Engage with Literature and Content is based on scientifically proven research and pedagogy in literacy and language. Deep attention to literacy development and the science behind it are the foundation of the program. The Science of Reading (SoR), as it pertains to readers in high school, includes the five pillars of literacy. Research indicates that a role remains in sound-symbol phonological awareness and phonics. As students encounter unfamiliar multisyllabic words, they use not only morphology, but graphophonemic strategies to pronounce new vocabulary (Hougen 2015; CDE 2022). A continued focus on vocabulary development, fluency, and text comprehension remains vital for academic success. Significant statistics have demonstrated over time that a portion of students in high school cannot read at grade level. In fact, according to a study by Alliance for Excellent Education, one in four secondary students were unable to read and understand textbook content. Current studies continue to show a lag with the Nation's Report Card showing 1/3 of secondary students in the US scoring below a basic level in reading (NAEP 2019, 2022).

For secondary students, the process is complex and requires a consideration of the intricacies of reading as an ongoing developmental process. For striving readers and multilingual students especially, literacy encompasses much more than reading, as students traverse language domains (including listening, speaking, and writing). Thus, the research underpinning these unique needs is also part of the foundation.

For today's learners, literacy also includes digital and discipline-specific literacies, as well as language specific to career and technical education. Each academic content area requires its own development of vocabulary, knowledge of syntax, and useful comprehension strategies for fluency and understanding to grow. This process is nonhierarchical and not always linear. To address both language and content needs, academic content standards as well as language development standards drive the lessons in each unit, building rigor toward achievement.

Beyond content-area literacy, adolescents often rely on out-of-school literacies as part of their identity development. Students have literacy skills that must be made evident in the classroom setting. Today, we recognize these skills as part of the funds of knowledge students bring forward, and capitalize on them as academic assets (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti 2005; Moll 2019). Students from a wide range of abilities and backgrounds all possess the talent necessary to become strong in literacy. *Engage* provides the supports necessary to aid and accelerate the process.

Engage with Literature and Content is built on specialized knowledge specifically designed for working with learners by building on the assets they bring into the classroom and addressing the unique academic challenges they face. All lessons contain differentiation and offer scaffolds and opportunities for augmentation.

Strong literacy development requires multicomponent strategies that move beyond isolated skills to cognitively challenging and engaging literacy activities that promote growth. Engagement is key when working with students who need added literacy supports.

Research background

Importance of motivation and engagement

In a classroom setting, complex emotional and motivational factors come into play as students strive to develop language. Krashen (1982) referred to this as the "affective filter." When the affective filter is high, students may experience anxiety, self-consciousness, boredom, annoyance, or even alienation. When the affective filter is low, students experience less anxiety and are actively engaged. Current research continues to support motivation and engagement as key to literacy development for adolescents (Wilkinson 2020). *Engage* is structured to create environmental and pedagogical supports that engage students in the simultaneous learning of language and content in an engaging and welcoming manner. Meaningful tasks for students with disabilities and neurodiverse learners, along with amplifications for students who would benefit from additional challenges (including gifted learners), are included in every unit.

Language and literacy interaction in the classroom

The work of Vygotsky (1978) has long served as a foundation for much of the research and theory on cognitive and linguistic development. He strongly believed in the role of social interaction in the development of cognition and language and thus literacy. Students cannot learn a language or develop literacy in a rote manner and have it be preserved or applied in any meaningful way. Further, Bruner's (1977) work also emphasized the importance of revisiting concepts and ideas. He noted that learning requires a continual deepening of understanding in progressively more complex ways. *Engage* contains multiple opportunities for repeated interaction in pairs, small groups, and whole groups. Vocabulary, concepts, and literacy skills are practiced and applied throughout the curriculum. This repetition with meaningful, curated interaction supports all students.

Scaffolded instruction

Systemic supports are needed in order to support the complex, nonlinear process of literacy development. With scaffolded instruction in literacy, the educator supports students at a level just beyond what they are able to achieve on their own. Vygotsky (1978) called this the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Current research building upon the ZPD emphasizes the importance of scaffolds across the language domains. For example, the American Institutes for Research Center for English Language Learners (2018) disseminated research noting that scaffolding is crucial in language acquisition and literacy. They suggest adding visuals, gestures, examples, graphic organizers, and sentence frames. *Engage* incorporates the foundational research and progressive models designed to meet the needs of students developing literacy skills. The research is translated into strategies that function in a cohesive and consistent manner, focusing on the desired result of increased language and literacy development. In this way, *Engage* provides a path to academic success.

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Engage Instructional Routine

- **Explore and Learn** Each unit begins with an initial engagement where students contemplate an **Essential Question** and then **Engage with the Theme** by viewing a video. In this video, a group of young people discuss the theme, thus prompting thought, modeling ideas, and serving as an exemplar. Following an asset-based approach, students respond to **What You Bring** and consider it from their own point of view in **From Your Perspective**. This creates connection and addresses relevance, which is a strong consideration for these learners. **In this Unit** then provides a preview of the reading selections and other content students will encounter.

- **Practice** Students work with an **Anchor Reading**, focus on **Grammar**, engage in **Listening and Speaking** practice, interact with **Media**, and increase academic knowledge via content area selections—**English Language Arts Reading**, **Science Reading**, **Social Studies Reading**, and **Math Reading**. They incorporate writing skills and apply them to enhance **Writing**. They also explore **Pathways** to college, career, and technical education—presenting a world of inspiring possibilities!

- **Communicate** Students have multiple opportunities to communicate their learning before, during, and after reading by sharing their ideas with partners, in small groups, and independently. Graphic organizers help students build visual comprehension and compelte the **Map It!**. Vocabulary is addressed explicitly as students **Build Vocabulary** and **Expand Vocabulary**. **Academic vocabulary** is consistently included with spiraled and cumulative attention. Students view fellow students in a **Study Group** video that models academic discourse about the task. This prompts metacognition as students follow with their own discussion. Students **present** and **publish** in every unit.

- **Assess** Units include embedded formative assessments so that teachers can gauge progress in real time and then respond to individual student needs. Importantly, at the end of the unit, students have the opportunity to **Reflect on the Unit**, where they review what they have learned and circle back to the Essential Question. They are also provided with added resources and readings to explore. The Assessment Program for each unit then includes formative and summative assessments to ensure progress.