



New York State Education Department  
School Improvement Team  
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### Teaching Reading/English Language Arts/Literacy to At-Risk Adolescents

Until recently, "early" intervention in reading/literacy has been the major focus of most grants and research. A few years ago I was able to provide only two research-based models that focused on adolescents. In fact, a few publications stated that if we do not help a child to learn to read by the end of grade four or five, that child was "lost." Finally, more research is available that points to effective interventions for at-risk middle and high school students. So - here is an update on research and effective models for at-risk adolescents.

The two original programs that I have suggested to those of you who have called over the years are still highly effective. The first is HOTS, (Higher Order Thinking Skills), a program validated under the National Diffusion network. This program focuses on both reading and math, It is primarily for middle school students, is computer-based, and teaches thinking activities that increase students awareness of their own metacognition, the ability to make inferences, and engage successfully in problem-solving. For information, go to [www.hots.org](http://www.hots.org).

The second model I've found effective is the Strategic Teaching and Reading Project (STRP) from North Central Regional Laboratory. STRP provides professional development for teachers that helps them learn effective modeling and scaffolding strategies across all content areas. Teachers learn how to model reading comprehension strategies, and to help student make explicit the strategies that help them become effective learners. The web address for STRP is [www.ncrel.org/sdrs](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs). This takes you to NCREL's Pathways center. From there, click on "search" and type in STRP for a direct path to a review. STRP is being used as a CSR model in Syracuse.

Now, on to new information! WestEd has a new Strategic Literacy Initiative that can be accessed at [www.wested.org/stratlit/](http://www.wested.org/stratlit/). Like NCREL, WestEd is one of

the nine research-to-classroom labs across the United States that are funded through the United States Department of Education. The goal of Strategic Literacy is to make the reading process visible to students through a "reading apprenticeship" program that guides youngsters through a continuum of ever more difficult comprehension strategies. Students with poor comprehension benefit from such a program, but this is not effective for those few non-readers.

The State of Oregon has developed a web-based book entitled Helping Non-Readers in Fourth Grade and Beyond: Programs and Strategies for Teaching Older Students how to Read. Access it at [www.ode.state.or.us/cifs/nonreadr.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/cifs/nonreadr.pdf). This booklet is a compilation of strategies, and includes a few strategies that are designed primarily for non-readers. Most focus on both motivation by helping students recognize their progress, and on high interest materials designed for older students. Most report two to three year gains for students in a single academic year. Programs range from highly prescriptive through individual tutoring. One program, Laubach Way To Read, is an adult literacy program with high interest materials.

Yet another state that has provided support materials for middle and high school students is Florida. Florida's Education Department provides an excellent list of websites, Bookmarks for Secondary Reading, for middle and high school literacy. It pulls together a wide range of resources for those of us interested in supporting middle and high school students learn to read and write effectively. Access that website at <http://osi.fsu.edu/middlehigh.htm>.

I hope this newsletter provides you with new and useful information as you work to support all of your students in meeting New York State learning standards. And - if any of you have additional resources to share, please let me know and I will send them along to everyone. Best wishes to you all!