

Introduction Language-Based Teaching Series

As educators, we are deeply invested in helping young people reach their potential. The curricula we design and the instruction we deliver are informed by our goal of fostering students' development into individuals who are intellectually engaged in the world of ideas, active in their communities, morally and spiritually aware, and physically healthy. We coach our students to become independent thinkers and creative problem-solvers and decision-makers who communicate effectively and act with responsible purpose. Often, though, our lofty goals are obscured by the daily grind of lesson planning, grading, advising, coaching, and the myriad other responsibilities teachers commonly shoulder.

Landmark Outreach's *Language-Based Teaching Series* is about empowering students to reach their academic potential. Young people arrive in our classrooms with biological makeups and life experiences that influence both what and how they learn. Some students have learning disabilities; some do not. All students have potential, and all students need our help to reach it.

As it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a school to train a scholar. We all—faculty, staff, and administrators—are responsible for facilitating each student's educational rearing. Sometimes, in our urgency to ready students for the competitive adult world, we forget that we are teaching young people who need models, explicit instruction, and guided practice in order to gain independence. As one school's principal commented, "Too frequently, we lose sight of the student for the assignment."



Some students come to us with a full complement of academic skills and enthusiasm for schoolwork. We praise the quality of their independent work, and in our own minds hold them up as the standard by which we judge other students. Many students fall short, and we wonder why. Our wondering leads us to all sorts of assumptions.

The *Language-Based Teaching Series* offers information and practical resources to help teachers and administrators understand and support the students who fall short of expectations. From a synthesis of research on learning to insights gained in the classroom, the series aims to support educators' efforts to help all students learn effectively. Each book focuses on one topic, organizes chapters around *what to know* and *what to do*, and provides strategies, checklists, questionnaires, and other tools that can be reproduced as-is or accessed online and customized. These materials are intended to spark ideas and help with understanding students' thinking, scaffolding learning, and implementing skills-based instruction.

Of course, there are no quick fixes for students with learning difficulties, and no single book or program can address all learners' needs. This series aims to get teachers thinking broadly about students' strengths and vulnerabilities, how they learn, and what helps them gain essential skills.

Landmark Outreach encourages readers of our publications to contact us with questions, comments, and ideas. Each of our books has a dedicated feedback page on our website. Please consider posting your thoughts about what you've read! To learn when new books in the series are released, visit landmarkoutreach.org and join the Landmark Outreach mailing list.