

# Preface

Research tells us the most effective teachers of content area literacy are the content area teachers themselves because, as content area specialists, they know what knowledge and skills are needed to effectively read and write in their disciplines. In effect, they think like scientists, artists, social scientists, mathematicians, or practitioners of whatever subject they teach. Yet, most middle school and high school teachers will readily admit that the majority of their training in college was in their content area discipline rather than in how to teach literacy in that discipline.

This book presents a snapshot of adolescent learners and how they learn, and it offers research-based best practices and content area strategies for teaching grounded in the theory of multiple intelligences and brain-based research. These enable teachers to increase student learning in all content area disciplines by more effectively integrating reading, writing, and critical thinking into their daily classroom instruction. Examples and reproducible masters for implementing the strategies are included in this book to assure immediate transfer to all content area classrooms.

*Chapter 1* (The Challenge of Adolescent Literacy) highlights the challenge that teaching adolescents often presents; then it details ways in which teachers in today's classrooms can meet this challenge by presenting students with effective approaches to reading both narrative and expository texts.

*Chapter 2* (Teaching Specialized and Technical Vocabulary) stresses the critical importance of helping students acquire, learn, and retain vocabulary by noting that the end product of both recreational and informational reading is comprehension and that vocabulary knowledge makes up as much as 70% to 80% of comprehension. To help facilitate the learning of vocabulary, this chapter provides a myriad of strategies to foster vocabulary acquisition and knowledge in all content areas.

*Chapter 3* (Reading to Learn in Content Area Disciplines) discusses specific processes and skills that students must be able to complete in order to successfully comprehend both the narrative and expository texts they are required to read in the various content area disciplines they study. This chapter provides four types of learning strategies that can be used in all content area disciplines: (1) questioning strategies, (2) note-taking and summary strategies, (3) study guide strategies, and (4) critical response strategies.

*Chapter 4* (Writing to Learn in Content Area Disciplines) examines the connection between reading and writing, noting that one must have access to written material for reading to occur. Furthermore, the act of writing enables students to process the ideas and concepts they have read about. In order to help students use writing to effectively learn what has been read, this chapter provides a variety of writing-to-learn strategies for use in all content area disciplines.

*Chapter 5* (Speaking to Learn in Content Area Disciplines) examines the connection between reading and speaking, noting that during speaking, students not only process the ideas and concepts of their learning but also give concrete shape to their thoughts. In order to help students use speaking to effectively learn what has been read, this chapter provides a variety of speaking-to-learn strategies for use in all content area disciplines.

*Chapter 6* (Fostering Real World Literacy) considers the challenges that face students in the age of technology and discusses the new literacies that engage students, such as the Internet, informational literacy, media literacy, and visual literacy. In order to help students learn using these new technological opportunities, this chapter provides learning strategies that can be used in all content areas for information-gathering and analysis activities, such as the following: (1) collaborative projects; (2) problem-based project learning; (3) media literacy, with activities for learning from newspapers, magazines, and news broadcasts; and finally (4) visual literacy, with activities that use storyboards, photographs, television, and videos.