

Literacy is for Life

School-age students, preschoolers, and especially infants today face an altered future wherein foundational literacy abilities are merely the table-stakes for living a pleasurable and prolific life.

Subsequently, the pressure on PreK-12 educators and administrators to ensure equitable and effective access to a top-quality literacy curriculum, and improving student outcomes, has never been greater.

High expectations for delivering student proficiency in reading, writing, and thinking are driving literacy and curriculum leaders to improve and augment their school and district literacy strategy and action plans.

Within the discipline of curricula development, continuous improvement in holistic literacy instruction, performance assessment, and professional expertise will propel the attainment of district literacy goals and objectives.

Seven Attributes of an Impactful Literacy Curriculum Plan

Seven literacy curriculum attributes frame the focus on a comprehensive literacy reform initiative across the literacy strands—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. These help ensure each student is more prepared than ever before to take his or her place among a highly literate citizenry.

These "7-Rs" contain attributes of an impactful literacy curriculum plan to empower teachers, boost literacy outcomes, and prepare students for college and careers.

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To participate fully in society and the workplace in 2020, citizens will need powerful literacy abilities that until now have been achieved by only a small percentage of the population.

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International Literacy Association (ILA) and National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE)

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The 25 fastest-growing professions have far greater than average literacy demands, while the fastest-declining professions have lower than average literacy demands.

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Literacy Connects (LiteracyConnects.org)

Seven R's of PreK-12 Literacy

1 Reach

extends to address all learners

2 Relevance

upholds instructional individualization

3 Results

are gained via evidence-based approaches

4 Responsive

tools and platforms drive proficiency

5 Real-time

assessment and monitoring speeds proficiency

6 Reflective

practices integrate literacy in all content areas

7 Ready

teachers optimize student success

ABOUT

REFERENCES

1 | Reach extends to address all learners



Literacy leaders aspire to instruct with intent, and provide learning with purpose. Teachers can apply materials from research-based print resources to powerful digital tools in order to foster, to foster appropriate instruction and connect literacy to the lives of students.

You need to create a literacy instruction continuum to reach all students right where they are—across preschool, elementary and secondary grade levels. High-impact literacy curricula utilize multi-level, tiered instructional frameworks, which incorporate:

- Core comprehensive fundamentals encompassing ELA, EL, and AP
- Intervention literacy essentials to deliver specialized instruction
- Supplemental literacy choices including blended and digital resources and platforms

Ways to reach all learners

- Deliver a range of research-based pedagogy for every level and across curricular areas, to cultivate a literacy mindset.
- Conduct frequent reviews of learning situations by encouraging students to reflect on what they already know about a topic, what they want to find out about it, and eventually, what they have just learned about a new topic.
- Provide balanced literacy via reading/writing workshops, open sources, student choice resources, teacher-driven leveled texts, and authentic literature.
- Offer AP courses that incorporate digital literacies, differentiation, social media, and research and inquiry.
- Provide core basal ELA programs that are standards-based, flexible in scope and sequence, and contain leveled texts.
- Consider alternative core ELA programs bringing classrooms back to basics using explicit, systematic instruction that is validated through empirical evidence.
- For severely struggling classrooms and students, consider Direct Instruction containing built-in corrective action to sustain achievement and improve student outcomes.
- Deploy effective and customized approaches to address the increasing diversity of language ability and population of English Learners (ELs).

1 | Reach







36% of 4th grade and 34% of 8th grade students perform at or above the proficient level in NAEP reading.

LITERACY RESOURCES

- Strategies and Principles for Developing a Holistic PreK-12 Literacy Curriculum
- ☐ PreK-12 Literacy Solutions
- ► Changes in Education Are Preparing Students for the Workplace of Tomorrow
- Impact of Literacy in Preparing Students for a Life After School Age
- Monday Mornings with Marisa: SRA Open Court Reading
- Literacy is for Life

Ways to reach all learners (continued)

- Implement Pre–K programs containing cross-curricular instruction, classroom routines, and strong socio-emotional content.
- Design reading and writing assignments to motivate students who lack engagement in school activities.
- Evaluate and adjust remediation and intervention staffing levels, to ensure all students have equal access to high-quality teachers with appropriate instructional support and coaching.
- Ensure a greater share of resources and efforts are pointed toward intervention and prevention in the earliest grades including kindergarten and preschool, to mitigate self-perpetuating achievement gaps.
- Enhance the literacy curriculum by adding enrichment in science, arts, physical education, sports, STEM, computer coding, and community service.
- Introduce foundational literacy skills in isolation at first, and then gradually integrate them with other skills.
- Incorporate a high level of teacher-student interaction with small group and/or individual practice and provide opportunities for feedback.
- Embed key concepts—strategies and principles that are essential to mastery—into learning activities, and ensure they are featured prominently in formative assessments.

2 | Relevance upholds instructional individualization



Each student's literacy needs are as unique as is he or she. Literacy instruction needs to empower great teaching and afford student personalization, so schools can reach all learners and progress them to higher levels of achievement.

Most important, relevance is sustained by crafting attainable and clear goals for each student. Deliver personalized learning to improve student academic outcomes by guiding students through the curriculum according to needs, skill levels, passions, and achievement. Adopt customized pathways to ensure that students are academically capable, and successfully prepped for both the job market and further education.

Flexible grouping periods and various methods can address different learning styles and cultural backgrounds. For example, small-group intervention provides content support, remediation, or proactive backing, while whole class grouping delivers curriculum extensions in an efficient manner. Meanwhile, enrichments can provide engaging, experiential curriculum activities.

Ways to individualize instruction



- Differentiate instruction to specifically target skill practice in gap areas for individual learners at all proficiency levels--varying the content, timing, and degree of instructional support.
- Empower students with voice and choice as they take an active part in learning-create a longitudinal portrait of strengths, weakness, achievements, reflection, and ideas over time.
- Strengthen and stretch ELA skills using evidence-based developmental texts and computer-based activities to accelerate students beyond their actual grade level.
- Provide blended and personalized learning together with remedial or advanced courses that accommodate individual student needs.
- Enhance motivation and engagement by offering high-interest reading materials.
- Allow variety and student choice in selection of topics and projects for learners of all ability levels, particularly at the middle school and high school level.
- Use texts that support the purpose of instruction and communicate the purpose clearly to students.

2 | Relevance



If students can't read on-level by 3rd grade they are less likely to a graduate by age 19 than a child reading on-level in 3rd grade.

MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION RESOURCES

- Empowering Every Learner in PreK-12 Education
- Wonders Balanced Literacy Allowing Teachers to Customize Learning Pathways
- ▶ How Personalized Learning Will Meet the Diverse Needs of Students
- Curriculum Content that Fits: Customize Your Success
- ▶ How Personalized Learning is Becoming Critical in Education

Ways to Individualize Instruction (continued)

- Employ a "gradual release of responsibility" which provides instruction on reading comprehension strategies and gradually transfer ownership to students.
- Assess readiness for next levels by developing a feedback loop to capture and analyze student outcomes data—apply learning analytics and learner profiling to gather and analyze large amounts of detail about individual student interactions.
- Employ adaptive technologies to pinpoint where a student is in his or her learning, track the progress of individual lessons, find out where they're spending the most time, determine the challenges they need to move forward, and tailor the learning approach and pathway.
- Engage all students, maintain focus, and keep behavior in check with game-like activities and real-world projects.
- Use programs that provide multiple suggested learning pathways, affording the flexibility to adjust content delivery to address diverse learners.

3 Results are gained via evidence-based approaches



Literacy instruction should inspire learning by engaging students via relevant, dynamic, and research-proven pedagogy and content. An approach that incorporates scientifically-based practices and strategies is the best way to catalyze the "aha" moments that power results.

The best evidence-based programs deliver the academic rigor required to prepare students not only for high-stakes tests, but for pronounced intellectual challenges they'll face in future schooling and the workplace.

To drive literacy gains, choose well-structured ELA programs that include rigorous, research-proven curriculum platforms that lift competency, meet state standards, and support ESSA accountability quidelines.

Ways to deliver rigorous literacy instruction

- Anchor the literacy curriculum in commercially available, evidence-based packages to maximize student outcomes, support students with special needs, and provide built-in professional training to optimize program impact.
- At all levels, incorporate both literary and informational texts to strengthen comprehension skills, as facility with one does not necessarily mean facility with the other.
- Select passages at a level that is just beyond students' comfort zone to foster continual growth and challenge.
- Ask students to make predictions about possible outcomes in the texts they are reading, to promote deep thinking about both literary and informational materials.
- Engage students in active discussions and incorporate peer collaboration whenever possible; in younger grades, teachers can model behaviors for appropriate discourse and provide added structure for student discussions.
- Introduce literacy strategies with explicit instruction and teacher modeling, and then continue with scaffolding and coaching from the teacher as students apply them to a range of texts.
- Give students a print- or digital-rich environment with high-interest adolescent literature and selections that cater to a wide range of reading levels and connect with the cultural backgrounds and interests of students.
- Incorporate activities and strategies that foster metacognitive awareness while building comprehensive skills. Use teacher-generated questions and direct students to engage in self-questioning.

3 | Results



1% 1.5%

Average Literacy Rates Permanent Increase

A 1% increase in average literacy rates yields a 1.5% permanent increase in the GDP

LITERACY RESOURCES

- How to Promote Effective ELA Classroom Collaboration
- Text Complexity and Close Reading: Best Practices for Adolescent Learners
- ► Foundational Skills: 5 Ways to Build the Cornerstone for Proficient Reading
- ► The Science of Learning Serving the Art of Teaching
- Creative Teaching Strategies to Address ELA Standards

Ways to deliver rigorous literacy instruction (continued)

- Provide an array of nonfiction materials such as biography and autobiography and journalistic writing formats, including newspaper articles and factual accounts.
- Use reading passages involving a conflict or dilemma, giving students an opportunity to choose a perspective, which enhances both empathy and disclosure skills.
- Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- Provide instruction on common organizational structures of narrative and informational texts, so that students become increasingly able to identify "clue words" and infer structural elements independently.
- Teach students specifc learning strategies for complex literary text, including how to construct meaning; analyze devices like characterization, theme, and plot; develop new vocabulary; and make inferences.
- Employ concept-oriented reading instruction, by introducing comprehension strategies in the context of learning topics from rich domains, such as natural science topics.

4 | Responsive tools and platforms drive proficiency



Rich technology, connected learning, and personalized programs and apps are changing how students learn and how teachers teach.

Research shows technology-based instruction is reducing the time students reach a learning objective by 30 to 80 percent. And with engaging resources at their fingertips, students see amazing academic success that increases their enjoyment of class, and their instructors.

Literacy educators are leveraging new technologies and digital stacks to provide access to next-generation learning anywhere. Digital instruction connects education to real-world experiences and also promotes equity, access, and opportunity for all students. Not only that, but students develop more responsibility for and control of their learning, with more choices around the pace, time, and location of online instruction.

Digital programs help deepen meaning and stimulate high-level thinking. They nurture higher thinking skills such as reasoning and synthesizing, afford a chance to explore important ideas, and develop the skills and attitudes needed to do rigorous, quality work. And, they offer new ways to accomplish projects and nurture multiple modes of expression, including writing and speaking.

Ways to leverage interactive digital learning

- Adopt digital adaptive learning platforms that make learning more efficient, and provide greater insight into students' progress and learning gaps.
- Ensure digital programs utilize a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to personalize learning for each student, so they test and progress at a flexible pace that's not necessarily based on age or grade level.
- Use federal funding to gain the best of emerging technologies, applications, tools, software, and devices that can be applied to enhancing learning experiences.
- Select programs that provide opportunities for collaborative activities to boost learning outcomes and enhance social skills.
- Employ digital programs to promote on-task behavior and prevent students from being distracted by the social dynamics of traditional classrooms.
- Employ new technologies to extend the meaning of "anytime, anywhere learning": use a smartboard for interactive engagement, replace paper quizzes with online, poll students over their smartphones, share students' screens over the classroom projector or flat panel display, and video conference with international classrooms for project-based learning.
- Consider adding mobile learning by operating your school under a BYOD (bring your own device) system, supported by high performance, secure Wi-Fi systems and networks.
- Transform learning for EL and special needs students using assistive technology and digital accessibility, to support and assimilate them seamlessly into traditional classrooms.

4 | Responsive



Percentage of time that technology is used for instruction, according to teachers:

primary role supporting role not utilized

MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION RESOURCES

- How Technology is Enabling Opportunities for Every Child
- Adaptive Technology Strategically Supports Outcomes
- Changing the Classroom with Purposeful Technology
- Leverage Technology to Teach Common Core Literacy Standards
- ► How to Solve the Demands of Complex Reading with FLEX Literacy

Ways to leverage digital learning (continued)

- Increase educator technology proficiency for educators by requiring professional development to help teachers implement mobile learning and other classroom technologies as part of a holistic education plan.
- Implement adaptive tools that help students master vocabulary in every subject area.
- Strive to obtain one-to-one computer access (one device per student), as well as a communications infrastructure that supports speedy internet connections.
- Develop a rubric to evaluate edtech providers that includes instructional design, course content, engagement, interactivity, assessment resources, services support, and technical requirements.

5 | Real-Time assessment and monitoring speeds proficiency



Literacy leaders are embracing real-time assessment strategies based on increasingly higher educational standards for literacy instruction, so they can maximize student outcomes.

Today's curriculum-aligned assessment programs pave the way to new methods of assessment and accountability. Every mouse click informs instructiona strategies for students. Teachers are assisted with daily decisions to help each student master concepts and develop competencies. What's more, they help principals evaluate the types of professional development needed for staff improvement.

Online assessment first allows teachers to preassess students' readiness and interests at the start of a unit, before automatically serving up the appropriate interfaces, prompts, and instruction. Students progress based on objectives that are precisely tracked and easily viewed through graphics, so teachers can see where each student stands.

This literacy attribute helps build better pedagogies, empower students to take an active part in learning, accelerate struggling populations, and assess factors affecting completion and students' success.

Ways to assess impressively

- Choose digital programs with dashboards that capture information, redirect curriculum content to close the gap on achievement gaps, drive closed-loop performance reporting, make informed decisions, and provide transparency for teachers, parents and other stakeholders.
- Employ digital assessment software to help manage data intelligence for federal and state accountability reporting. Reports can be instantly produced and easily broken down by various parameters including ethnicity, gender, free reduced lunch, and more.
- Create effective formative assessments that draw from a range of types (informal checks, quizzes, open-ended prompts, story retelling, "think alouds", performance tasks/projects) to identify both small and large gaps in students' understanding.
- Strengthen assessment models, using formative and summative assessments that are highly individualized and student-centered, driving stronger student and educator support.
- Develop complete student portfolios capturing aspects of personalized learning: test scores, students' independence and self-confidence ratings, engagement metrics, evidence of critical thinking and applied learning skills, and feedback from teachers and other stakeholders.
- Identify the type of assessment to best target knowledge and skills for development, essential criteria for assessing student work, and kinds of activities most likely to prepare students for summative assessments—as well as rehearse their knowledge to generate formative feedback.

5 | Real-Time





The number of 12th grade students at/above proficiency in reading (NAEP) has not significantly improved in recent years

MCGRAW-HILL EDUCATION RESOURCES

- Effective Assessment: Identifying Individual Student Needs
- Use Data Assessments to Deliver Mastery in the Reading Mastery Signature Edition
- Meaningful Assessment Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction: Collecting Student Data for Assessment

Ways to assess impressively (continued)

- Use student data to guide instructional groupings (along with individual feedback and instruction) to drive the formation of heterogenous student subgroups which support peer learning and optimize outcomes for group members of varied proficiency levels.
- Ensure assessment tools contain multiple entry points to dynamically create the learning path best suited to his or her needs, to guide the student through curriculum.
- Ensure professional learning systems for educators explicitly address the unique mindsets and skills required to address every student's entry, benchmarking, gateway measurements, and exit exams.
- Select programs that equip administrators and teachers with intuitive dashboards to interpret progress and performance data in real-time, and make informed decisions.
- Engage administrators in effective improvement planning so they can use advanced assessment data to set goals and evaluate progress against these goals.
- Ensure that teachers are equipped with the training and support they need to gather real-time data with ease and use it to inform and modify their lesson plans and deliver a varied approach with individual students.

6 | Reflective practices integrate literacy in all content areas



Becoming literate means each student is able to read and understand a variety of subject matter texts in order to form valid conclusions and participate in meaningful conversations around a given subject. Literacy action plans today incorporate proactive literacy strategies as an essential means to help all students master core content, and connect with standards and objectives of specific content areas.

Content literacy instruction prepares students to read, write, and discuss using the language of science, social studies, mathematics, and English language arts. Students need to acquire discipline-specific literacy skills, comprehension, and understanding of text structures involved with reading a mathematics textbook, a science journal article, a primary historical source, or a Shakespearian play.

As students are asked to read texts of increasing complexity from grade level to grade level, their skills as readers must also become increasingly sophisticated. High school students still need support in learning how to comprehend and critically think about media, lectures, demonstrations, charts and graphs, and hands-on activities.

There is an infinite number of engaging and effective strategies an educator can use to deliver support for building comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and spelling. And, all learners need the opportunity to reflect on prior knowledge to better make meaning of new knowledge, and deepen learning experiences.

Ways to advance content literacy

- Use instructional strategies with diverse fictional and nonfiction texts. Embed the strategies into the content educators are already using that is aligned with state standards, district curriculum, school mission, and grade-level goals.
- Plan and implement a horizontally (across grade levels) and vertically (across subjects and content areas, sequential, and conceptually-based) aligned curriculum. Ensure leadership teams—at schoolwide, content, and grade levels—support and advance this practice.
- Collaborate with content-area colleagues to integrate reading and writing strategy instruction into select learning activities.
- Design interdisciplinary projects and activities which teach content-area knowledge while also developing comprehension and writing skills.
- Ensure content area groups collaborate to develop literacy progressions specific to each content area and map current curriculum across grade levels to identify any gaps and/or overlaps.
- Provide opportunities for student reflection whereby students give serious thought or consideration to something that has been accomplished. Give students a chance to think critically about their learning experiences, talk about them, listen to and consider others' perspectives, and write about their experiences and perceptions.
- Focus on big ideas—the key concepts and ideas from rich domains (i.e., natural sciences) and the content areas suitable for the grade level, to guide instruction that is deep and meaningful.

6 | Reflective





Percentage of 4-year-olds who are read to on a daily basis: 38.6%

LITERACY RESOURCE

- Setting a Foundation for Life Long, Cross-Curricular Success with Wonders
- Adolescent Literacy Instruction Aligned to the CCSS
- ► The Reciprocal Nature of Language Arts and English Language Instruction
- When All Else Fails, Teach Comprehension! Effective Teaching Strategies
- Digitally Enhanced Thematic Instructional Units to Engage Your ELA Classroom
- Teaching Students to Write Like Reporters

Ways to advance content literacy (continued)

- Gauge Depth of Knowledge by measuring whether cognitive requirements between the assessments and standards consistent for each of the content areas are covered, and that the same complexity of knowledge and skill are sought and required.
- Allow students to engage in formal debate and to debrief their experience with a lens on the quality of arguments, and reflect on what they learned about presenting them effectively.
- Engage students in pair-sharing or small group discussions to summarize main ideas from readings, frame a research project, evaluate the accuracy and fairness of a report, design a product, interpret statistical data, identify questions, discuss how ideas and knowledge have altered their perceptions, and compare and contrast information.
- Engage with the National Writing Project (NWP) so teachers of all content areas can learn new strategies to encourage, support, and grow writers—strategies including a writing process that puts the writer in charge of content, voice, and structure.
- Host performances or presentations of students' creative works in music, drama, cinema, fashion design, painting, sculpture, drafting, and graphic design. Allow time for formal critiques and discussion about meaning of the works.
- Provide dedicated instructional time to cause-and-effect, compare-and-contrast, and other common structures of informational text, so students' familiarity will support learning new material in other subjects.

7 | Ready teachers optimize student success



While exploring literacy curriculum innovation, be sure to include continuous and personalized professional improvement to ignite teacher performance and delivery.

Strive for excellence in building literacy educators' capabilities through professional development (PD). Make sure PD strategy aligns to both your district and your personal career goals. Take advantage of your colleagues' knowledge to build professional capacity. Also, you can collaborate within professional learning communities, and tune into crowd-accelerated innovation to improve instructional practice and raise student achievement.

ELA teachers and administrators are addressing new challenges as well as opportunities as learning models move from instruction-focused and passive, to student-centered and active. At the same time, customizable curricula, online training, and just-in-time embedded courses are enhancing PD.

PD must drive top literacy skills for educators, and as a result, advance student learning. Whether delivered online or in classrooms, sufficient time should be dedicated to allow teachers to practice and construct learning opportunities for students which reflect the pedagogy stressed in the PD. This way, you're sure to gain new ideas, sustain ELA learning, and achieve planned outcomes.

Ways to improve professional learning

- Increase literacy training opportunities to set high expectations and open the door to a variety of personalized educational opportunities. Follow ESSA directives to incorporate PD for literacy, including: sustained over time, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused.
- Look to the professional expertise of your curriculum advisors to ensure that programs are implemented quickly and efficiently, and instruction is delivered with top rigor.
- Train all teachers in the essentials of literacy instruction and reinforce expectations to support students' overall literacy development.
- Focus on the acquisition of professional skills related to common standards and assessment to drive more effective college and career prep.
- Select curriculum programs that contain embedded, online professional training already built into core, specialized, and digital learning courses and platforms.
- Create a focus on staff input and collaboration. Engage with colleagues in critical reading of challenging texts, critical writing and critical conversations for PD to serve as a model for teaching.
- Develop leadership expertise by creating new PD roles for your district's competency-area specialists. Develop expert teachers as peer tutors, form school improvement teams, and leverage the skills of outside consultants.
- Provide opportunities to develop expertise across multiple domains—pedagogical research, instructional techniques, and digital competency.

7 | Ready





LEP teachers are prepared

54 percent of teachers have limited English proficient (LEP) students in class, and 1/5 of teachers are prepared to serve them

LITERACY RESOURCES

- Online Professional Development
- ► How Professional Development is Opening up Opportunities for Collaboration Among Educators
- Effective Teaching Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension
- Strengthening Literacy and Math Intervention
- Take Charge of Your Professional Development Online
- Connecting Teachers and Advancing Literacy Education

Ways to improve professional learning (continued)

- Call veteran teachers to lead PD sessions focusing on what they've learned at workshops, classes and conferences, to share perspective and knowledge with beginning and middle-of-the-road teachers.
- Encourage teachers to acquire additional certification or advanced degrees in ELA, ESL, or bilingual education.
- Give content area teachers onsite support to learn and implement literacy best practices through PD and opportunities to collaboratively plan and share literacy instructional strategies.
- Apply data-driven learning, adaptive assessments, and digital tools to teacher evaluations to more precisely quide and improve instructional delivery.
- Try out experimental and highly effective collaboration devices including PLCs (professional learning communities), learn-from-anywhere MOOCs (massive open online courses), online learning portals, and peer-based communities, to increase student achievement.
- Ensure all non-literacy teachers learn how to provide effective vocabulary instruction in their subject areas, including reading comprehension strategies that can help students make sense of content-area texts, and to teach students to read and write in ways that are most relevant to specific content areas.
- Develop strong, consistent teacher support in strategies and methods for addressing special populations (English learners, students with learning disabilities), using enhanced and highly targeted PD programs.
- Ensure that strong PD is included in digital edtech programs to support the implementation and academic success of digital technology projects, and student achievement.

About

Literacy is for Life

You became an educator to improve children's lives—a process that begins with literacy. With our continuum of differentiated literacy programs and learning platforms, you can precisely tailor literacy instruction to the needs of all your students. Our shared commitment and expertise can transform them all into the skilled readers, writers, and thinkers of the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that literacy is for life.

MHEonline.com/Literacy #LiteracyforLife



Reach All Learners

Your students' literacy needs are as unique as they are. Our literacy instruction supports great teaching, empowering you to reach all learners and raise them to new levels of achievement.

Instruct with Intent

Infuse teaching and learning with purpose. From research-based print resources to powerful digital tools, our materials foster appropriate instruction and connect literacy to the lives of students.

Engage & Inspire

To inspire, you must first engage students through learning that's active and relevant. We design all our content with that in mind, so you become the catalyst for the "aha" moments that power results.

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