

Assisting Struggling Readers

A brief roundup of resources to help your students on the road to literacy

Classroom Jeopardy! StandardsLink for Literacy (ETA Cuisinaire)

Classroom Jeopardy! StandardsLink for Literacy enables students to practice and be quizzed on standards-based content while playing a realistic Jeopardy! game. Six leveled books come with each reading/language arts game cartridge so students can respond to clues by applying reading comprehension strategies in context, just as they are required to do on standardized tests. Each package includes one game cartridge with five sets of Single, Double and Final Jeopardy! games, a teacher's guide on CD-ROM and a set of leveled books. The teacher's guide provides blackline masters, extension activities, and tips for using the technology.

State-specific versions are available for California, Florida and Illinois in grades 3 through 6. National versions for grades 3 through 8 are available to support other states.

The Comprehension Toolkit Series (Heinemann Firsthand)

Research has shown that skillful readers employ a repertoire of specific cognitive strategies to unlock meaning and provide understanding (Pearson, 1983; Duke, 2006). True comprehension happens when readers engage in an inner conversation with the text, merge their thinking with the text, ask questions, draw inferences, think about what's important, and summarize and synthesize. *The Comprehension Toolkit Series*, a new comprehension curriculum for K-6, helps teach these strategies to students so they can understand, respond to, and learn from nonfiction text.

Building on the strategy instruction in their book *Strategies That Work*, Stephanie Harvey

and Anne Goudvis designed these teaching resources around six fundamental comprehension strategies. Students learn and practice these strategies as they read short, engaging, real-world informational text.

The lessons in the *Toolkit* series model the authors' comprehension instruction and provide an explicit framework for teaching. Framed around the gradual release of responsibility, *Toolkit* lessons provide scaffolded instruction through modeling and guided practice, then release responsibility to students with opportunities for collaborative practice, independent practice, and application. Lessons emphasize responsive teaching and offer practical strategies for differentiating instruction and meeting the various needs of struggling readers.

Hot Topics: High-Interest Reading (Evan Moor)

Hot Topics: High-Interest Reading provides struggling readers in grades 4-8 with inspiration and instruction to help them become successful lifetime readers. The dynamic selections and guided reading instruction within each *Hot Topics* set — A, B, and Science — help students develop important comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and a love for reading.

Each Classroom Kit contains:

- 20 high-impact, full-color, 4-page reading selections written and designed to attract and hold student attention;
- Spiral-bound Teacher's Guide with step-by-step lesson plans, reading strategies, reproducible, and vocabulary practice to make teaching each selection simple and enjoyable;
- Audio CD with read-alouds of all the selections to model how to navigate nonlinear texts;
- Storage box with tabbed dividers for convenient storage and classroom presentation.

Jamestown Reading Navigator (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill)

Jamestown Reading Navigator is a research-based print and online program for Grades 6-12 designed to:

- Motivate reluctant readers with highly engaging online and print content written exclusively for adolescents;
- Raise scores with direct, explicit instruction in reading skills and strategies;
- Provide a focus on non-fiction and content area reading strategies;
- Use data driven decisions with ongoing progress monitoring.

LeapTrack Reading Pro (LeapFrog SchoolHouse)

LeapTrack Reading Pro is designed to help students overcome common barriers to reading success and inspire them to want to read. The award-winning *LeapTrack* management software assesses, reports, and prescribes individualized lesson plans for struggling readers in grades 3-8. High-interest, motivating nonfiction articles help students build fluency through comprehension, word recognition, and vocabulary acquisition activities. The program also promotes reading achievement through:

- Integrated skill development in each personalized lesson plan;
- Scaffolded lessons that challenge students at the pace appropriate to their level;
- Self-directed learning opportunities and responsive audio support to build student confidence;
- Integrated assessment that delivers ongoing achievement alerts.

My Reading Coach (Mindplay)

The *My Reading Coach* program offers students a virtual reading specialist in a one-on-one teacher/student environment. The program provides comprehensive, direct instruction and direct intervention that focuses on phonemic awareness, grammar, phonics, spelling, fluency and reading comprehension. *My Reading Coach* is designed for students from 2nd grade through adulthood, non-readers and average readers alike.

The program consists of a series of lessons that teach students correct sound pronunciation and letter formation, how to spell English words by learning underlying patterns instead of memorization, rules and easy-to-remember

strategies. There are more than 200 stories incorporated throughout these lessons.

Using the program, each student is tested and automatically assigned appropriate lessons. Each lesson then begins with an emulated teacher providing interactive instruction. Every student progresses at their own pace through the program, repeating lessons or activities, while receiving specific feedback based on their responses. An optional Spanish module is also available that allows students to be instructed in Spanish to learn English.

Reading TRIUMPHS (Macmillan/McGraw-Hill)

Reading TRIUMPHS is an intervention program for Grades K-6 that meets readers where they are and supports their growth in comprehension and skills with a comprehensive program designed to:

- Provide explicit instruction for tested skills;
- Offer multiple practice and application opportunities.
- Use data driven decisions to match instruction to students' needs and to monitor growth;
- Provide "no assumption instruction" with repeated, age-appropriate teaching for all tested skills at all grades.

ZOOM IN (Curriculum Associates)

The new *ZOOM IN* series bridges the gap between reading strategy instruction and the successful use of reading strategies in "real reading." Backed by research and aligned with recent literacy initiatives, the 48-book series features six titles at eight reading levels. The material covers understanding main idea and details, understanding sequences, recognizing cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, making predications, and drawing conclusions and making inferences.

The *ZOOM IN* Student Books feature three comprehensive lessons, five independent application lessons to ensure mastery, with self assessments and teacher assessments for progress monitoring. The educator features include an annotated and scripted Teacher Guide with directions for teaching students, a Placement Book and Placement Teacher Guide for identifying strategy gaps, and CD management software for tracking student and class performance and progress. The *ZOOM IN* series will be available in mid-August.



Academic Literacy for Minorities

Greater Expectations: Teaching Academic Literacy to Underrepresented Students Stenhouse

While the population of Hispanic/Latino and African American students in the U.S. continues to grow, the rate at which they attend college remains alarmingly small. These students, who are often defined as "educationally underrepresented," are a bellwether of a shortcoming in our nation's educational system that has serious implications for the future. In *Greater Expectations*, Robin Turner, a high school English teacher from Anaheim, California, offers pragmatic, proven methods for better preparing underrepresented students for higher education.

The book is grounded in the author's experience as a leader in the Puente Program, a college preparation program started in California high schools over twenty years ago. Since 1981, Puente has proven highly effective in producing positive change by improving academic performance, standardized test scores, and college admission rates for underrepresented students.

Forming the book's foundations are the ideas of *familia* and *cariño*, or family and caring. The first, *familia*, asserts the importance of establishing a sense of community among adolescents and tapping into student culture-ethnicity, music, sports, neighborhood and so on in the language arts classroom. The second concept, a pedagogy of *cariño*, contends that too often, underrepresented students possess attributes that are overlooked and are viewed with a deficit-model paradigm. Building on this foundation, *Greater Expectations* shows how to effectively teach different modes of academic discourse-literary analysis, autobiographical/biographical, persuasive research, and community-based writing. Offering a combination of personal narrative, how-to lesson plans, and student samples, Robin Turner challenges readers to approach their underrepresented students with greater expectations and be equipped with specific lesson plans to enable their classes to meet them. ❧