VOLUME 2

What I Use in My Classroom

Introduction

What I Use in My Classroom is a teacher-authored collection of resource reviews for free online tools and materials. The recommended resources are accompanied by teachers' reflections on the product's strengths and weaknesses, as well as how they've used it effectively within their own local settings. All of the teacher reviewers are experienced educators who are members of Student Achievement Partners' Core Advocate Network, and are familiar with the requirements of today's college- and career-ready standards. Learn more about the Core Advocates and how you can join here: www.achievethecore.org/core-advocates. To learn more about Student Achievement Partners, visit achievethecore.org.

Recommendations from:

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Resource	How it Works	How I've Used This Tool	Caveats / Concerns	Time I've Seen Success	Scenarios in Use
Achieve the Core Text Sets www.achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter_cat=1112 **From** Katherine Linnehan	The Achieve the Core Text Sets are collections of multimedia resources designed to expose students to domain-specific vocabulary and background knowledge so that they may use this expert knowledge to better comprehend complex text.	The text sets provide all students with the opportunity to explore high-interest topics at their own pace. The multimedia aspect of this resource also ensures that multiple learning styles are addressed within the collection. As a reading specialist working primarily with students who have background knowledge and vocabulary deficits, this resource is an essential component of my instruction. The Common Core emphasizes that students should read grade-level complex text proficiently, and this resource provides students with opportunities to gain the exposure to the vocabulary and background knowledge that is necessary to do so.	The text sets include books, articles, videos, and websites. It is important to check to make sure that the websites and videos referenced are accessible through your school's firewall. In addition, some of the books that are listed are part of a specific curriculum publisher's resources.	While working with a text describing the role of smokejumpers in fighting forest fires, our fourth grade students used a text set to gain background knowledge on this topic. The students were able to watch videos of smokejumpers preparing to jump into a fire, use infographics to study how forest fires begin and spread, and learn the dangers of the job. Through this mixed media approach, the students gained access to critical vocabulary and knowledge through multiple avenues. The reluctant readers met the challenge of reading complex text with greater confidence and success.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Independent student work • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards • Supporting students below grade level • Supporting English language learners
ReadWorks www.digital.readworks.org/ **From** Jessica Moore	ReadWorks is an online website that provides reading comprehension materials for students and instructional guidance for teachers using a vast array of curated literary and informational articles. It offers reading comprehension lessons, vocabulary and formative assessment materials (including passages and question sets), skill and strategy lesson units, comprehension units, and novel study units across grade levels from kindergarten to 6th grade. Additionally, needs of older students can be addressed through the passages and paired question sets that are available for students through 12th grade and may be selected using filters that include grade level, Lexile score, text type, topic, and/or skill and strategy.	ReadWorks has been a valuable complementary resource in my instructional planning, particularly for use with my struggling readers. I have used resources from the skill and strategy units to supplement my whole class instruction on particular standards and skills, which has not only provided my students with additional texts and questions, but has given me support that I need in the re-teaching process with my students. The student packets are easily printable with one click, which is a great time saver, and the instructional guide provides me with examples to use both for my own reference and for my students as models for thinking.	Teachers will need to create a free account in order to fully utilize the ReadWorks database of materials. Signing up is quick and easy and while they send fairly regular emails alerting users to the release of new and/or timely materials, it is not excessive. While this resource is an outstanding addition to an existing curriculum, it isn't a standalone program. The texts are often good quality, however, they do not come with qualitative analysis of their complexity features, which can leave a bit to be desired in terms of the overall quality of the texts. Also, the questions that are paired with the texts are excellent for guiding students in reading comprehension practice, but do not necessarily go to the depth that is expected by assessments such as PARCC.	This year, I have been using the ReadWorks skill and strategy units with a 6th grade intervention group. While this group of students struggles with decoding and fluency, they also need significant support with reading comprehension. The skill and strategy units have been a nice complement to foundational skills work with opportunities for the kids to do repeated readings and word attack strategies on texts that they are also trying to understand. I have appreciated all of the instructional guidance that is provided as I am helping them to refine their skills.	• Small group instruction • Independent student work • Supporting students below grade level • Supporting English language learners
Bookworms https://sites.google.com/a/udel.edu/revised-bookworms-lessons/general-information **From** Karen K. Parrino	Funded by The Georgia Department of Education through the Striving Readers initiative, Bookworms is a comprehensive reading program offered free to educators and parents of K-5 students.	As a kindergarten educator, I find the PowerPoint on poems, songs, and texts for phonological play very useful and engaging. In addition, I enjoy using the interactive read-alouds and appreciate the integration of science and social studies content. There is a good mix of fiction and nonfiction texts in each grade band, which increases student interest and understanding of content area material and assists in developing critical writing skills. Bookworms provides a scope and sequence for word study at each grade level. For interested individuals, Bookworms provides additional support at their professional development website comprehensivereadingsolutions.com. This additional support addresses grades K-12.	Bookworms suggests additional supplementary guides for providing differentiated reading instruction, one for lower grades and one for fourth and fifth grades. These additional differentiated instructional guides are available for purchase on Amazon and are linked on the Bookworms site. As an educator, I would highly recommend that anyone using the Bookworms curriculum purchase these resources.	The videos are very helpful. I use the oral segmenting and blending as shown in one of the video segments. The teacher reads a list of the day's words, but the children can't see them. The teacher asks the students to blend the sounds into words and then to segment them into sounds. Also, the segment on teaching letter patterns, which is the second part to the lesson, is also phonological. The teacher does not show the students the words. Instead he/she pronounces them and asks the students to match the words to picture cards with a picture of a sock, a mop, and a dot. The task is to listen to the word, think of the pattern at the end of the word, and then point to a picture with that same sound. This has proven very beneficial for my students, especially those struggling with phonics.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Supporting students below grade level

Resource	How it Works	How I've Used This Tool	Caveats / Concerns	Time I've Seen Success	Scenarios in Use
Vermont Writing Collaborative www. vermontwriting collaborative.org From Lauren E. Trahan	Resources for educators to implement the Writing For Understanding: Using Backward Design to Help All Students Write Effectively model for writing instruction.	I use this resource in my classroom to take students from conceptual knowledge to producing a piece of writing that is clearly focused, well-developed, and insightful.	While applicable for grades K-12, student exemplars are limited to elementary and middle school grade bands. Teachers should also take into account that materials may require adjusting language to fit classroom culture. Lastly, in my experience, strategies seem to reach full potential when students have a basic understanding of grammar, know the process of building out a standard paragraph/essay, and are able to comprehend grade-level texts.	While writing on the topic "Who is ultimately responsible for the tragedy of Macbeth?" I had to first identify what I wanted my students to know and understand about the play. I centered the focusing question around the complex characters and, using this resource, identified the reading strategies and writing skills students would need to demonstrate in order to complete the assignment. I really desired for my students to understand Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and I set about scaffolding meaningful interaction with these characters both in the play, and with historical content knowledge about the culture of Shakespeare's era. We researched vocabulary that would describe the characters and built language lessons around "because, but, so" conjunctions using the descriptions of the complex characters. We looked at similarities in ambitious leaders, uncovered the details of internal and external conflicts, and discussed healthy and unhealthy relationships. This resource has shown me the extent of understanding that my students need in order to produce insightful and coherent writing.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Independent student work • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards • Supporting students below grade level • Peer mentoring and review
Expeditionary Learning www. eleducation.org/ From Angie Gunter	Expeditionary Learning offers free, open educational resources (OER) including:Year-long college- and career-ready standards-aligned ELA curricula for grades 3–8, Models of excellence showcasing high quality P-12 student work, Videos of exemplary classrooms and teaching Professional learning tools for use in PLCs	I have used the ELA modules as examples for curricular design with my pre-service teachers because they (1) are anchored to challenging texts, (2) provide a blend of genres to help students make connections, and (3) present important topics that interest students and foster upper-level thinking. I have also drawn from the modules in my high school classroom, using the design as a template for my own unit planning and adapting student resources for high school students. The modules are well-designed and easily implemented. Student directions and handouts are downloadable, and all lessons are accompanied with detailed instructions for teachers.	Currently only ELA modules for grades 3–8 and Social Studies modules for grades 6 and 9 are available.	I've seen much success in use and adaptation of the curriculum modules provided by EL. My pre-service teachers have reported that using the EL modules as models for curricular design was one of the most practical experiences in their coursework, and some are using the EL modules and their own modules in their classrooms now. In one of the elementary schools in our region, the 5th grade team began using the modules in their reading classes. I saw the students engaging in learning, analyzing, and facilitating discussion among their peers after reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document. I was struck with the pride students exhibited in getting to know "big" words and with their understanding of the complex ideas related to the document. I know some of the texts may seem out of reach for some students, but I have seen many teachers challenge students with complex texts and ideas, and with the support and pacing provided by Expeditionary Learning, I've witnessed those students rising to the challenge.	• Whole group instruction • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards • Supporting students below grade level • Professional Development

Resource	How it Works	How I've Used This Tool	Caveats / Concerns	Time I've Seen Success	Scenarios in Use
NCTM Illuminations www.eleducation.org/ From Trey Ferguson	This website is an easy-to-search, standards-aligned resource with a wealth of ready-to-implement lessons and activities.	I have used NCTM Illuminations as a tool to find activities pertaining to my course (both digital and paper-based). I predominately use the online applets for group explorations and/or demonstrations to introduce or explore a new mathematical concept.	Each activity/resource comes with a lesson plan that includes detailed instructions for implementation. These instructions are not necessary to use the resource, but are useful for those needing additional help. Some of the digital resources are not mobile-friendly (iPhone/iPads).	I always introduce the concept of equality using NCTM's pan balance and balancing shapes activities. These applets are an easy (and mobile-friendly) digital exploration for students to figure out the weights of various shapes, and an excellent lead-in to equation solving or systems of equations.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Independent student work • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards
Mathematics Assessment Project – Formative Assessment for High School and Middle School – Classroom Challenges www.map.mathshell.org/lessons.php From Jana Bryant	Classroom Challenges are free lessons that support teachers in formative assessment. There are 100 lessons in total, 20 at each grade from 6 to 8 and 40 for 'Career and College Readiness' at High School Grades 9 and above. There are two types of lessons: Concept Development and Problem Solving.	Concept Development lessons are recommended for use about two-thirds of the way into a unit of study. This allows teachers and students to evaluate their learning, yet leaves time to work on concepts that students are still struggling with, as well as time to build on the lesson's idea during the rest of the unit. These formative assessment lessons can also be used at the start of a new school year or unit, focused on that concept, to help determine students' level of understanding and identify gaps, allowing a teacher to be more focused in their instruction at the start of the new unit. Problem Solving lessons are recommended for use every month or two throughout the year. They offer teachers the opportunity to develop students' proficiencies in the Standards for Mathematical Practice and math concepts through deepening their understanding of and consolidating concepts, as well as building new connections.	Teachers will want to download A Brief Guide for Teachers and Administrators for more details on how to implement a lesson. The Math Design Collaborative (MDC) Classroom Challenges Video Library is also available. The Kentucky Department of Education website contains field-tested Elementary Formative Assessment Lessons.	Each time I embed one of these formative assessment lessons within my instruction, I am able to learn so much information about my students' math strengths and weaknesses. These lessons allow me to give students more detailed feedback about their work. Enacting these lessons revealed that homogenous pairings can have enormous positive consequences for learning. These lessons are great for student engagement. My students like the hands-on collaborative activities—the card-sorts are their favorite! These lessons help me understand more clearly what instruction and assessment aligned to college- and career-ready standards should look like. They've also helped me facilitate richer mathematical discussions with students by providing sample guiding questions to ask.	• Whole group instruction • Independent student work • Aligned to college and career readiness standards • Supporting students below grade
Illustrative Mathematics www.illustrativemathematics.org From Amy Holbrook	This resource has become my "go-to" when looking for rich student math tasks to assess student understanding, including their knowledge of the Standards for Mathematical Practice. Illustrative Mathematics is a website that offers a variety of instructional math resources intended to use for the classroom to help deepen student and teacher understandings of the mathematics required by the standards.	When I am looking for information about what students should know, how students should be thinking about math-specific content or how to assess recently taught content, I turn to the Illustrative Mathematics student tasks. The tasks can be found under content standards and by selecting the grade level. Each task has a student view, a commentary from subject-matter experts, and the task's solution. I use the commentary and solution as a starting point for thinking about how students will approach the task. I will do "the math" prior to implementation, outline what I am looking for in the student work during implementation, and analyze the student work after the implementation.	The website still has a lot of "coming soon" features. Additionally, accessing and understanding the details of the teacher professional learning takes a little more work.	Prior to beginning a new unit on decimals, a 5th grade teacher and I wanted to understand students' prior knowledge of place value of whole numbers. Using Student Achievement Partners' Coherence Map, we connected a 4th grade standard to the upcoming unit and used that information to look for a 4th grade task on Illustrative Mathematics. We selected a task to use formatively. Prior to implementing the task, we spent time together planning the implementation using the 5 Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussions. This was the first time this teacher had used an Illustrative Mathematics task in her classroom. We had a fantastic day of learning—both teachers and students.	• Whole group instruction • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards • Supporting students below grade level • Professional Development

Resource	How it Works	How I've Used This Tool	Caveats / Concerns	Time I've Seen Success	Scenarios in Use
PBS Learning Media www.pbslearning media.org/ **From** Angie Gunter	PBS LearningMedia™ provides access to more than 100,000 videos, images, lesson plans, and articles organized by grade level, content, and standards.	In my junior and senior English classes, I utilized PBS LearningMedia's Video Production: Behind the Scenes with the Pros. My students were assigned extended research projects in which they would choose a local business or person they thought was worthy of memorializing and create a short video that would include their own research and interviews of those connected to their subjects. PBS provides accessible tutorials on the pre-production of videos, interview techniques, audio suggestions, and editing instructions.	There is a paid version called PBS LearningMedia Custom that offers state-specific connection to standards, reporting analytics and tools, content management system features, and an enhanced content library.	Although I used the site to offer students access to documentaries as well as resources to analyze them, for my classes the most beneficial aspects of the site were the resources regarding video production, particularly the clips with interview advice. The short, easily accessible videos offer important strategies for students to consider as they are preparing to interview people. Practical procedures such as asking open-ended questions, coming to the interview prepared to listen and potentially veer off in other directions, and allowing the conversation to happen organically rather than simply reading off a list of pre-prepared questions were all very helpful strategies for my students. These speaking and listening techniques sometimes take a back seat to the reading and writing demands of an ELA course, but these skills are ones students recognize they'll need to use on a daily basis in various aspects of their lives, and therefore are important ones to master. Since the clips are divided into specific skills, it was easy for me to differentiate, and assign particular sections of the site to groups that needed those instructions. Since the instructional videos are posted online, students could watch and rewatch them as many times as they needed to.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Independent student work • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards
Colorin Colorado www.colorin colorado.org/ **From** Karen K. Parrino	¡Colorín Colorado! is a great resource for supporting and serving educators and parents of bilingual students.	As a kindergarten teacher, I have explored the section that focuses on the early education of young English language learners (ELLs). Resources include a webcast, classroom strategies, parent tips, research and policy recommendations, and recommended books and websites. Additional resources are provided for elementary, middle, and high school ELL students. The videos on the site are very helpful. Examples of topics include answering guiding questions with middle school ELL students, making connections, instruction of key academic vocabulary with high school ELL students, and ELL parent engagement in middle school.	Educators should be aware that policies can differ state to state and educators can choose their state from a map to refer to their state's specific policies.	I used the literacy calendar that provides opportunities to celebrate different cultures, events, and holidays with books. Making connections with ELL families in my classroom and within my larger school community has enhanced my ability to create a welcoming and respectful classroom and school environment. The site contains links to statewide agencies, resources, and organizations focused on English language learners (ELLs). A great addition to this site is the link to help English language learners successfully meet the Common Core State Standards. The resource section offers ideas and materials including classroom videos, teacher interviews, and bilingual parent tips. You can get more great information and ideas on the site's Common Core and ELLs blog.	• Whole group instruction • Supporting students below grade level • Supporting English language learners
EdReports www.edreports.org **From** Loryn Lenartowicz	The website provides independent, evidence-based reviews on the standards alignment and quality of many popular textbooks and series.	This resource helps me understand what chapters and lessons of my adopted textbook are not aligned to college- and career-ready standards. This helps me make instructional decisions about which resources to use in my classroom.	The website does not provide chapter-by-chapter commentary, rather it provides a big picture view of standards alignment and quality of each instructional material reviewed.	I have used the grade level-specific review of one of the textbooks to work with teachers to both more deeply understand our state's standards and to illustrate that just because a topic is included in a textbook does not necessarily mean it should be taught. In one particular case, my grade-level team decided that a few lessons from a chapter should not be taught because, like the review stated, the content of those lessons did not match the standards for our particular grade level. As such, both our assessment and our scope and sequence changed to reflect this.	• Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards • Professional Development

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Actively Learn www. activelylearn. com From Dr. Bryan R. Drost	Actively Learn is an online tool that includes texts and standards-based lessons allowing students and teachers to interact synchronously or asynchronously. Teachers can create their own content or assign pre-existing content to students and then track students' responses as aligned to educational standards. As students are reading, they can interact with a text through writing annotations, highlighting, responding to text-dependent questions, as well as leaving comments and feedback for other students in group assignments.	This product works like an e-reader for any text or media, but allows teachers to embed questions or notes aligned to standards to ensure maximum comprehension in the processing of a complex text. This allows the teacher to monitor and determine next steps for each reader. It also includes collaborative notes and comments that allow students to interact with each other as they are interpreting a complex text.	There are limited items for lower Lexile levels. The system can embed into Google Classroom. It also has a text-to-speech feature that should be monitored by the teacher for student usage. The tool is basically free, but a paid subscription unlocks more features that are helpful when working with multiple classes and/or students.	I have used this resource with teams of teachers in a variety of ways: for whole group instruction, independent reading, and research projects. First, find a complex text and/or multimedia that has been vetted against the three criteria for high quality texts (quantitative metrics, qualitative metrics, and professional judgment). Then, embed text-dependent questions that require students to grapple with a complex text. Tag each question per the standards that they are designed to measure. You can assign all students the same text, or differentiate the content to support students at various levels, keeping in mind that it is crucial that students are working with grade-level work. You can also search in the database for preexisting activities and questions, or embed an AchievetheCore.org resource into the system. After, use the scoring and reporting tool to help analyze the data and provide feedback to students.	• Whole group instruction • Small group instruction • Independent student work • Instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards