



Literacy Strategies for Improving Mathematics Instruction

By Joan M Kenney, Euthecia Hancewicz, Loretta Heuer

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What makes mathematics so confusing to students? To succeed in the study of arithmetic, geometry, or algebra, students must learn what is effectively a second language of mathematical terms and symbols. In *Literacy Strategies for Improving Mathematics Instruction*, Joan M. Kenney and her coauthors describe common ways in which students misinterpret the language of mathematics, and show teachers what they can do to ensure that their students become fluent in that language.

The authors synthesize the research on what it takes to decode mathematical text, explain how teachers can use guided discourse and graphic representation to help students develop mathematical literacy skills, offer guidance on using action research to enhance mathematics instruction, and discuss the importance of student-centered learning and concept-building skills in the classroom. Real-life vignettes of student struggles illuminate the profound effect of literacy problems on student achievement in mathematics.

This book will help teachers better understand their students' difficulties with mathematics and take the steps necessary to alleviate them. Abundantly researched and filled with helpful strategies and resources, it is an invaluable resource for mathematics teachers at all levels.

Joan M. Kenney has been both a research scientist and a mathematics teacher at the secondary and college levels. Most recently, she served as codirector of the Balanced Assessment Program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Joan M. Kenney's professional career has encompassed a wide variety of experiences in the field of mathematics. She has worked as a research scientist, specializing in operations analysis and risk management; taught mathematics at the secondary and college level; and performed task modeling and pedagogical intervention in elementary and middle school classrooms. Joan served as the national evaluator for the NSF-sponsored "Assessment Community of Teachers" and "Connecting with Mathematics" projects, the "Instructional Leadership Academy" sponsored by the Council for Basic Education, and the "Digi-Block" program. She has delivered keynote addresses at several national and international conferences, and has written extensively about mathematics education reform and assessment. Joan recently retired from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where for 10 years she was the Project Coordinator and Co-director of the "Balanced Assessment" Program. During that time she was involved in assessment task design, student performance evaluation, and outreach to community stakeholders; she also served on the Mathematics Task Force of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, and on the original design committee for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). She continues to consult with school districts on issues of mathematics curriculum and classroom practice, and to provide professional development for teachers and administrators in the areas of mathematics content and assessment. Her book, "Literacy Strategies for Improving Mathematics Instruction", was recently published by ASCD. Joan may be contacted by e-mail at Joan_Kenney@post.harvard.edu.

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