What does the LRA leadership recommend for effective literacy instruction for adolescents?

- Take into account students' interests and needs, while at the same time attend to the challenges of living in an information-based economy. (5)

- Provide adolescents who are experiencing reading difficulties with clear goals and feedback that lead to increased self-efficacy and achievement. (6)

- Create environments rich in technology and multimedia that heighten students' motivation to become independent readers and writers as a means of increasing their sense of competency. (6)

- Increase student engagement through student motivation, strategy use, growth in conceptual knowledge, and social interaction. (7)

- Integrate reading and writing as often as possible because each process reinforces the other and can lead to improved comprehension and retention of subject area content. (11)

- Encourage student-generated visual, oral, and written texts to provide adolescents with opportunities to weave their own experiences, feelings, and interests into various learning activities. (11)

- Teach students to comprehend and think critically about different kinds of print and nonprint texts, including those that are student generated, visual, oral, or digital in nature. (11)

EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR ADOLESCENTS
A Summary

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What is LRA?
The Literacy Research Association (LRA) is a professional organization for individuals who share an interest in research and the dissemination of information about literacy and literacy instruction. LRA was formerly known as the National Reading Conference (NRC) (www.nrconline.org)

What is adolescent literacy?
The term *adolescent literacy*, broader in scope than secondary reading, is also more inclusive of what young people count as texts (e.g., textbooks, digital texts, hypertexts). Many adolescents of the current generation find their own reasons for becoming literate – reasons that go beyond reading to acquire information involving academic texts. This is not to say that academic literacy is unimportant; rather, it is to emphasize the need to address the implications of young people's multiple literacies for classroom instruction. (2, 4-5)

Why is the LRA Leadership concerned about adolescent literacy?
Despite the work of conscientious teachers, reading supervisors, curriculum coordinators, and principals in middle schools and high schools across the country, young people's literacy skills are not keeping pace with societal demands for living at a time in which information changes rapidly and shows no sign of slowing. (3-4)

What does the LRA leadership believe about adolescent literacy?

- Adolescents' perceptions of how competent they are as readers and writers, generally speaking, will affect how motivated they are to learn in their subject area classes. Thus, if academic literacy instruction is to be effective, it must address issues of self-efficacy and engagement. (6-8)

- Adolescents respond to the literacy demands of their subject area classes when they have appropriate background knowledge and strategies for reading a variety of texts. Effective instruction develops students' abilities to comprehend, discuss, study, and write about multiple forms of text (print, visual, and oral) by taking into account what they are capable of doing as everyday users of language and literacy. (8-11)

- Adolescents who struggle to read in subject area classrooms deserve instruction that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive to their needs. To be effective, such instruction must be embedded in the regular curriculum and address differences in their abilities to read, write, and communicate orally as strengths, not as deficits. (12-16)

- Adolescents' interests in the internet, hypermedia, and various interactive communication technologies suggest the need to teach youth to read with a critical eye toward how writers, illustrators, and the like represent people and their ideas – in short, how individuals who create texts make those texts work. At the same time, it suggests teaching adolescents that all texts, including their textbooks, often promote or silence particular views. (16-20)

- Adolescents' evolving expertise in navigating routine school literacy tasks suggests the need to involve them in higher level thinking about what they read and write than is currently possible within a transmission model of instruction with its emphasis on skill and drill, teacher-centered instruction, and passive learning. Effective alternatives to this model include participatory approaches that actively engage students in their own learning and that treat texts as tools for learning rather than as repositories of information to be memorized, and then all too quickly forgotten. (20-24)