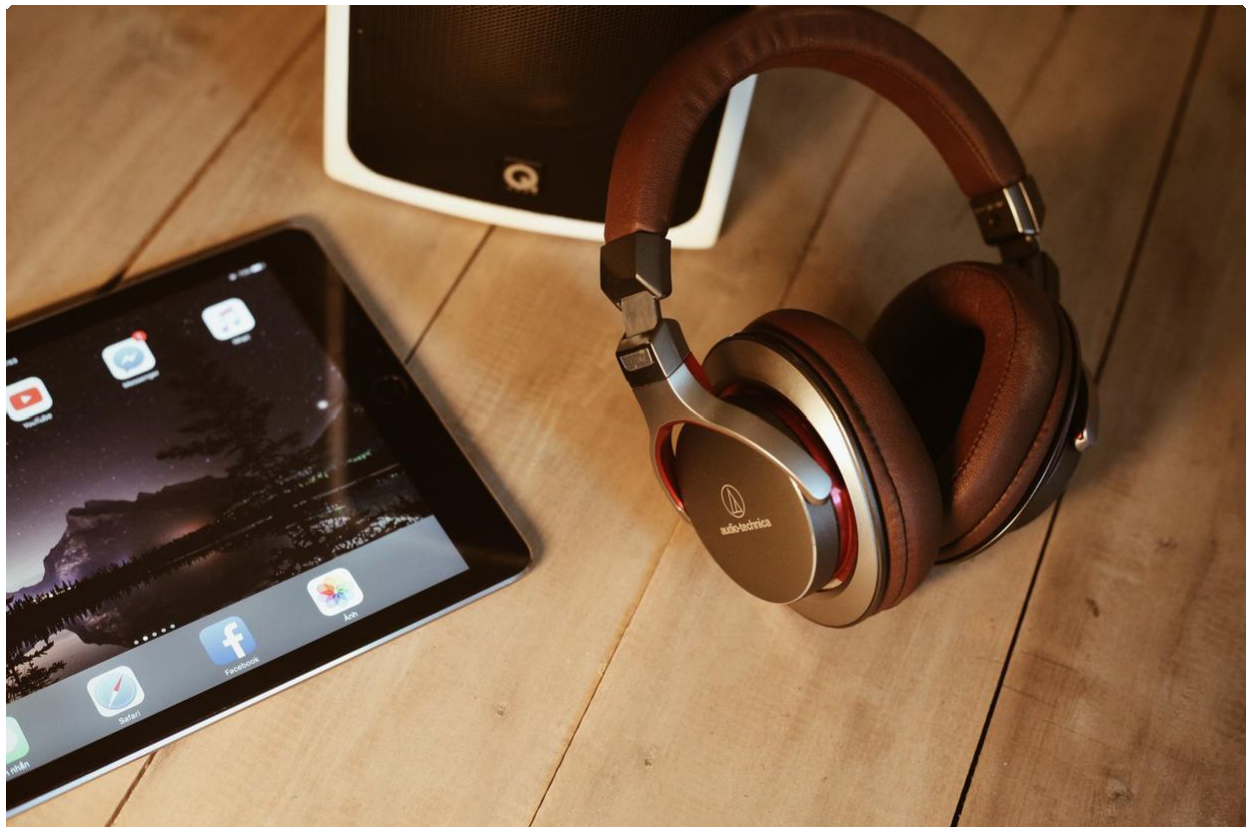# *Integrated Digital Literacy*

Supporting the Older Struggling Reader through Technology

Summary:

Reading interventions that provide students opportunities to acquire the skills they are missing and advance important meaning-making strategies, are necessary to break the cycle of failure many students have experienced. Digital instruction can be leveraged to aid the older struggling reader. Integrated Digital Literacy can be used in four ways to ameliorate the situation: 1) **Develop Critical Language Skills, 2) Increase Interest and Motivation, 3) Transform Understanding ,and 4) Embed Supports to Customize Text.** Below is a list of tools that may be useful in integrating digital literacy in each of these areas.

Skill Instruction: Technology Tools

[Lexia PowerUp](): PowerUp helps educators simultaneously address gaps in fundamental literacy skills while helping students build the higher-order skills they need to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and compare increasingly complex literary and informational texts. Blending online student-driven explicit instruction with offline teacher-delivered lessons and activities, PowerUp empowers secondary teachers—regardless of their background or expertise in reading—to deliver the exact instruction each student needs to become a proficient reader.

[Reading Horizons Elevate]() - The *Reading Horizons Elevate*® Direct instruction materials empower teachers to provide straightforward multisensory reading intervention that helps students build new brain connections and dissect tricky words.Help students transfer foundational reading skills to connected text while learning about a wide range of high-interest topics. The *Reading Horizons Elevate*® Reading Library Books provide 330 content-rich nonfiction passages for every reading level (1-12).

[Reading Plus]() - Built on decades of research, Reading Plus assesses efficiency and comprehension. It also measures and increases student motivation. The program allows students to practice at their own pace and uses adaptive technology in a truly meaningful way.
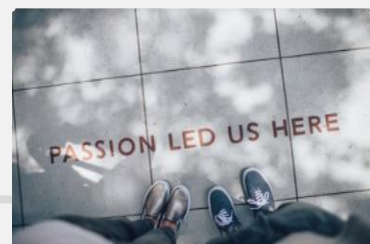
[System 44]() - By focusing on three key components, *System 44* delivers just-in-time intensive intervention and a supportive learning environment that the most challenged readers urgently need.**Adaptive instruction offers a personalized path to building foundational skills. Scaffolded instruction helps students meet rigorous standards.**

[Read 180]() - Developed using the latest cognitive neuroscience, *READ 180* changes the brains of struggling readers by helping different parts work together more effectively.By tapping into brain science and growth mindset, a more personalized instructional approach accelerates achievement.New engaging content promotes student choice and helps readers make deeper connections that extend well beyond the classroom.

[Read Naturally - This web-based intervention efficiently applies the research-based Read Naturally Strategy to accelerate reading achievement. Visual and auditory prompts guide students through]() the motivating steps to develop fluency and phonics skills, support comprehension, and improve vocabulary. Track student progress easily and use the data to differentiate instruction with **Read Naturally Live**

[Achieve 3000]() - Achieve3000 Literacy was designed for early screening, identifying skill gaps, targeting instruction, and regular progress monitoring. Help struggling students by using our differentiated content, learning scaffolds, and proven literacy routine. With these tools, struggling students can accelerate Lexile gains toward meeting grade-level college and career readiness expectations.

[Fluency Tutor](): - Pick any content, any time. Teachers can select any web page or browse a library of over 500 pre-selected reading passages based on content, lexile level or reading age. Students can rehearse and record their reading in a relaxed environment at school or at home, with extra help provided by a dictionary, picture dictionary and translation tools. Teachers can listen to students' recordings wherever and whenever it's convenient, giving quick feedback or a more in-depth assessment of reading progress.

Interest and Motivation: Technology Tools

Here are two local bloggers that provide book bites on young adult literature: Mrs. Melanie Roy Recommends and Young Adult on the Shelf.

One way to spark enthusiasm for reading is through "teaser" videos. The Book Trailers for Readers website offers a collection of teacher and student-created "commercials" for highly-recommended books. Students can make their own recordings using tech tools such as Animoto, Adobe Spark and iMovie.

Creating a community around books can also boost student interest. The "Global Read Aloud" projects of Middle School and Young Adults connect classrooms around the world that are reading the same book to share digital responses. Another exciting method is video conferencing using Google Hangouts and Skype an Author Network.

In 2016, Gina Cervetti, Tanya Wright, and Hye Jin Hwang proved that if children read multiple texts around a topic, it accelerates vocabulary growth. Classes using this approach of reading deeply (instead of just widely) consistently outscore similar classes on standardized tests of comprehension. So students need opportunities to increase their overall volume of reading on topics that interest them. Some websites that provide access to varied and topical texts include:

General interest:
- The teacher download center for Word Generation has a library of debate-worthy texts that will engage learners with student-relevant issues: http://wordgen.serpmedia.org/t_weekly2016.html
- Tween Tribune is a repository of articles on a wide range of subjects for tweens and teens: http://tweentribune.com/category/tween78/
- DOGO News provides a searchable library of current event texts, across varied subjects: http://www.dogonews.com/

History/Social Studies:
- Read about people from America's past at the Library of Congress site Meet Amazing Americans: http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/all.php

Science:
- Find short, interesting science themed readings at Science News for Students: https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/

Sports:
- Sports Illustrated for Kids offers current-events articles related to sports: http://www.sikids.com/

Young Adult:
- Each year, the Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc., publishes a downloadable anthology of nonfiction texts, created by young adults for young adults, focusing on where they have found courage in the face of challenges: http://maxcourage.org/curricula-programs#annual-essay-anthologies
- Story Shares has created a library of short chapter books that are both compelling and approachable for struggling teen and young adult readers. http://www.storyshares.org/books

Free public domain audiobook sites:
- **Librivox** - Free - This site offers free text to speech audio books for public domain literature.
- Volunteers record chapters of books and release the audio files back onto the internet.
- **Project Gutenberg** - Free - This site offers free text to speech audio books for public domain literature. Volunteers record chapters of books and release the audio files back onto the internet.

Audiobooks - membership sites:

This option is available for individuals with dyslexia that can get a qualified certifying professional to fill out a form from the membership site.

Bookshare - Free - This site offers free text to speech audio books for diagnosed individuals with dyslexia. The books are simply scanned. Then, free or purchasable apps use computerized voices to read the text aloud.
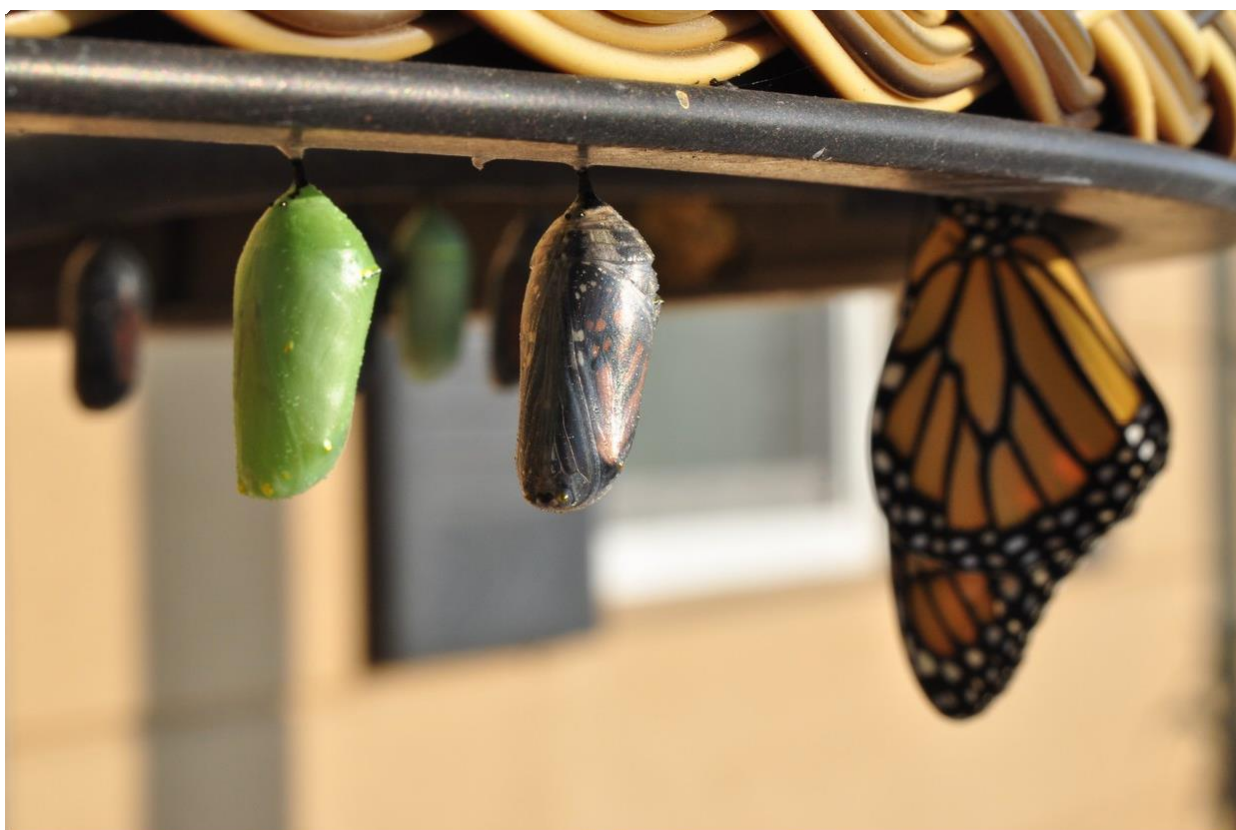
[Learning Ally](#) - $ - This affordable option offers text to speech audio books for diagnosed individuals with dyslexia. Volunteers read the books aloud.
[Kindle](#) - The Kindle app has many interactive features like bookmarks, text highlights, making notes and it also lets you synchronize your eBook to another device. But, Kindle allows you to download or purchase eBooks only from the Amazon library.

Purchasable audiobooks:
[Audible.com](#) - This Amazon company provides audiobooks. It also provides magazines, radio shows, podcasts, stand-up comedy, and speeches.
[Raz-Kids](#) - This website provides comprehensive reading resources for students, with hundreds of eBooks offered at 27 different levels of difficulty. Kids access leveled text and read at their own pace.

Transform Understanding: Technology Tools

Effective communication requires secondary students to be able to communicate, collaborate, create and think critically (the 4 Cs) through multimodal texts in diverse forms. It is important for all learners to learn composition, not just writing, and to learn the optimal medium for any particular task, purpose and audience.

Some examples include:

- Use social media and interactive web tools (e.g., discussion forums, chats, web design, annotation tools, storyboards, comic strips, animation presentations)
- Compose in multiple media such as text, speech, drawing, illustration, comics, storyboards, design, film, music, dance/movement, visual art, sculpture, or video
- Use story webs, outlining tools, or concept mapping tools
- Use text-to-speech software (voice recognition), human dictation, recording

There are limitless digital options to assist students in engaging in the 4Cs. Here are a few suggestions:

Collaboration: Tools that help us work together
[Scrible](#): Students use this chrome extension to curate, annotate, tag and share articles.

[Padlet](#): A digital canvas that allows users to add all sorts of items as they work together on a project.
[Trello](#): A project management tool that helps keep teams organized as they work. Teachers can create board templates for students. They make a copy of the board, add collaborators and move things around/upload documents, etc. as they complete items.

💬 Communication: Tools that help us share what we've done

[Blogger](#): Part of Google Apps suite, it is a powerful tool to elevate student voice. Students can write a post, reflect on their learning, etc..
[Flipgrid](#): Easily and quickly create topics for students to discuss ideas. These quick videos provide insight into student thinking.
[Seesaw](#): Allows students to capture, organize and share their learning. Like a digital portfolio, a way to share classroom activities with parents, too.
[Jilster](#): Allows students to create online magazines collaboratively.

🎨 Creativity: Tools that help us develop products to explore the content
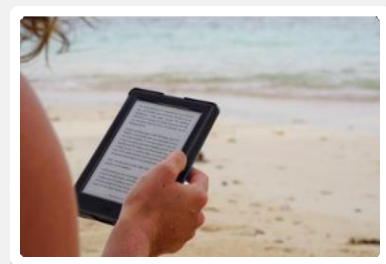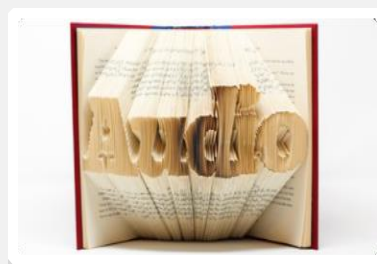
[WeVideo](#): Online video editing software.
[Canva](#): Easily and quickly create visually stunning flyers, posters, collages, infographics and more.
[MakeBeliefsComix](#): Create comics that can be printed or e-mailed.
💡 Critical Thinking: Tools that help us go beyond the content.
[Coggle](#): Collaborative mind mapping Chrome extension that integrates with Google Drive. Students brainstorm ideas and develop maps to show how the content they are learning integrates with previously understood ideas.
[KQED Learn](#): Students work in a semi-gated environment (all students must be attached to a teacher but can communicate with each other), responding to prompts and investigations.

Customization of Text: Tech Tools

There are different ways for students to engage and interact using technology, offering more opportunities to overcome reading challenges. Readers may listen to an audio version of a book and follow along with printed text, also called Audio-supported reading (ASR) or text-to-speech (TTS). Digital text on a computer, tablet, or smartphone can be spoken aloud. A challenging word on a page of a website or ebook may be selected and pronounced. Settings are adjustable to ensure that the speed of the spoken text and voice type are comfortable for the child.

The ability to adjust the way text is presented on the screen can make a huge difference for a struggling reader. It's simple to change the font size and style to find something more readable. Research from Rello and Baeza-Yates concluded that students with dyslexia might benefit from [switching to Helvetica, Courier, Arial, Verdana and CMU fonts. They may also want to try the Open](#) [Dyslexic typeface. These researchers also discovered warm background colors such as peach, ora](#)nge or yellow are beneficial for readability. Also, cool background colors, in particular blue grey, blue, and green, decreased the text read ability. For all fonts, 12pt to 14 pt is considered most comfortable.

Resources for Text-to-Speech (TTS)

Text-to-speech (TTS) can open a wide range of challenging texts to readers, and can motivate students to read and learn more. These resources can be used with Mac or PC computers. See your school Computer Technology specialist for help in getting these, or other, TTS tools working for your students.

- MAC- Directions to access TTS directly from the system http://support.apple.com/kb/PH14230
  PC – Directions to download Natural Reader which will read text on the PC – http://www.naturalreaders.com/

Read & Write by TextHelp. Read&Write literacy software makes the web, documents and files more accessible on any platform or device.

Immersive Readers

[Immersive Reader](#) is a multi-purpose customization tool offered through Microsoft OneNote. It lets you: A)Change font size, text spacing, and background colour. B)Split up words into syllables. C)Highlight verbs, nouns, adjectives and sub-clauses. D)Choose between two fonts optimised to help with reading. E)Read out text aloud, and change the speed of reading.

[Kindle Immersion Reader](#) takes you deeper into a story than ever before! This functionality allows you to read a Kindle eBook and listen to its professionally narrated Audible companion Audiobook – all at the same time. Not only that, but you get the benefit of real-time highlighting, making Immersion Reading a valuable tool to boost reading comprehension and overall retention of content.

E-Pens

Pen scanners can be a great help to students who are required to read volumes of text and take copious notes. The scanner pen can scan, store and transfer selected passages as well as hand-[written script](#), numbers, and even small images. Some to consider:

[C-Pen Reader](#)
[Scanmarker Air](#)
[Ectaco C-Pen](#)
[PenPower WorldPenScan](#)

Text Simplification

Students with dyslexia may benefit from content simplification. Generally text simplification tools substitute longer more complex terms with more frequently-used and shorter words. Using more frequent words caused research participants with dyslexia to read significantly faster, while the use of shorter words caused them to understand the text better. These results indicate that struggling readers may benefit from interactive tools that perform lexical simplification.

There are several ways you can modify texts, or find modified texts, to make them accessible to all students.

[NEWSELA](#) Easy to set up accounts and classes using Google, Microsoft, or Clever. Nonfiction articles are available and assignable on multiple reading levels. There are even Spanish language versions of articles.

[READWORKS](#) Includes fiction and poetry as well as nonfiction, text-to-speech for articles and activities. Easy to create classes, assign and track student progress on assignments.

TWEEN TRIBUNE Engaging nonfiction news articles and graphics, all with a range of reading levels. Includes lesson plans that can be adapted for different grade levels.

Sometimes, though, you don't have the luxury of choosing your own texts for use in the classroom. Or, you may have a specific text you want to use written at a level not yet accessible to some students. In that scenario, these resources can be helpful:

REWORDIFY (rewordify.com) This website lets you copy and paste existing text (or key it in if there's no copy option), highlighting difficult words and substituting simpler alternatives. Ease of use; identifies challenging vocabulary and suggests simpler word/phrase substitutions; automatically generates word lists and vocabulary-building activities.

SIMPLISH (simplish.org). Like Rewordify, this site allows users to input text by typing, copying and pasting, or by providing a URL. With a click of the button of your choice, the text is then simplified or summarized.

TEXT COMPACTOR (https://www.textcompactor.com/**).** Using a simple formula that measures how many times a key word is used in each sentence, this website condenses text into a tight summary. It doesn't actually substitute words, but it does analyze the passage, eliminating what it perceives as unimportant details to focus readers on the main messages. It's a time-saver for summarizing news articles (where writing tends to be more formulaic), but doesn't work well with narrative texts.

Many apps and websites provide alternatives for students to experience text. A great example of this is the site **My Shakespeare**. This site offers interactive text versions of plays accompanied by media such as interviews with characters, performances and pop-up notes that appeal to a 21st century learner. Digital products like this give students additional channels to understand, experience, and enjoy difficult text.

Online Dictionary Resources
Just in time supports, such as a click-for-definition online dictionary, can keep students in the flow of reading while supporting increased comprehension and engagement. While there are many online dictionaries, two we like for their student-friendly definitions are listed here:

Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English https://www.ldoceonline.com/
Collins CO-Build Dictionary https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english

Translation engines
Did you know that struggling readers who speak other languages make linguistic connections and build better understanding when they see words or passages in familiar languages? And did you know that Google has a free tool your students can use to translate any text? Make this tool known and available to students to help them build understanding and engagement with texts.

Google Translate: https://translate.google.com/

Microsoft Specific Tools

Microsoft Edge Browser
- Click book icon in browser and then right click to have text read aloud

Microsoft Lens App
- iPhone, Newer Android, iPads
- Open app, snap picture of text, click open in immersive reader (customize font size, speed, voice, and background color)

Microsoft Word/Microsoft OneNote Immersive Reader

* Students can have assignments read aloud using immersive reader under the View Tab

[Microsoft Word-Dictate](#)
* [Dictating letters, numbers, and symbols](#)
* Microsoft [OneNote](#) has dictate and audio message

[Microsoft Word-Dictate](#)

[Microsoft OneNote Audio Recording tool](#)

Low Tech-pencil grips, grid paper, and cursive writing

[Microsoft Planner](#) (Syncs with Outlook Calendar. Free app for phones)

Español [Microsoft Translator](#)

[Microsoft Translator](#)

Google Chrome Specific Tools

[Google Read & Write (typically costs money for license for student, changes made because of Covid-19)](#)
* Typically, a student will already have this license as part of their IEP or 504 plan

[Google Read Aloud Extension (Free)](#)
* Select Extension, highlight text and click read aloud

[Google Docs Voice Typing](#) (Tools Tab)
* [Voice Typing in Google Slides](#)

[Google Docs Voice Typing](#) (Tools Tab)

[Google Keep](#) (Syncs with a students Google Calendar. Free app for phone and iPads)

[Google Translator](#)

[Microsoft Translator](#)