



Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students in Grades 4 to 8 (2nd Edition)

Thomas G. Gunning

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This practical resource gives teachers step-by-step guidance for teaching students in grades 4 to 8 all major aspects of reading and writing.

In response to today's needs to tailor instruction for the middle grades, this book features sample lessons for virtually every major literacy skill/strategy and offers numerous reinforcement suggestions and generous listings of materials appropriate for the middle grades. Renowned author Tom Gunning presents the theories behind the methods, so readers will be free to choose, adapt, and/or construct their own approaches as they create a balanced evidence-based program of literacy instruction.

Because language, background knowledge, and thinking skills are the foundation of basic and higher-level literacy, the text emphasizes background building, vocabulary and overall language development, and the development of key thinking skills. Given the current emphasis on "*Leaving No Child Behind*" and closing the literacy gap, the text explores techniques and materials for helping below-level readers and writers. Included are listings of intervention programs for older struggling readers and suggestions for helping middle school students who are still having difficulty with decoding skills.

A Letter to Students, From the Author

Avon, Connecticut

March 14, 2007

Dear Student:

Although I receive royalties from the sales of *Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students in Grades 4-8* (Second Edition), my main reason for writing the text and continuously revising it is to improve the quality of literacy instruction for students. I believe that the best way to do that is to provide for pre-service and in-service teachers a text that explains effective ways to assess and instruct students. As times change and I acquire new knowledge and insights, I add to and revise the suggestions that I make.

In preparation for the revision of this last edition, I worked three days a week for a year in an urban school as a hands-on consultant. I also visited a number of schools, talked with lots of teachers, and worked with groups of students in a variety of settings. These direct experiences were very enlightening. One of my chief discoveries was the importance of fostering higher-level reading and responding skills. To meet the demands of No Child Left Behind, many schools are focusing on decoding skills and literal comprehension. Unfortunately, this has led to a neglect of vocabulary development and higher-level literacy skills, which are key elements in developing the kinds of skills needed in today's society and which are assessed in the upper grades by today's high-stakes tests. To emphasize the importance of higher-level literacy skills, a new feature entitled "Building Higher-Level Literacy," appears at the end of each chapter.

Recognizing the reality of the requirements of No Child Left Behind and high-stakes tests, I have included suggestions for preparing students to cope with demanding tests. Using lookbacks, supporting responses, and other key comprehension and test-taking skills are featured. Also emphasized is the importance of going beyond teaching students how to respond to challenging texts in discussions to also

teaching them how to respond in writing, since that is how they will be assessed.

Quickwrites, Macro-Cloze, Story Impressions, Think-Pair-Share, and a number of other intriguing teaching techniques have been added. Throughout the text, changes, large and small, have been made that I believe will enhance your knowledge of literacy and your ability as a teacher to build the literacy of the students that you teach. While I realize that the purchase of the text might mean a financial sacrifice, it should help make you a better teacher of literacy and your students' better readers and writers. Although the text is costly, potential benefits are priceless.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Gunning, Ed. D, Author
Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students

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