

# Solution Tree | Press

## **From Tired to Inspired: Fresh Strategies to Engage Students in Literacy**

*By Mary Kim Schreck*

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### **Study Guide**

This study guide is a companion to the book *From Tired to Inspired: Fresh Strategies to Engage Students in Literacy* by Mary Kim Schreck. *From Tired to Inspired* provides educators with highly creative, research-based tips and detailed strategies to improve literacy in upper elementary and secondary school classrooms and make better, independent thinkers of our students.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on specific topics. It can be used by teacher-preparation institutions, teachers, and preteachers who want to develop authentic literacy in their students—that is, the ability to comprehend and successfully master complex assignments in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as encouraged by the Common Core State Standards.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Close Reading and Close Writing**

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1. How can you encourage students to use their latent thinking processes?
2. How does wordplay promote close reading? How can you incorporate wordplay into your current lesson plans?
3. How can you use or adapt the “We Say. . . They Say. . .” feature box on page 10 in subjects other than language arts?
4. How can you use your own junk mail and promotional ads in a fine-print station?
5. Why do many students struggle with reading older forms of English prose? How can you help them overcome this challenge?

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Core of Literacy**

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1. What does the author mean when she says storytelling is now more virtual than carbon based? What technology tools do you use in your school or classroom to promote storytelling?
2. How can you teach empathy in CCSS lessons and encourage students to approach various subject areas through the perspective of their creators?
3. How can the storyboard be used as a thinking tool?
4. Why can't students' intelligence be gauged by a single test on a unit or lesson studied?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Reteaching Strategies**

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1. According to the author, “it is necessary to shift away from the traditional view that reteaching is needed primarily for those students who don’t fully understand or have failed to learn” (p. 43). When and why should educators reteach material?
2. Why should teachers prepare eight different ways to teach skills or concepts?
3. What must be done to ensure that a lesson can be taught to nearly any student?
4. How can you use an X-ray chart, like the one shown in figure 3.1, to support your reteaching strategies?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Cognitive Conversations**

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1. Why is it advantageous to shift the opportunity and responsibility to pose questions to the student?
2. What is the best method for an objective check on the range and quality of your questioning habits?
3. How can you use first assignments and beginning-of-the-year decisions to engage students?
4. What is the easiest way for students to actively engage with each other?
5. What exercises does the author recommend to help students distinguish between debates and discussions?
6. What is active learning? What role does it play in sustained learning?

## **Chapter 5**

### **Using Novelty for Reluctant Learners**

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1. Who are reluctant learners? How can you distinguish between reluctant and slow learners?
2. How can Halloween be used to teach relevance?
3. What can you do to sustain reluctant readers during large textual commitments of class time?
4. Why does the inclusion of song lyrics in instruction enhance learning?
5. What is the purpose of scaffolding students' reading and writing experiences?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Creative and Critical Thinking**

#### **Approaches to Literacy**

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1. How can educators effectively incorporate brainstorming into their instructional practices?
2. What are the characteristics of a good critical thinker?
3. Why should schools' instructional programs strengthen both creative and critical thinking skills?
4. How does neuroscience support the value divergent thinking?
5. How can educators guide students to become producers of knowledge?

**Chapter 7**  
**Outrageous Teaching**

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1. What are the elements of outrageous teaching?
2. What causes boredom in schools, and how can educators keep students engaged?
3. How can you use or adapt the four scenarios of Outrageous Teaching to use in your classrooms and lesson plans?
4. According to the author, when is it appropriate to use the emphasis of the Common Core State Standards' on cold first readings, with no introduction of prior knowledge?



## **Chapter 8**

### **Mixing Complexity and Integration**

#### **Into Planning**

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1. What are the characteristics of good formative assessment?
2. How can educators help students feel they have control over their learning?
3. How can you use or adapt fig. 8.1 (page 123) to teach multipurpose content using *The House on Mango Street*?
4. What are spiral learning opportunities? How do they benefit students?
5. What are project-based writing units? When should they be used?

## Chapter 9

### Standards and Assessments Fostering Literacy Growth

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1. What is the difference between academic *standards* and *assessments*? How are the CCSS different from previous educational standards?
2. What factors contribute to assessments moving from being measures that enable teachers to adjust and improve teaching and to being goals in themselves?
3. What role does peer review play in persuasive writing activities?
4. How can educators make quality standards transparent to students in all phases of literacy development?
5. What is the author’s “gold standard for offering feedback”? How can you incorporate it into your own student-feedback practices?