Times are exciting for adolescent literacy research! Researchers are examining adolescents’ reading and writing like never before. This department, Research Connections, spotlights scholarly efforts aimed at improving classroom literacy instruction for adolescent learners. It takes a broad, disciplined-inquiry view of research, embracing use-inspired action research at local levels along with randomized field trials at national levels. It looks for productive links between adolescent literacy research and practice.

Online Resources

This inaugural article of Research Connections identifies websites that present adolescent literacy research. Increasingly, important reports are being posted online for convenient and immediate access. The websites presented alphabetically herein offer current research-based recommendations for adolescent literacy program development and classroom instruction.

AdLit.org: www.adlit.org

The Learning Media department of WETA, a public broadcaster and producer located in Arlington, Virginia, produces AdLit.org. This website, which is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation, first appeared in late 2007. It is directed to educators and parents of struggling adolescent readers and writers.

AdLit.org is extensive. Research & Reports is one link among the 13 related to adolescent literacy that appears on the homepage. Opening Research & Reports leads to 20 links with titles such as Background Knowledge, Intervention, and School-wide Reform which, in turn, provide links to frequently cited reports. For instance, Background Knowledge provides links to the full reports of Effective Literacy Instruction for Adolescents (Alvermann, 2001) and To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007).

An extra link is named Additional Sources of Reading Research. This option leads to an abundance of resources presented under four categories: Regional Comprehensive Centers, Education Journals, Associations and Advocacy Organizations, and Databases.

Alliance for Excellent Education: www.all4ed.org/

The Alliance for Excellent Education, begun in 2001 in Washington, DC, is a policy and advocacy organization based on the premise that U.S. high schools are in crisis. Several philanthropists, foundations, and corporations support the
Alliance, whose president is Bob Wise, a former congressman and former governor of West Virginia.

The Alliance is dedicated to transforming high schools so that every student graduates and is ready for postsecondary education and success in life. It addresses four issues: adolescent literacy, graduation rates, teachers, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reauthorization. It focuses on secondary-school students whose achievement is in the lowest quartile.

The Issues link on the Alliance’s homepage leads to the Adolescent Literacy link, which, in turn, leads to the Alliance’s many fact sheets, issue briefs, and reports on this topic. Here you will find the Alliance’s well-known reports, Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004) and Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (Graham & Perin, 2007), among others.

Along with the Alliance’s Adolescent Literacy link, its homepage provides entry to a Resource Library. This library leads to research reports on fundamental issues that underlie adolescent literacy instruction such as school structure and governance, curricular rigor and relevance, and youth’s readiness for college and the workplace. Educators working on secondary-school reforms that include adolescent literacy may find these resources especially valuable.

Carnegie Corporation’s Advancing Literacy Initiative: www.carnegie.org/literacy/index.html

The Carnegie Corporation of New York is a celebrated philanthropic foundation created in 1911 to advance knowledge and understanding. After consultations and literature reviews identified the need to improve adolescents’ literacy achievement, the Corporation’s Education Division began an Advancing Literacy initiative in 2003. To date, this initiative has granted scholars more than US$12 million to affect adolescent literacy policy, practice, and research. These grants have supported major recent reports produced through the Alliance for Excellent Education such as Adolescents and Literacy: Reading for the 21st Century (Kamil, 2003), Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007), Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004), and Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools (Graham & Perin, 2007). A Time to Act is a highly anticipated report funded by this initiative that has not been published as of this writing.

The Carnegie Corporation’s Advancing Literacy homepage displays six categories: The State of Adolescent Literacy Today; Educating the Educators; Family, Communities and Peers; Adolescent Literacy and Public Policy; Standards and Assessment; and Next Steps. The links beneath each heading open to a summary of relevant issues as well as to links to suggested readings. To illustrate, under the Next Steps heading is a Research and Policy link opens to the reports of selected grantees like the RAND Corporation.

Center on Instruction: www.centeroninstruction.org/index.cfm

The U.S. Department of Education sponsors 16 regional centers that provide resources and expertise to state and local educators who are helping schools meet NCLB goals. The Center on Instruction, whose parent group is the RMC Research Corporation from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is one of five sites that provide content-specific information to the regional centers. The Center on Instruction website bills itself as “Your source for information on research-based instruction.”

The Center’s homepage contains a Reading link that opens to a grades 4–12 tab with three sections: Resources, Research, and Exemplars. The Research section offers seven resources, including the noteworthy report Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction (Torgesen et al., 2007), which is a substantive and sensible integration of previous work. One part of this report details the current research base for literacy instruction for content area learners, English-language learners, and struggling readers.

International Reading Association: Focus on Adolescent Literacy: www.reading.org/resources/issues/focus_adolescent.html

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional organization dedicated to advancing the
quality of literacy instruction and research. IRA publishes the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy (JAAL)*, the publication that you are currently reading, which is exclusively for teachers of older readers. IRA members who select a subscription to *JAAL* have online access to its issues published during the subscription year, as well as to archival issues beginning with September 2004.

The IRA Focus on Adolescent Literacy webpage contains nine categories that include IRA Books and Resources, Position Statements, and Resolutions, among others. Research-based documents are spread throughout these sections. For instance, the IRA position statement on adolescent literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999) is available under Position Statements.

The Annotated Research Updates found under Online Resources are a sure path to adolescent literacy research on this website. William G. Brozo and his coauthors have posted summaries of 15 important classroom-based adolescent literacy research reports, and they offer Reflecting on Practice questions after each summary to prompt personal connections and applications.

**Closing Words**

Searching the Internet will be especially beneficial in the future as large-scale government-sponsored reports are released online. For instance, the Enhanced Reading Opportunities Study is examining the impact of two highly rated interventions on accelerating the performance of struggling ninth-grade readers. Early findings have been released through the National Center for Education Evaluation’s site (Kemple et al., 2008), and more will follow as the study unfolds during its five-year period.

To be sure, the five websites presented above do not present an entire picture of current adolescent literacy research. They miss much that is printed conventionally in books and journals, perhaps made available through individual or institutional subscriptions, but not posted on the Internet for universal access. Online resources such as the ones presented herein offer plentiful funds of information, but they are best used in concert with other resources.

**References**


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