

Profile of Chicago Public Schools' Striving Readers English Language Arts Curriculum and Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) Reading System

Publisher: The *Chicago Striving Readers English Language Arts Curriculum* is developed by Donna Ogle of National Louis University and the Chicago Public Schools. The AMP Reading System is distributed by Pearson Education, Inc.

Program Website: AMP: <http://www.pearsonschool.com>

Striving Readers Projects Using this Program: Chicago Public Schools, IL

Overview

Key features: *Chicago Striving Readers English Language Arts Curriculum (CSR-ELA)* is designed to improve the reading skills of all middle school students through instruction on comprehension-focused literacy strategies. The program uses a tiered approach in which students with lower reading ability receive more intensive intervention: Tier 1 includes students who meet or exceed state performance standards for their grade; Tier 2 is struggling readers who are reading no more than 1 year below grade level and who are assumed to be able to reach grade level with focused support in the classroom; Tier 3 includes struggling readers reading more than 1 year below grade level, who require long-term intensive support and customized instruction. All three tiers receive the whole-school (“blended”) intervention, which is delivered in language arts and subject-area classes and is designed to provide direct explicit instruction in comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and word identification. Tiers 2 and 3 students receive the targeted intervention, which consists of small-group, focused instruction for the Tier 2 students within the language arts and subject-area classes. Tier 3 additionally receives the AMP reading program after the regular school day as an afterschool class that is designed to provide explicit instruction on comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and building fluency.

Grades: Middle school students (grades 6 – 8)¹

Target students: The targeted intervention is designed for students who are reading below grade level but not more than one grade below. AMP targets middle school students reading 3 or 4 years below grade level (at a 3rd - 6th grade level).

Duration: The blended and targeted interventions are expected to be provided each day within ELA classes and subject area classrooms. AMP is delivered outside of school in an afterschool program, for 1 hour per day, 4 days a week.

Class size: 15 students

Content

Fluency: One part of the instruction in the blended model is Partner Reading in the Content Area Too, which is intended to build students’ fluency. Also, the AMP model incorporates vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension into each exercise.

Comprehension: The blended model includes three reading instruction components: Building background knowledge through direct vocabulary instruction, Partner Reading in the Content

¹ The AMP Reading Program is designed for students in grades 6 - 12.

Area Too for fluency and comprehension, and text set units related to subject area content and formats. AMP is designed to provide direct instruction on 7 comprehension strategies: Summarizing, Questioning, Previewing, Text Structure, Visualizing, Inferencing, and Megacognition.

Vocabulary: The blended model includes direct vocabulary instruction intended to build background knowledge. Also, AMP is designed to incorporate vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension into each exercise.

Decoding/Phonics: Not described in publicly available documents.

Writing: Not described in publicly available documents.

Organization

The blended intervention is intended to last 90-minutes. As designed, students start with 10–20 minutes of whole-group instruction; move to 60 minutes of practice and application in small groups; and conclude with 10–20 minutes of whole-group sharing.² During the small-group period, students rotate, as assigned, among three 20-minute workshop activities. In AMP, students are categorized into 3 levels based on their reading level. Each level has 7 units and 18 lessons per unit.

Use of Technology

Each classroom is intended to have: a listening center where students can listen to audiobooks and access models of fluency; a media center with three computers and access to one classroom printer to support special intervention software and group or individual research; and 10 Palm Pilots (handheld computers) for activities such as note taking, brainstorming, preparing graphic organizers, and taking spelling tests. AMP is designed to provide students with opportunities to listen to the novels with audio cd's and a Playaway device.

Student Motivation

Both the targeted intervention and the AMP reading system use reading materials selected to be of high-interest for adolescents, which are integrated with technology and audio resources to encourage interactive and independent learning and increase student motivation to read. Student independence is intended to be supported through the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to students within the whole group/small group/whole group configuration.

Formative Assessment

The model involves frequent, purposeful assessment and adjustment of instruction with screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring tools, including Learning First, fluency snapshots, spelling inventories, teacher observation and checklists, student self-assessment, and student interest inventories.

² While the original model recommends a 90-minute structure, due to class scheduling constraints, it is most often implemented within a 60-minute time frame in the Chicago Striving Readers schools.

Text Materials

Program uses multileveled reading materials designed to be authentic and of high-interest to adolescents. “Text set” units, developed with collaboration of Donna Ogle and National Louis University staff, include a variety of informational non-fiction texts at different reading levels and with varied text structures and organizational features. Texts are selected with the goal of being “culturally-responsive.” Reading materials are integrated with technology and audio resources, which is intended to increase student engagement.