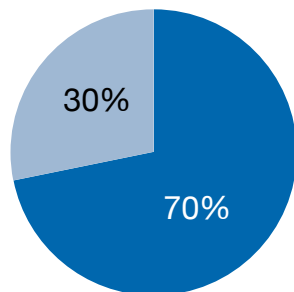


# THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON LEARNING

## Our Approach to Adolescent Literacy

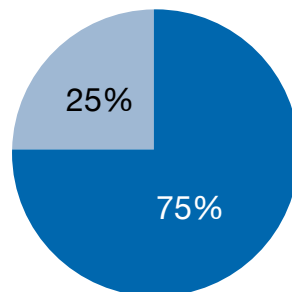
Astonishingly high numbers of adolescents fail to attain the level of proficient reader: 68 percent of eighth-graders and 64 percent of 12th-graders, according to recent national statistics. Clearly, society cannot afford to ignore the tremendous literacy needs these numbers represent.

### The Challenge



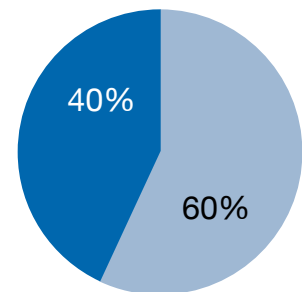
■ Middle and high school students reading below a proficient level  
■ Middle and high school students reading at a proficient level or above

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)



■ 12-graders writing below a proficient level  
■ 12-graders writing at a proficient level or above

Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008



■ High school graduates without the literacy skills employers seek  
■ High school graduates with the literacy skills employers seek

National Governors Association, 2005

### How We Support Adolescent Literacy

For more than 30 years, we have worked with schools and communities, with classroom teachers, students, and service organizations, to tackle the serious challenges of improving literacy among the nation's adolescents.

■ Center for Research on Learning staff members sit on several national policy boards that focus on adolescent literacy. Most recently, Daryl Mellard, director of the Center's Division of Adult Studies, was appointed to the Committee on Learning Sciences: Foundations and Applications to Adolescent and Adult Literacy. Jim Knight, director of the Kansas Coaching Project, is on the Board of Directors for the National Staff Development Council. Center director Don Deshler is a member of the National Institute for Literacy Advisory Board, the National Governors Association Adolescent Literacy Advisory Council, Carnegie Corporation of New York's Advancing Adolescent Literacy Advisory Council, and the Alliance for Excellent Education Adolescent Literacy National Advisory Council, among other national leadership positions.

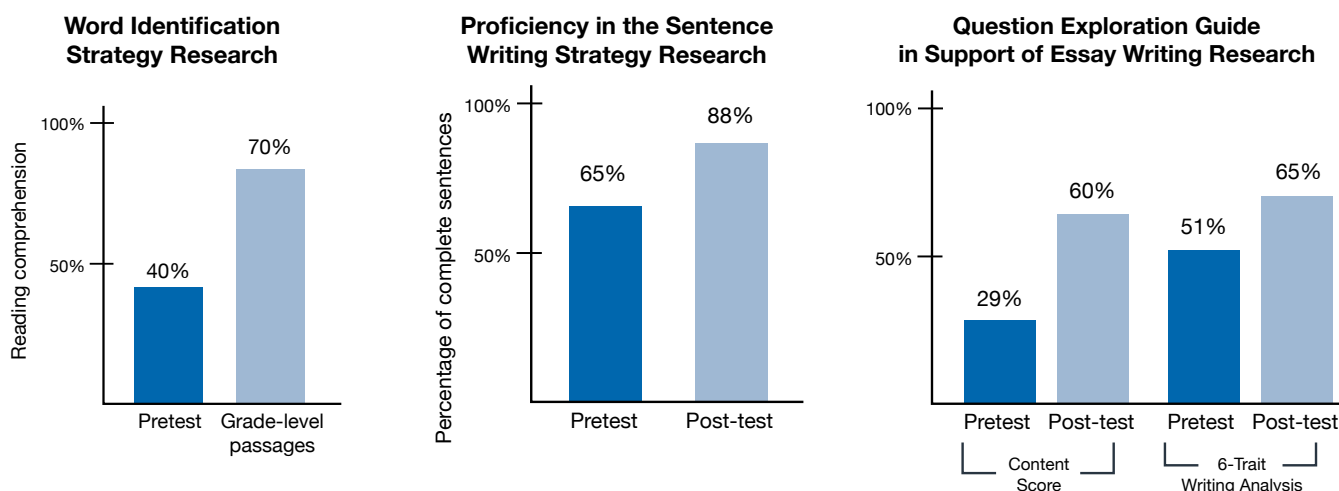
■ Our Strategic Instruction Model® (SIM®) is a research-validated literacy program that helps adolescents learn how to learn, providing a means for them to achieve independence and success. SIM consists of a Learning Strategies Curriculum that responds to the need for direct, explicit instruction for adolescents with learning disabilities and a set of Content Enhancement Teaching Routines that promote effective instruction in academically diverse classes. We have developed and validated learning strategies for reading; studying and remembering information; writing; improving assignment and test performance; effectively interacting with others; motivation; and math. Our teaching routines assist teachers in planning and leading learning; exploring text, topics, and details; teaching concepts; and increasing student performance.

More information: <http://kucri.org/sim>

■ We have developed more than 150 products in our pursuit of improved adolescent literacy. These products include step-by-step guidebooks for teachers, practice materials for students, and an array of multimedia resources harnessing the instructional power of video, CD, DVD, and web-based applications.

■ Two of our divisions focus their efforts exclusively on using technology to support instruction. ALTEC—committed to empowering learners of all types and ages through technology—develops such key literacy supports as instructional web-based resources, program supports, and scaleable online assessment. The e-Learning Design Lab explores new uses of technology to enhance learning environments. For example, its Online Academy Modules are designed to better prepare our nation’s future reading teachers, while its Blending Assessment with Instruction Program offers online student lessons and tutorials in math aligned with state and national curriculum standards. [More information: http://altec.org](http://altec.org) and <http://elearndesign.org>

### Toward a solution



### Select Adolescent Literacy Projects

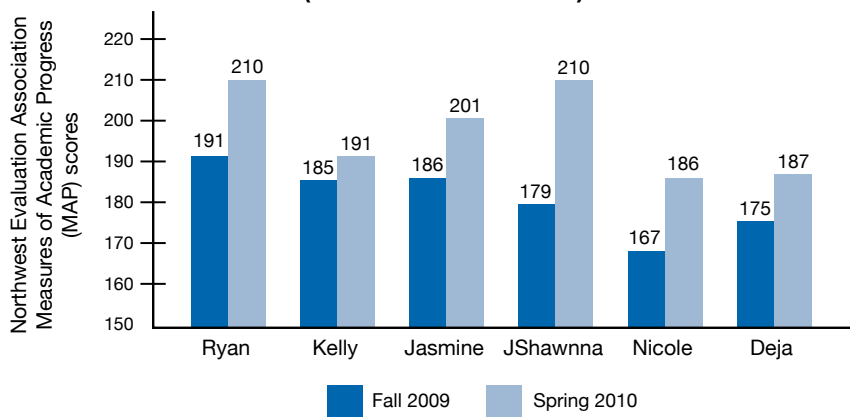
■ Our Xtreme Reading™ one-year class is designed to allow adolescents to develop the reading and writing skills they need to pass required classes, graduate from high school, and prepare for the future. The class aims to better prepare students to attack the demands of college or a career, to read and write confidently, to solve problems independently, and to work effectively as a member of a team.

■ The two-year Fusion Reading™ Program combines a motivation program with newly developed reading interventions to focus students’ attention on the importance of becoming an expert reader and how the benefits of being an expert reader can help them reach their hopes and dreams. The program relies on highly engaging reading materials selected for their appeal to struggling urban students.

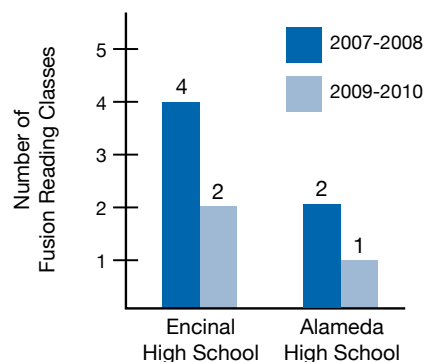
■ The Center’s After School Literacy Program promotes a new model of tutoring, Strategic Tutoring, which helps students complete homework assignments and build literacy skills. We are conducting research for this program in Boys and Girls Clubs of America across the country, helping Boys and Girls Clubs’ staff and volunteers adopt the Strategic Tutoring model.

■ Soaring to New Heights takes adolescent literacy beyond the classroom by preparing high school juniors with disabilities for the challenges of post-secondary education or employment. Soaring to New Heights is a collaborative effort with the Wichita, Kansas, public school district, Kansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Kansas Health Policy Authority.

**Reading Improvement after 7 Months of Fusion Reading Instruction  
(Midwest Middle School)**



**Reducing the Need for High School  
Fusion Reading Classes**



*As middle school students who have participated in Fusion Reading classes move into high school, the number of special education reading classes required for the student population decreases by half.*

## Professional Development Methods

We are committed to ensuring that the results of our studies have lasting meaning. Based on our research results, we develop products that teachers and students can use successfully to improve student achievement. We also continue to explore an array of methods for getting these materials into the hands of those who need them.

- We have established and continue to nurture an international network of professional educators. These individuals, members of our SIM International Professional Development Network, work with districts, schools, teachers, state departments, and colleges and universities to prepare others to effectively use our materials.

- One of our divisions, the Kansas Coaching Project, is a leader in the field of instructional coaching. This on-site, continuing professional development helps teachers overcome daily obstacles to the adoption of new instructional methods.

- We supplement our face-to-face professional development activities with web-based applications and other multimedia supports.

## Results

Before we promote new instructional procedures resulting from our research, they must meet our rigorous standards: Every instructional procedure must be palatable for teachers or they won't adopt it for classroom use. Procedures must be powerful enough to make a difference for low-achieving students and must be perceived as valuable by high- and average-achieving students. Students must be able to use skills and strategies in a variety of settings and situations. Finally, our procedures must result in socially significant gains for students. A procedure that results in an increase in performance from 20 percent to 40 percent might be *statistically* significant, but it is not *socially* significant because the student is still failing.

## About the Center

At the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, we believe no child or adolescent can be left behind in the quest for literacy, equal opportunity, and a future with promise. Since 1978, we have completed more than \$150 million in research and development as we worked to solve problems that limit individuals' quality of life and their ability to learn and perform in school, work, home, or community.

The six divisions and institutes within the Center tackle different aspects of today's educational challenges. We use technology to connect and engage learners of all ages and in a range of circumstances—from the youngster trying to master math concepts to the seasoned teacher in need of new ideas for literacy instruction.

### CRL Divisions:

- Advanced Learning Technologies (ALTEC)
- Division of Adult Studies
- eLearning Design Lab
- Kansas Coaching Project
- Institute for Research on Adolescent Learning
- Professional Development Research Institute

## Our Mission

To solve problems that limit individuals' quality of life and their ability to learn and perform in school, work, home, or the community.

## Our Goals

■ **Research:** To conduct research that dramatically improves the quality of life in the school, workplace, home, and community for all individuals, but especially for those who experience barriers to success.

■ **Development:** To develop resources, technologies, and procedures that facilitate learning, teaching, and advocacy for individuals.

■ **Professional Development:** To prepare others to use new knowledge and validated practices that improve quality-of-life outcomes.

■ **Organizational Change:** To promote public policy and reform in schools, social service agencies, and other institutions that enhance optimal learning, social proficiency, personal success, and appreciation of human diversity.

■ **Dissemination:** To share knowledge generated through research and development in ways that reach the largest possible audiences.

