

LITERACY STRONG

ALL YEAR LONG

Powerful Lessons for Grades 3–5

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Introduction

Literacy is at the heart of all learning! It comprises reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language competencies. Just like a heart is the most essential organ, pumping the vital necessities to all other areas of the body, literacy is the essential component that propels learning in all other content areas to function properly and bring lifelong learning. Therefore, students' level of learning is directly affected by their level of literacy knowledge and ability to access and apply that knowledge. To continue to strengthen the literacy skills of students in the intermediate grades for academic success, educators will need to integrate literacy through effective approaches such as:

- interdisciplinary, project- and concept-based learning to motivate and engage them, allowing for an inquisitive stance toward their learning process (Lanning, 2013; Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009);
- opportunities for collaborative conversations about their learning process;
- effective neuroscience and brain research connections into learning for a growth mindset (Caine & Caine, 2013; Dweck, 2006; Jensen, 2009);
- awareness of the importance of emotional and social health (Tomlinson, 2017); and
- acquiring a backward design process (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Keeping literacy as the strong foundation is exactly what is needed to propel learning to higher, stronger grounds. A cohesive, comprehensive literacy experience gives students opportunities to make pertinent connections among the standards of learning. This learning is strengthened as the process and content spirals with a continuous cause-and-effect structure moving through the various seasons of a school year.

School-based seasons are very similar to our Earth's seasons. Both divide the year into quarters, marked by changes along the way. Most school-based seasons have a beginning of the school year, a midyear point, a closing of the school year, and a summertime. With every new season, there is a cause that launches it. Earth's seasons are caused by a tilt on its axis. Similarly, our school-based seasons are also caused by a tilt in the learner's mindset. We, the teachers, represent Earth, remaining steadfast on student achievement as we move around the ever-changing shifts in both learners' minds and the global field of education.

As we learn to effectively move through the various seasons of a school year, we need to give students ample opportunities to take in all that each season offers. Farmers would not expect to plant apple seeds during the first season and see fruit the next day. The apple seed needs time to take root and grow stronger to be able to produce flavorful apples. It takes a process to produce a product, and the same is true for our school-based seasons. There are times to plant, water, weed, prune, and harvest knowledge. We must first sow into the mind of a learner the amount of seed that is necessary to obtain the kind of harvest that allows the learner to be a productive citizen.

Each season is necessary for the strength, accumulation of knowledge, and longevity within the learner. "Practice that is distributed over longer periods of time sustains meaning and consolidates the learnings into long-term storage in a form that will ensure accurate recall and applications in the future" (Sousa, 2011, p. 106). Strong literacy students apply their newfound knowledge throughout the school year as lessons increase in complexity and remain relevant to their developmental needs.

The major goal of *Literacy Strong All Year Long: Powerful Lessons for Grades 3–5* is to empower and equip intermediate educators with ways to effectively keep literacy achievement strong and progressing in their classrooms. This resource allows educators to teach literacy strategy lessons that spiral across the entire school year, focusing on reaching various learning styles in today's diverse classrooms. The lessons motivate intermediate learners to accumulate literacy achievement for long-term retention by accessing and enhancing prior learning throughout the school year for a particular literacy strategy strand (e.g., analyzing words, questioning for close reading). These lessons create ample opportunities for previous learning to be applied in various situations throughout the seasons of the school year.

We hope this book captures our collaborative work as it builds on and extends research on how the brain makes connections between new and previous learning and helps students accumulate and strengthen literacy strategies for deeper learning (Anderson, 2009; Caine & Caine, 2013; National Research Council, 2012; Sousa, 2011; Wolfe, 2010). Every effort is needed to maintain the instructional cycle for layering deeper learning as educators assess, plan, implement, assess again, and reflect

to maximize the quality of literacy instruction using a progression of literacy strategies. These strategies are presented in a lesson framework designed for developing a seamless flow of learning across the seasons of a school year.

Organization of This Book

Each chapter uses a season of the school year to center instruction with a focus on the English Language Arts Literacy Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) presented in 40 lessons that are conducive to deeper learning. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of the importance of keeping literacy strong during the specific season of the school year. The remaining portion of the chapter gives educators 10 Literacy Strands in comprehensive literacy lessons for applying literacy strategies within the English Language Arts Standards. Each Literacy Strand presented in Chapter 1 spirals throughout the remaining chapters, rising in complexity. This continuum gives educators the opportunity to use students' previous academic vocabulary and learning standards as a springboard. As learners gain knowledge, confidence, and independence over time, the sophistication of the standards also progresses. A comprehensive literacy lesson format (adapted from Ellery & Rosenboom, 2011) guides educators as they gradually release responsibility to students so they can become self-regulated, literacy-strong learners. The comprehensive literacy lesson format encompasses the following features.

Lesson Trailer

The lesson trailers are designed to fulfill the purpose of a movie or book trailer: they intend to attract the educator with the purpose of the lesson and to motivate him or her to teach the focused literacy lesson in the classroom.

Literacy Enhancer

The literacy enhancer gives an overview of each lesson with a focus on boosting literacy strength in one of the reading component areas of word work, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A literacy strategy is also aligned to the highlighted reading component with the focus skill of the strategy noted (e.g., Comprehension: Determining Importance and Summarizing of key details and main idea).

Preparation

Every great lesson begins with preparation. This focus area of the lesson supports educators in answering the question: What resources are needed to accomplish the lesson with excellence? It is a time to prepare the materials, review the key academic

vocabulary, focus on the big ideas and learning objectives, and establish essential questions. Every effort that is made for learning to occur signifies the value placed on establishing an environment that is conducive for learning.

Initiation

This initial phase of instruction develops student interest and motivation by creating an action (e.g., establish an anticipatory lead-in, hook, or attention grabber; inquiry-based learning; problem-based learning), which opens the mind of the learner and sets the stage for learning. This phase is intended to be accomplished in a short time period with interactive engagement between the teacher and students.

Demonstration

This modeling phase allows the teacher to explain clearly and concisely the what, how, and why of a task through explicit demonstration. It sets up the instruction so the teacher can unpack key learning points, with students having a view into the mind of the teacher through think-alouds and real-time examples.

Collaboration

This section provides instructional format and conversational coaching through shared experiences. It allows students to process information and apply accountable talk while responding to and further developing what others share in relationship to their own cognitive development from the content. The collaboration phase also allows learners to share text-dependent evidence through apprenticeship learning.

Application

Real-time practice is the key to this section of the lesson. During this instructional phase, learners can be with partners, in groups, or work independently to apply their newfound knowledge through approximations and active engagement experiences (e.g., guided small groups, literacy centers or stations, investigative labs).

Reflection

Intrapersonal perspective is the focus of this phase of the learning format. Students are provided a time to be self-regulated learners by considering and recording what they have learned and what they still want to learn (e.g., evaluating the feedback from monitoring progress toward a learning goal, learning logs, or written reflection journals).

Adaptation and Extension

This section of the lesson provides various ways to adapt and extend learning, allowing flexibility in meeting the diverse instructional levels and needs of learners in today's classrooms. The design of the lesson integrates many learning modalities to craft a rigorous lesson. This adaptation and extension phase recommends ways for instructors to reach as many of the learning styles and exceptional needs as possible.

Evaluation

Each lesson has "I can . . ." statements and behavior indicators to evaluate the process and product within the lesson. These tools are oriented to reflect what the student knows and still needs to know for intentional instruction as an integral part of the learning cycle, not just the end of the process.

Reproducible

These resources are designed to allow for collaboration and accountable talk, as well as for interpreting and applying previous learning to newfound knowledge by relating experiences and acquiring ownership of learning.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1: Starting the School Year Literacy Strong. The introduction of this chapter offers evidence on the importance of getting the school year off to a strong start by teaching literacy routines and setting expectations for students to become stronger readers and writers. Establishing benchmarks for future points of reference to gauge students' learning is addressed. Also, strategies are described on how to focus a literacy community on building rapport with students and empowering parents to help lay a solid literacy foundation for them. Ten comprehensive strategy lessons that are relevant for the beginning of the year form the core of Chapter 1. These lessons demonstrate the routines, expectations, assessments, and opportunities for collaboration as a literacy community.

Chapter 2: Beating the Midyear Blahs. The introduction of Chapter 2 highlights the importance of maintaining momentum at the halfway mark of the school year. This chapter focuses on progressing literacy learning through a time when learning can get stagnant. It offers ways for educators to maintain momentum and monitor expectations that were established at the beginning of the year. This season allows for strengthening the student–teacher–parent relationship because rapport has been

built. The chapter also offers ways to continue evaluating literacy goals and benchmarks by monitoring progress in specific literacy components. Building on the lessons in Chapter 1, this chapter features the 10 comprehensive strategy lessons that are relevant in the middle of the year of their literacy journey. Each lesson spirals from the literacy enhancers (standards/literacy strategies) featured in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Ending the School Year Literacy Strong. The introduction highlights the importance of stepping up and finishing strong, not with a slow glide but with a strong climb, to give educators the endurance and ability to stay focused on learning through the end of the school year. This chapter provides practical ways to be intentional, with appropriate intensity levels that allow literacy goals to be achieved. Also, this chapter reminds educators of the influence that they have acquired as literacy leaders in their classrooms and how to use their influential stance to end the year literacy strong. Ten comprehensive strategy lessons that are relevant to skills acquired by the end of the year highlight the academic vocabulary from previous seasons of the school year found in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 4: Stopping the Summer Slide. The introduction shares the importance of progressing literacy through the summer months. The focus is on continued reinforcement of the literacy strategies from the school year and on reading for pleasure, emphasizing summer reading lists, roles and responsibilities, and continued goal setting as students prepare for their next year's adventure. An extended summer break presents a unique challenge for educators and learners. The 10 comprehensive strategy lessons provide an independent and possibly tutorial learning environment. Each lesson continues to build off the key academic vocabulary within the standards featured in Chapters 1–3.

Literacy Strong All Year Long: Spiraling to Success

We designed the interactive literacy lessons in this book to support you, grades 3–5 educators, in guiding students throughout the seasons and cycles of the school year. When you put literacy at the heart of your classroom, students benefit from a strong foundation and joyfully engage in higher levels of reading and learning.

Lessons

For a quick look at all the lessons in this book, refer to Figure 1, which lists reading component strands, literacy strategy strands, and lesson titles. This chart will be beneficial as you plan throughout the school year.

FIGURE 1

40 Lessons at a Glance

| Reading Component Strand | Literacy Strategy Strand | Chapter 1 Lesson | Chapter 2 Lesson | Chapter 3 Lesson | Chapter 4 Lesson |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Word Study | Decoding | Vowel Teams, p. 13 | Syllable Segmentation: Haiku, p. 92 | Stressing over Syllables: Cinquain Poetry, p. 178 | Syllable Scoop Search, p. 263 |
| Vocabulary | Gaming with Words | Word Ladders, p. 21 | Making and Writing Words, p. 101 | Semantic Feature Analysis, p. 184 | Family Wordo, p. 270 |
| Vocabulary | Analyzing Words | Numerical Prefix Roots, p. 27 | Functional Roots, p. 109 | Land, Water, Stars Roots, p. 194 | Finding Word Roots Throughout the Summer, p. 279 |
| Vocabulary | Associating Words | Shades of Meaning and Colorful Words, p. 32 | Like What? Similes and Metaphors Galore, p. 114 | Wacky Wise Words, p. 199 | Words and Their Crazy Relatives, p. 286 |
| Fluency | Phrasing, Pacing, Expressing | Keep a Poem in Your Pocket and a Song in Your Heart, p. 42 | Honoring President John F. Kennedy Through Oratory, p. 124 | Readers Theatre: Make Text Come Alive, p. 210 | Celebrating USA on Independence Day, p. 298 |
| Comprehension | Previewing | Sneak Preview 1-2-3, p. 49 | Informational Text Feature Tour!, p. 129 | Text Trip Maps, p. 216 | Preview Power, p. 309 |
| Comprehension | Inferring and Drawing Conclusions | Making Predictions, p. 58 | A Text with a View: Imagery with Reading, p. 137 | Tableaux: Making Text Come to Life, p. 225 | Summer Book Buddies, p. 318 |
| Comprehension | Questioning for Close Reading | Top 5 Interrogative <i>W</i> Words for Speculative Talk, p. 64 | Inference Dance Moves: Reading Between the Lines, p. 143 | ARE You Ready to Rumble? Anticipating, Reacting, and Evaluating, p. 231 | Question Generator, p. 324 |
| Comprehension | Determining Importance and Summarizing, p. 69 | Sifting What Matters: Digging Up Details, p. 69 | Recount Recipe, p. 151 | Getting the Gist: Circling Around the Main Idea, p. 239 | Movie Message Madness, p. 330 |
| Comprehension | Motivating Readers | Motivation with Book Logs, p. 75 | Take Off and Partner Talk Bookmarks, p. 159 | Ready, Set Goals, Read!, p. 245 | Splash into Summer Reading!, p. 337 |