

# Improving Reading for Academic Success

## Strategies for Enhancing Adolescent Literacy

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**Solutions**  
*to the Dropout Crisis*

# Presentation Features

- Information on the current status of reading
- The role of the content teacher and reading
- A prescription for improvement including parents, students, teachers and schools
- Resources to use and share



# Current Status of Reading

- “The stronger their literacy skills, the more likely adults are to hold a full-time job, vote in national elections, participate in community organizations, volunteer and help their children with their homework” (Heller and Greenleaf, 2007)

**Literacy makes a difference for us all.**



# Current Status of Reading

- Most students fall into one of three reading categories:
  - On-level – (30%)
  - Academic Improvement (50-60%)
  - Intervention (10-20%)



# Crisis Stage for Reading in America

- Some examples are:
  - Only 3% of fifth grade students and 5% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students read at an advanced level.
  - 75 % of struggling third grade readers still struggle in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - 8,000,000 students in grades 4-12 read below grade level.



- 70% of students entering high school read too poorly to absorb high school subject matter.
- It takes 1.5 years to remediate for each year a student is behind in reading level. For students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade with 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, it will take 4.5 years (entire high school experience) to catch up.



# Social and Economic Ills

- Inability to read leads to numerous negative outcomes.
- Essentially, inability to read reduces student options and choices.
- A primary result is dropping out of high school which leads to additional social and economic problems.
- People with low literacy levels have four times higher health care costs.



# Three Main Problem Areas

- Crime
- Dropouts
- Employability



# A Prescription for Improvement: Reading Is the Problem and the Solution!

- There is a role for many players in addressing the reading problem including:
- Teachers
- Schools
- Students
- Parents



# Role of Content Area Teacher

- Teacher knowledge of teaching reading
  - Teachers need to increase their knowledge of supporting their students' reading
- The literacy-focused classroom
  - Offer students wide variety of reading materials
- Improving reading comprehension
  - Proficiency in the Big Six is the outcome



# The Big Six

- **Summarizing** – capturing main ideas
- **Paraphrasing** – putting ideas into words
- **Categorizing** – analyzing implied meaning
- **Inferring** – reading between the lines
- **Predicting** – making inferences
- **Recognizing Vocabulary** – determining meaning



# Five Points All Teachers Should Know About Reading

- Reading and comprehension are the same and are products of reflection
- Reading to learn and learning to read are symbiotic - they occur at the same time
- Comprehension increases as students learn to understand "big ideas" before, during and after reading
- The more students know about a topic the easier it is to derive meaning
- the more difficult the content/text the more social and interactive the reading experience needs to be.



# Teachers

- Increase amount of homework
- Effective strategies for teaching reading
  - Read aloud
  - Offer student choices and personal selections
  - Build vocabulary
  - Build comprehension – improving reading comprehension is the number one factor to increase graduation rates.



# Schools

- Provide literacy coaches
- Foster literacy-rich classroom environments
- Recognize and value alternative literacies including internet and web-based
- Insure reading assessment and support for struggling readers in elementary grades
- Offer alternative reading materials to struggling readers
- Encourage more homework



# Parents

- Provide support for reading at home including reading material such as magazines, newspapers, books, etc.
- Role model reading and talk with students about their reading at home and school
- Increase the amount of time students spend reading – 50% of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students report reading 4 minutes a day or less while watching as much as 130 minutes of television
- Monitor student homework



# Students

- Increase the amount of time spent reading – 20% of high school students report spending no time reading in a typical school week
- Seek and read interesting materials including magazines, graphic novels, and comic books
- Use texting and web surfing to build reading skills and vocabulary
- Spend less time watching television and playing video games



# Change is Challenging

Change has considerable psychological impact on the mind. To the fearful, it is threatening because it means things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better.

King Whitney, Jr.



# Any Questions?

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