studying the language of text messaging and e-mail offers the opportunity to have conversations about audience and how an "IM" communication between two friends might be rewritten for different purposes. In the process, students are considering vocabulary, word study, and craft as they work as both readers and writers to construct and comprehend text.

The Appendix offers just a sampling of the sites that invite teens to comprehend and construct social and academic knowledge in a virtual space. Interestingly, many of the postings are rooted in literature and world issues. For many of these adolescent authors, the construction of social and academic knowledge is blended.

Although access to the Internet continues to rise among teen populations (Lenhart et al., 2010), educators remain rightfully concerned about students living in poverty who do not have the opportunity to engage with the same multimodal texts that their more affluent peers can access at home. For this reason, it is important that schools become places where these technology-rich tools

are available to all students and connected to learning throughout the school day and beyond.

Access alone is not enough to ensure academic literacy. Researchers (e.g., Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) find that students often engage in superficial searches for information and fail to critically evaluate the sites they rely on for information. More than ever, adolescents need teachers who can help them understand how to read and interpret texts critically and to position themselves strategically as authors in a Web 2.0 environment. Specifically, instruction is needed that will enable students to comprehend and construct a range of multimodal texts across genres, disciplines, and digital spaces. Teaching comprehension and composition, while always a mainstay of the school curriculum, is even more crucial today. Likewise, the stakes have never seemed higher for teaching students to think critically about what they see, hear, view, and construct in the relatively untamed world of Web 2.0.

*As Janelle packs up for the day, she turns on her cell phone—which must remain off for most of the day—and sees another text from her mom and a video that her dad sent her from his trip. Janelle groans when she realizes that her dad has once again forgotten how to upload video, but at least he's trying. As Janelle walks home through the city, eyes firmly rooted on her phone screen and thumbs busily keying in text messages, she reconnects with her world.*

#### **4. Adolescents deserve differentiated literacy instruction specific to their individual needs.**

*Michalea, Vishnu, and Shawna do not need the same kind of instruction. Michalea needs intensive intervention, and his needs are best met within an instructional program that provides varying levels of instruction. Shawna is ready to move beyond the work of most, bored by some of the whole-class materials and interested in studying topics close to her cultural background. Vishnu benefits when working collaboratively with others, finding the support of his peers to be helpful for both his social awareness as well as his academic development.*

The schools populated by adolescents are diverse academically, economically, socially, culturally, and linguistically (OECD, 2010). The 1999 position statement's call for appropriate differentiation of instruction has expanded to include culturally responsive pedagogy as our classrooms become increasingly diverse learning spaces. This diversity offers the opportunity to support engaged readers who read for personal pleasure and



learning, acquire critical academic language, and develop literacy skills and strategies to support the acquisition of information and concepts in the content areas using both print and nonprint materials. Meeting the literacy and learning needs of our new diverse adolescent population has become the quintessential challenge for teachers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Brozo & Simpson, 2007; Lapp & Moss, 2012; OECD, 2010).

Michalea, Vishnu, and Shawna (and all of the adolescents they represent) need to develop discipline-specific vocabulary and text knowledge and sophisticated literacy skills in school to support their ability to comprehend and communicate effectively into adulthood. To maximize understanding of this content material and better prepare them for an increasingly sophisticated discipline-based curriculum, adolescents of all ability levels—those who struggle academically and/or linguistically as well as those who exceed expectations—must learn to develop effective and meaningful literacy skills (Braunger, Donahue, Evans, & Galguera, 2005).

Adolescents who struggle are a diverse population. They may be youth who lack critical vocabulary and need more explicit instruction in comprehension skills and strategies. They may be students with specific learning difficulties who need more practice reading material at an appropriate level. Or they may be using a nonnative language in the classroom. Some may be dysfluent and unable to decode the multisyllabic words of content area texts. Others may be unable to comprehend or recall the text they have read fluently and expressively. Some may be accomplished literacy learners ready for experiences that the structure and resources of the classroom fail to offer.

We need to support our struggling learners, our gifted learners, and students along that continuum to advance all adolescents' literacy development. All are candidates for differentiated literacy supports to meet their unique needs. Effective instructional supports for these adolescents may be delivered in a variety of learning contexts. Quality whole-group teaching can be beneficial to all. Targeted interventions and enrichments may be appropriate for small groups while intensive one-on-one training may need to occur for individual students. Differentiated instruction may involve adaptations in subject area content, learning and literacy processes, and learning products.

This overlapping and differentiated approach to accommodating student diversity and delivering literacy instruction, depending upon the specific needs each student presents, is one important way of increasing the likelihood that adolescents will engage in instruction and reach their achievement potential.

For some, however, even with quality classroom-based instruction, problems will persist. Sadly, most students who enter the ninth grade with reading problems leave high school with reading problems (Cappella & Weinstein,

2001). Explicit literacy instruction is necessary throughout high school in all disciplines for these students to make and consolidate their gains. There is no quick solution. For these students, the most responsive interventions may occur in alternative learning environments, either within or outside the classroom context. Others are not always best served in pullout programs and special classes. Instructional adaptations and accommodations within the content classroom itself may bring about desired reading and learning improvements (Fisher, 2001; Jacobson et al., 2001; Mastropieri et al., 2001).

This layered approach to providing interventions for students with special literacy needs is consistent with the three-tiered framework of Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003). RTI is a U.S. and Canadian approach premised on the idea that responsive instruction can prevent most literacy and learning problems, and that the sooner students are discovered to have reading difficulties, the sooner interventions can be provided to help improve progress for them. Because the first level of support, Tier 1, occurs within the classroom, secondary content teachers must have skills to teach literacy skills and strategies and to differentiate instruction. Those adolescents who have mild literacy delays and fail to make sufficient progress in the general classroom environment move to the next level of support, which usually involves one or more rounds of research-based, small-group tutoring (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2008).

### ***5. Adolescents deserve opportunities to participate in oral communication when they engage in literacy activities.***

*Margaret and Matthew are excited about the text they both read earlier in the week. As they file into English language arts, their heads are buried together as they discuss the fiction text they both are in the midst of reading. As they ready themselves for class, they are disappointed that the rest of the conversation will have to wait until lunch.*

While the text that Margaret and Matthew read may not be specific to the topic of study, the value of talk around text is consistent across disciplines. Research demonstrates that oral communication in the classroom is an important precursor to both reading fluency and comprehension, yet it is often neglected in secondary schools (Horowitz, 2007). According to classroom observational studies, students are often silent in class (Nystrand & Duffy, 2003).

Oral communication in classrooms is related to student knowledge and development of academic communication skills—in speaking, reading, and writing. Classroom oral

participation helps students learn vocabulary, syntax, and macrostructures needed for reading and writing in the disciplines taught in middle and high schools. Most important, speech practice shapes student development of concepts being introduced in a subject area, a student's thinking, and argumentation skills needed in formal, academic learning. Literacy is social, and students who talk about and share their perspectives on the texts they have heard, read, and viewed may come to a deeper understanding of the text and topic than they would on their own without conversation.

Attention to oral language is critical for the increasing number of second-language learners that populate our classrooms. Expert teachers will need to be tolerant of diverse language styles and informal uses of another language beyond that used in the classroom. Teachers will also need to provide models of spoken language and examples of academic languages used in different fields of study for different purposes for all students, but particularly for those just beginning to learn the dominant language in the classroom. This type of culturally responsive pedagogy was important in 1999, but as our classroom spaces become even more culturally and linguistically diverse, the necessity to offer appropriate instruction increases.

Peer-peer and whole-class conversation offer lenses for beginning to uncover individual and group understanding and offer assessment and learning opportunities for teachers and their students. Students benefit from engaging in think-alouds and self-questioning, seeking clarification and sometimes sharing personal and critical reflections. Students should talk about what they learned and how it fits into their schema, making and sharing new insights as they analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. These opportunities for dialoguing with peers and teachers help students think through what they are learning and identify areas they do not understand or wish to further research. Often these informal conversations clarify misconceptions as well as help students realize common insights.

While many secondary teachers have paid attention to the reading-writing connection and are beginning to expand that to include nonprint text, there has been less attention devoted to fostering oral communication. Oracy remains a cornerstone of literacy development and needs to be fostered in middle and high school classrooms so that students learn how to communicate verbally in their diverse subject areas and acquire the discourse patterns of the disciplines studied, as well as how to engage in civil discourse and debate issues that arise in their local community and democratic society.

## **6. Adolescents deserve opportunities to use literacy in the pursuit of civic engagement.**

*When Jordan wakes up in the morning, he logs on to [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org) to check the status of his service project. What began as a requirement for English language arts the previous marking period has grown into a long-term project of collecting sports equipment for children. Jordan is pleased to see that there are three posts indicating donations are forthcoming.*

The ability for students to use texts as vehicles for building civic engagement is an essential piece of adolescent literacy in the 21st century. Adolescents uncover and share much of this information on the Web. Expert teachers invite these texts into the classroom and then help students unpack the multiple messages and meanings that exist within these complex literacy experiences. Multimodal literacy events allow students to comprehend and compose in and through print and nonprint text while also becoming an avenue for adolescents to link to the larger world in which they live.

Adolescents are sometimes criticized for being disengaged and disinterested with the world around them. Yet, this belief may not consider alternate pathways adolescents use to connect to world issues and through which they develop worldviews and their concern for equity and social justice in their world. In a survey of 18–24-year-olds, it was found that Internet sources offered the greatest vehicle of civic engagement, citing social networking tools as primary sources for making personal connections to world issues (Portney & O'Leary, 2007).

Understanding the expanding definition of text located within the multiliteracies adolescents' use on a daily basis offers an avenue for civic engagement. A survey of adolescent websites reveals how adolescents are using literacy to make meaning of the world around them and affect change. Social networking sites have become gathering places that invite groups to develop around common issues and needs. There are exemplars of online projects authored by adolescents devoted to issues they care about such as poverty, animal cruelty, and ecojustice.

Sixty-two percent of adolescents who use the Internet get their information about current events and politics online (Lenhart et al., 2010). This information explosion of Web 2.0 is an opportunity for teachers to help adolescents develop the critical comprehension strategies necessary for determining the validity of information. These strategies, traditionally taught through printed text, are critical for today's adolescents, because a quick search of most topics online may result in as much *misinformation* as there is *information*.

Developmentally, adolescents are beginning to form independent identities. Literacy is a critical link for students to begin to understand their emerging independence in relation to the world around them as they begin to take their own stances, express their own opinions, and establish their unique identities. Many schools are encouraging volunteer service in their local communities and beyond. These are important ways to prepare students for responsible civic engagement and global citizenship. Students also develop leadership skills and their own sense of self-efficacy as they reflect on the positive impact they can make in their world.

As adolescents engage in projects like Jordan's, they are using literacy as a natural vehicle for developing leadership while connecting their developing individual identities to the larger communities in which they live. Their use of multiple literacies invites the authentic participation in civic activities and engenders civic engagement. Students can develop their creative problem-solving strategies in authentic contexts. Many adolescents want to make a positive difference in their world and are willing to work for necessary reform and influence changes in their communities. These influential adolescent leaders will also influence their peers to use language and literacy to transform their world.

### **7. Adolescents deserve assessments that highlight their strengths and challenges.**

*Nancy is assessed at school in many different ways—through standardized tests, end-of-unit tests, homework, class assignments, and projects. The most meaningful ones to her are those that require her to think hard about her answers and those that offer her meaningful feedback. The most meaningful assessments for the teacher are the ones that provide some insight into her next instructional moves. Different kinds of assessments serve different purposes, but the ultimate purpose is that they result in higher levels of achievement. Individual students are best helped with multiple assessments over time. Students like Nancy benefit from formative assessment, which involves teachers' daily observations and tasks followed by specific and descriptive feedback that will guide the student's future learning.*

*Nancy doesn't do equally well each time she is assessed. Sometimes, she has trouble focusing, and sometimes, she just hasn't mastered a particular skill that is the emphasis of the assessment. Her teacher doesn't know which is which, though, unless she assesses the skill in different ways and at different*

*times in a variety of contexts. Nancy's teacher involves her in frequent learning conversations and opportunities to think aloud. Nancy is encouraged to reflect on her learning strengths and needs so that together, Nancy and her teacher can make decisions about her learning.*

The 1999 position statement on adolescent literacy highlighted the importance of assessment informing instruction. This position has not changed, but in many instances, the number and frequency of formal, standardized assessments that directly impact curricula and teacher and student expectations have risen. The Joint Task Force on Assessment of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (IRA–NCTE Joint Task Force on Assessment, 2009) has responded to this trend by calling for school curricula to be based on—and for students such as Nancy to be assessed on—an “inquiry framework,” which relies on assessment that “is the exploration of how the educational environment and the participants in the educational community support the process of students as they learn to become independent and collaborative thinkers and problem solvers” (p. 2). This type of approach to curriculum and assessment has also been called Horizon 2 (Fullan, 2003).

Au and Valencia (2010) call for all assessments—including high-stakes assessments—to align with Horizon 2 approaches; these approaches are logically, then, associated with assessment for learning: formative, ongoing assessments of students done in classrooms (Au & Valencia, 2010). These assessments must include such performances as students being able to make meaning from an idea in print and then represent their new understandings in a variety of modes (e.g., video, audio, graphical) while consciously making decisions about the most effective delivery mode for an audience (IRA–NCTE Joint Task Force on Assessment, 2009, p. 5).

Local, state, and provincial formative assessments for learning and summative assessments of learning that can assist teachers with instruction and help record student academic progress must be part of an overall, comprehensive assessment system; indeed, multiple forms of assessment are just what is being called for in response to the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects* in the United States (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Darling-Hammond (2010) calls for such indicators as “student participation in challenging curricula, progress through school, graduation rates, college attendance, citizenship, a safe and caring climate, and school success and improvement” (p. 5). Multiple measures can include performance assessments

as well as open-ended diagnostic assessment that can evaluate student performance over time.

Finland, which has been ranked at the top of all international comparisons of reading performance, does not make use of the high-stakes standardized tests used in the United States, which suggests that excellent reading achievement is not always linked to students taking standardized tests. Gallagher (2009) discusses what he calls the Paige Paradox, wherein struggling readers are given high-stakes, multiple-choice tests annually to measure their progress. To help students improve their reading scores, the curriculum is narrowed to focus on test-taking strategies, to the detriment of real reading and writing (The Education Trust, 2005; Gallagher, 2009). In addition, standardized tests do not measure what students can actually do or the progress that students make in a given period of time. These tests are also designed around what Fullan (2003) has called Horizon 1 knowledge.

Actual student performance requiring students to have acquired deep knowledge of concepts in subject matters as demonstrated by problem solving, collaboration, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking will give the students, their teachers, and their families knowledge of what has already been learned and what remains to be learned across disciplines. While it is true that performance assessments cost money, they cost less than the present high-stakes standardized test systems, which includes not only the cost of the tests themselves, but also the test preparation materials for teachers to use with their students. Such performance tests should make use of teacher knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Student-managed portfolios, including reflections by students of what they have learned and what remains to be learned, are one very effective way of measuring progress on performance assessments. Reflective thinking has long been recognized as one way of improving performance. Perhaps Dewey's (1933) definition explains this type of thinking best: "Reflective thinking is the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration" (p. 3). Further, reflective thinking, according to Dewey, is "active and careful consideration of any...supposed form of knowledge" (p. 9).

Teachers should be involved in the development of curriculum as well as assessment methods to ensure the goals of both are aligned. All assessment measures should be constructed in such a way that their ultimate goal is to improve teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) emphasize that assessments should occur as part of instruction, using a variety of methods and formats. Ongoing professional development and funding are needed to support evidenced based best practices in assessment.

## **8. Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of print and nonprint materials.**

*LaShawn hated to read her history textbook. One day, her history teacher gave her an excerpt from another history textbook that contradicted her own. This was interesting! Weren't textbooks supposed to tell...the truth? The class decided to try to resolve the controversy, so they explored more about the event through Web resources as well as different types of texts that included mixed media as well as nonfiction and narrative accounts. It turned out there was no clear resolution, but there was a good deal of evidence for both interpretations, and the availability of print and nonprint resources for learning prompted LaShawn to become interested in exploring history.*

*In the summer, Mario couldn't wait to read for his own pleasure rather than for the purposes of learning more about his school subjects. He didn't really like fiction, but loved to read true stories—biographies, memoirs, magazine articles—and he couldn't understand why his sister, Rosetta, never read. One day he showed her a book about horses he had checked out from the library. Rosetta loved horses. Not only did she read the book, but she went with him to the library and found more books about them and then turned to YouTube to see how what she was reading played out with images. Rosetta then happened upon a young adult fictional series about a horse farm and eagerly worked her way through each book.*

The 1999 adolescent literacy position statement made a strong case for the importance of access to authentic reading materials. This has not changed, but the types of materials adolescents access for personal and academic purposes (and sometimes both) have expanded to include multiple types of both print and nonprint resources. In many schools, funds are being diverted from the purchase of authentic literacy materials for the acquisition of standardized print-only reading curricula designed to improve standardized test scores (Gallagher, 2009). Providing time for adolescents to work with print and nonprint resources specific to the learning demands and interests of individual students supports overall literacy development. Out of school, adolescents are engaged in multiple types of print and nonprint texts. Classrooms such as LaShawn's can offer adolescents the opportunity to work with these texts in a mediated setting guided by instruction.

Authentic literacy experiences should occur across the disciplines with varied types of text that are inclusive of print, audio, and fixed and moving images. For example, historians rely on biography, newspaper articles and editorials, first-person accounts, and memoirs, as well as documentaries, photographs and artwork, maps, timelines, and other materials. Historical and science fiction often pique a student's interest in a topic that, given access to text, they can then pursue across genres and types. Offering adolescents access to relevant and recent young adult literature can motivate interest in reading and create an opportunity to build a lifelong habit of engaging in reading and writing for pleasure. This approach facilitates student learning, because adolescents such as LaShawn, Mario, and Rosetta are motivated to engage in what is naturally of interest and to make use of the multiple print and nonprint resources available to deepen understanding and build lifelong literacy habits (Draper, 2010; Lapp & Moss, 2012).

## Conclusion

There has been documented growth in adolescent literacy since the IRA Commission on Adolescent Literacy first issued its report (Moore et al., 1999). There is still work to be done, however. In many places around the world, literacy levels are still what they were nearly 40 years ago. It is the position of IRA that we need to capitalize on our growing body of research about adolescent literacy to best meet the needs of this diverse and growing population. Experienced educators have much wisdom to share about their successful literacy practices.

Literacy is an increasingly global concern. The fictional adolescents named in the 1999 position statement and within this update reflect only a small segment of the diverse population we are working to support. Technology makes it easy for us to participate in the global marketplace and communicate across cultures; yet, lack of access is an impediment to this participation for large segments of the global population. Those with high levels of access often lack the critical literacy skills that would allow them to make optimum use of the tools. Now, more than ever, we need to become active proponents of educational growth—growth that recognizes the importance of high levels of literacy in order for adolescents to achieve their potentials, reach their personal goals, and build a better society.

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# Appendix:

## Recommended Resources Organized by Topic

The downloadable PDF of this revised position statement and additional print and nonprint adolescent literacy resources from IRA can be accessed online at [www.reading.org/Resources/ResourcesbyTopic/Adolescent/Overview.aspx](http://www.reading.org/Resources/ResourcesbyTopic/Adolescent/Overview.aspx). Additionally, the IRA Adolescent Literacy Committees and Adolescent Literacy Task Force recommend the following resources.

### Access to Text

#### Online Resources

Rawson, C.H. (2011). Are all lists created equal? Diversity in award-winning and bestselling young adult fiction. *The Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults*, 1(3). Retrieved from [www.yalsa.org/jrly/2011/06/are-all-lists-created-equal-diversity-in-award-winning-and-bestselling-young-adult-fiction](http://www.yalsa.org/jrly/2011/06/are-all-lists-created-equal-diversity-in-award-winning-and-bestselling-young-adult-fiction)

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA): [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)  
A division of the American Library Association, YALSA is an association of librarians, library workers, and advocates. Its mission is to expand and strengthen library services for teens, ages 12–18. YALSA provides annual lists of various award-winning texts for adolescents.

### Assessment

#### Print Resources

Absolum, M. (2006). *Clarity in the classroom: Using formative assessment for building learning-focused relationships*. Auckland, New Zealand: Hodder Education.

Afflerbach, P. (2011). *Understanding and using reading assessment, K–12* (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2004). Working inside the black box: Raising assessment for learning in the classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(1), 8–21.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2010). A pleasant surprise. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(1), 47–48.

Davies, A. (with Herbst, S., & Reynolds, B.P.). (2008). *Leading the way to making classroom assessment work*. Courtenay, BC, Canada: Connections.

Davies, A., & Busick, K.U. (2007). *Classroom assessment: What's working in high schools?* Courtenay, BC, Canada: Connections.

Earl, L., & Katz, S. (2006). Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind: Assessment for learning, assessment as learning, assessment of learning. Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Retrieved from [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/wncp/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/wncp/index.html)

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2007). *Checking for understanding: Formative assessment techniques for your classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Fuller, B., Wright, J., Gesicki, K., & Kang, E. (2007). Gauging growth: How to judge No Child Left Behind? *Educational Researcher*, 36(5), 268–278. doi:10.3102/0013189X07306556

Gregory, K., Cameron, C., & Davies, A. (2000). *Self-assessment and goal-setting: For use in middle and secondary school classrooms*. Courtenay, BC, Canada: Connections.

Hume, K. (2010). *Evidence to action: Engaging and teaching young adolescents through assessment*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Learning Canada.

Morsy, L., Kieffer, M., & Snow, C. (2010). *Measure for measure: A critical consumers' guide to reading comprehension assessments for adolescents*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved from [carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/tta\\_Morsy.pdf](http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/tta_Morsy.pdf)

Stiggins, R.J. (2005). *Student-involved assessment for learning* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Tovani, C. (2011). *So what do they really know? Assessment that informs teaching and learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

#### Online Resources

Alberta Assessment Consortium: [www.aac.ab.ca](http://www.aac.ab.ca)

This consortium is a Canadian nonprofit partnership of education organizations devoted to enhancing student learning through the use of classroom assessment. The website offers everyday assessment tools for teachers.

Association for Achievement & Improvement Through Assessment: [www.aaia.org.uk](http://www.aaia.org.uk)

This British association promotes the improvement of student achievement through the processes of effective assessment, recording, and reporting.

Authentic Assessment Toolbox: [jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox](http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox)

Created by Jon Mueller, a psychology professor at North Central College in Illinois, this website is a helpful resource for understanding and creating authentic forms of assessment, such as rubrics, tasks, and standards for assessing and improving student learning.

Manitoba Education. (2011, March). *Classroom assessment*. Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Instructional Resources Unit, Educational Resources Branch, Manitoba Education. Retrieved from [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iru/library\\_publications/bibliographies/classroom\\_assessment\\_2011-03.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iru/library_publications/bibliographies/classroom_assessment_2011-03.pdf)

This is a comprehensive bibliography and list of multimedia resources for classroom assessment.

### Civic Engagement

#### Print Resource

Chapman, T.K., Hobbel, N., & Alvarado, N.V. (2011). A social justice approach as a base for teaching writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(7), 539–541. doi:10.1598/JAAL.54.7.8

#### Online Resources

Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.ca/youth/get\\_involved](http://www.amnesty.ca/youth/get_involved) and [www.amnesty.ca/youth/youth\\_action\\_toolkit/guide\\_to\\_individual\\_activism.php](http://www.amnesty.ca/youth/youth_action_toolkit/guide_to_individual_activism.php)

Amnesty International offers resources for adolescents who are interested in becoming activists in their community.

Ecojustice Education: [www.ecojusticeeducation.org/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.ecojusticeeducation.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)

Free the Children: [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com)

Created in 1995 by Craig Kielburger when he was 12 years old, this children's network provides guidelines for educators who would like to promote ecojustice education.

Imagineaction: [www.imagine-action.ca](http://www.imagine-action.ca)

A student-driven social action movement, this site is sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

## Content Area Instruction

### Print Resources

- Boke, N. (2004). *Reading to learn: A classroom guide to reading strategy instruction*. Montpelier: Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative. Retrieved from [education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_curriculum/literacy/reading/reading\\_to\\_learn/reading\\_to\\_learn\\_04.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_curriculum/literacy/reading/reading_to_learn/reading_to_learn_04.pdf)
- Buehl, D. (2009). *Classroom strategies for interactive learning* (3rd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. For a sample chapter on self-questioning, visit [www.reading.org/Publish.aspx?page=/publications/bbv/books/bk686/abstracts/bk686-self\\_questioning-buehl.html&mode=redirect](http://www.reading.org/Publish.aspx?page=/publications/bbv/books/bk686/abstracts/bk686-self_questioning-buehl.html&mode=redirect).
- Buehl, D. (2011). Mentoring students in disciplinary literacy. In *Developing readers in the academic disciplines* (pp. 1–30). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Draper, R.J., Broomhead, P., Jensen, A.P., Nokes, J.D., & Siebert, D. (Eds.). (2010). *(Re)imagining content-area literacy instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hynd, C., Holschuh, J.P., & Hubbard, B.P. (2004). Thinking like a historian: College students' reading of multiple historical documents. *Journal of Literacy Research, 36*(2), 141–176.
- Jetton, T.L., & Shanahan, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Adolescent literacy in the academic disciplines: General principles and practical strategies*. New York: Guilford.
- Johnson, H., Watson, P.A., Delahunty, T., McSwiggen, P., & Smith, T. (2011). What it is they do: Differentiating knowledge and literacy practices across content disciplines. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*(2), 100–109. doi:10.1002/JAAL.00013
- Moje, E.B. (2007). Developing socially just subject-matter instruction: A review of the literature on disciplinary literacy teaching. *Review of Research in Education, 31*, 1–44.
- Moje, E.B. (2011, May). *Why and how literacy matters for learning subject matter: An argument for disciplinary literacy instruction in all grades*. Paper presented at the 56th annual meeting of the International Reading Association, Orlando, FL. Retrieved from [sites.google.com/site/literacyandscience/home/program-schedule-moje](http://sites.google.com/site/literacyandscience/home/program-schedule-moje)
- Olson, C.B. (2006). *The reading/writing connection: Strategies for teaching and learning in the secondary classroom*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*(1), 40–59.
- Zwiers, J. (2010). *Building reading comprehension habits in grades 6–12: A toolkit of classroom activities* (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

### Online Resources

- AdLit.org: [www.adlit.org](http://www.adlit.org)
- Buehl, D. (n.d.). *Literacy and sound learning strategies for thoughtful reading*. Retrieved from [soundlearning.publicradio.org/standard/docs/reading\\_strategies.shtml](http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/standard/docs/reading_strategies.shtml)
- Instructional Strategies Online: [olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/alpha.html](http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/alpha.html)  
Saskatoon Public Schools (Canada) offers an alphabetized list of instructional methods to promote literacy.
- International Reading Association. (n.d.). *Teaching vocabulary in middle and high school* [Audio podcast]. Newark, DE: Author. Retrieved from [www.reading.org/General/Publications/Podcasts.aspx](http://www.reading.org/General/Publications/Podcasts.aspx)  
This podcast is based on “Nine Things Every Teacher Should Know About Words and Vocabulary Instruction” by K. Bromley, 2008, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 50*(7), 528–537. It is part of IRA's Class Acts: Ideas for Teaching Reading and Writing podcast series.
- Just Read Now: [www.justreadnow.com](http://www.justreadnow.com)
- The Knowledge Loom: [knowledgeloom.org/resources.jsp?location=6&bpinterid=1174&spotlightid=1174](http://knowledgeloom.org/resources.jsp?location=6&bpinterid=1174&spotlightid=1174)

- Developed and maintained by The Education Alliance at Brown University, this webpage includes links to a variety of resources for adolescent literacy in the content areas, including lessons, reports, articles, and educational games.
- Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2009). *Lapp and Fisher on comprehension instruction* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from [www.reading.org/downloads/podcasts/II-LappFisher.mp3](http://www.reading.org/downloads/podcasts/II-LappFisher.mp3)
- Learning Point Associates: [www.learningpt.org/literacy/adolescent/websites.php](http://www.learningpt.org/literacy/adolescent/websites.php)  
This webpage provides a comprehensive list of adolescent literacy websites.
- Moje, E.B. (2008). *Moje on literacy in the subject areas* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from [www.reading.org/downloads/podcasts/II-Moje.mp3](http://www.reading.org/downloads/podcasts/II-Moje.mp3)
- ReadWriteThink: [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)  
Visit this website for a variety of lesson plans related to adolescent literacy in the content areas.
- West Virginia Department of Education: [wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/comprehension.html](http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/comprehension.html) and [wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/KeystoComprehension.html](http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/KeystoComprehension.html)  
These webpages provide a strategy bank and instructional keys for teaching comprehension.

## Differentiation of Instruction

### Print Resources

- Deshler, D.D., Palincsar, A.S., Biancarosa, G., & Nair, M. (2007). *Informed choices for struggling adolescent readers: A research-based guide to instructional programs and practices*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- EduGAINS. (2010). *Differentiated instruction educator's package: Facilitator's guide—Assessment for learning: Getting to the core of teaching and learning*. Retrieved from [www.edugains.ca/resources/DI/D.I.%20Enhancement%20Package/Assessment%20for%20Learning/DI\\_Assessment\\_Gde\\_2009.pdf](http://www.edugains.ca/resources/DI/D.I.%20Enhancement%20Package/Assessment%20for%20Learning/DI_Assessment_Gde_2009.pdf)
- Greenleaf, C.L., Jiménez, R.T., & Roller, C.M. (2002). Reclaiming secondary reading interventions: From limited to rich conceptions, from narrow to broad conversations. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*(4), 484–496. doi:10.1598/RRQ.374.7
- Gregory, G.H., & Kuzmich, L. (2005). *Differentiated literacy strategies for student growth and achievement in grades 7–12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hume, K. (2008). *Start where they are: Differentiating for success with the young adolescent*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada.
- Snow, C.E., & Biancarosa, G. (2003). *Adolescent literacy and the achievement gap: What do we know and where do we go from here?* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Tomlinson, C.A., & Imbeau, M.B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C.A., & Imbeau, M.B. (2011). *Managing a differentiated classroom: A practical guide*. Boston: Scholastic.

## Leadership

### Print Resources

- Bates, L., Breslow, N., & Hupert, N. (2009). *Five states' efforts to improve adolescent literacy* (Report No. 067). Washington, DC: Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from [ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=121](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=121)
- Bean, R.M., & Dagen, A.S. (Eds.). (2011). *Best practices of literacy leaders: Keys to school improvement*. New York: Guilford.
- Fullan, M., Hill, P., & Crévola, C. (2006). *Breakthrough*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.



- Harmon, J.M., Hedrick, W.B., Wood, K.D., & Vintinner, J. (2011). An investigation of current secondary reading programs. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 50(2), 105–119. doi:10.1080/19388071003611152
- Irvin, J., Meltzer, J., Dean, N., & Mickler, M.J. (2010). *Taking the lead on adolescent literacy: Action steps for schoolwide success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin; Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Piercy, T., & Piercy, W. (2011). *Disciplinary literacy: Redefining deep understanding and leadership for 21st-century demands*. Englewood, CO: Advanced Learning Press.

### Online Resources

- Council of Chief State School Officers: [highschool.ccsso.org/web/guest/AdolescentLiteracy](https://highschool.ccsso.org/web/guest/AdolescentLiteracy)  
The CCSSO provides information on secondary school redesign and models from various state initiatives.
- Project AdLIT (Ohio): [ohiorc.org/orc\\_documents/orc/AdLIT/prodevelopment/documents/lfl\\_0207/lfl\\_compendium.pdf](https://ohiorc.org/orc_documents/orc/AdLIT/prodevelopment/documents/lfl_0207/lfl_compendium.pdf)

## Multimodality

### Print Resources

- Alvermann, D.E. (Ed.). (2002). *Adolescents and literacies in a digital world*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Alvermann, D.E. (2008). Why bother theorizing adolescents' online literacies for classroom practice and research? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 8–19. doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.1.2
- Curwood, J.S., & Cowell, L.L.H. (2011). iPoetry: Creating space for new literacies in the English curriculum. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(2), 110–120. doi:10.1002/JAAL.00014
- Gee, J.P. (2007). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy* (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kajder, S. (2006). *Bringing the outside in: Visual ways of engaging reluctant readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. New York: Routledge.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2011). *New literacies: Everyday practices and social learning* (3rd ed.). London: Open University Press.
- Leander, K.M. (2002). Locating Latanya: The situated production of identity artifacts in classroom interaction. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 37(2), 198–250.

- Leu, D.J., O'Byrne, W.I., Zawilinski, L., McVerry, J.G., & Everett-Cacopardo, H. (2009). Comments on Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes: Expanding the new literacies conversation. *Educational Researcher*, 38(4), 264–269. doi:10.3102/0013189X09336676
- Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Travel notes from the new literacy studies: Instances of practice*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Zhang, S., & Duke, N. (2008). Strategies for Internet reading with different reading purposes: A descriptive study of twelve good Internet readers. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 40(1), 128–162.

### Online Resource

- Open Directory Project: [www.dmoz.org/Kids\\_and\\_Teens/Teen\\_Life](http://www.dmoz.org/Kids_and_Teens/Teen_Life)  
This webpage provides links to student-authored websites.

## Oral Language

### Print Resources

- Hawkins, M.R. (2004). Researching English language and literacy development in schools. *Educational Researcher*, 33(3), 14–25. doi:10.3102/0013189X033003014
- Horowitz, R. (1994). Adolescent beliefs about oral and written language. In R. Garner & P.A. Alexander (Eds.), *Beliefs about text and instruction with text* (pp. 1–24). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Horowitz, R. (Ed.). (2007). *Talking texts: How speech and writing interact in school learning*. London: Routledge.
- Horowitz, R., & Olson, D.R. (2007). Texts that talk: The special and peculiar nature of classroom discourse and the crediting of sources. In R. Horowitz (Ed.), *Talking texts: How speech and writing interact in school learning* (pp. 55–90). London: Routledge.
- Pilgreen, J., & Krashen, S. (1993). Sustained silent reading with English as a second language high school students: Impact on reading comprehension, reading frequency, and reading enjoyment. *School Library Media Quarterly*, 22(1), 21–23.
- Reznitskaya, A., Kuo, L., Clark, A., Miller, B., Jadallah, M., Anderson, R.C., et al. (2009). Collaborative reasoning: A dialogic approach to group discussions. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(1), 29–48. doi:10.1080/03057640802701952

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