



Paul DiGeorgio, PhD
AP Lang teacher

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

How an AP® Lang Teacher Raised Reading Skills and Scores with UWorld

THE CHALLENGE:

Reading Comprehension

At Bishop Kenny High School in Jacksonville, Florida, AP English Language and Composition has consistently seen exam pass rates at 90% or above for several years, and students have high expectations for themselves. But beneath the strong numbers, Dr. Paul DiGeorgio, now in his 4th year teaching AP Lang, saw a persistent gap: Many of these high achievers still struggled to engage deeply with complex reading passages.

“They’ve been in the system a long time, but no one really teaches them how to read better,” he explained. “And these are students who think getting a ‘B’ is unacceptable.” The issue wasn’t effort or intelligence. It was the lack of structured practice, metacognitive strategies, and exposure to the variety and rigor required by the updated Course and Exam Description (CED).

When he took over the course in the 2022–23 school year, UWorld’s Courses for AP had already been implemented, but not intentionally; low-yield topics were still being prioritized, and the CED alignment wasn’t where it needed to be. Dr. DiGeorgio knew the class needed a reset and recalibration grounded in better practice and the consistent use of higher-quality materials.

His goal was straightforward: Build stronger readers through daily exposure to rigorous texts and teach students how to think about their own thinking. To do that effectively, he needed a tool that offered accuracy, variety, and repetition — the kind that would challenge high-performing students and prepare them for the unpredictable nature of AP exam passages. UWorld became the platform that made this approach possible.

THE SOLUTION:

Metacognition, Deliberate Practice, and High-Quality Reading Exposure

When Dr. DiGeorgio stepped into AP Lang, he implemented an approach that combined daily reading, intentional metacognitive routines, and steady exposure to rigorous, varied texts. To execute this consistently, he used UWorld's Courses for AP as the backbone of daily practice.

"A lot of the issue is reading more," he explained, "but students don't have the time. For that reason, we do a lot of the reading in class." UWorld's multiple-choice questions (MCQs) gave him a way to make that reading meaningful. The passages ranged from modern nonfiction to 19th-century political speeches, mirroring the unpredictability of the AP exam. They came with detailed explanations, aligned tightly to the CED, and included a default timer slightly shorter than exam conditions, ideal for developing fluency and accuracy under pressure.

Dr. DiGeorgio integrated these questions into a rhythm his students could rely on: timed MCQs at home and in-class quizzes that doubled as opportunities for metacognitive reflection. With a background in philosophy, he emphasized not just answering questions, but understanding how students were thinking through them.

"I famously say that I don't teach students that much," he said. "It's more about showing them ways to think about their own thinking."

Through repetition and reflection, his students learned to analyze distractors, identify the option that directly answered the question, and approach passages with more confidence and precision. The result was a classroom culture built on practice, clarity, and cognitive awareness, powered by tools that made high-level reading instruction both consistent and scalable.

THE RESULTS:

Stronger Readers, Higher Confidence, and a 98% Pass Rate

Dr. DiGeorgio set 2 clear goals for his students: Earn an A or B in the course and score a 3 or higher on the AP exam. By the end of the 2024–25 school year, every student met the classroom benchmark, and his AP Lang section achieved a **98% pass rate** — his highest yet.

He credits the gains to consistent practice and high expectations. "It might sound like I am so great," Dr. DiGeorgio remarked, "but it's not me at all. It's a testament to the students, who are well prepared, and UWorld. In fact, without UWorld, I'd be using weaker resources or laboriously creating my own content."

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But his influence is unmistakable. As students worked through increasingly rigorous MCQs, he pushed them to evaluate distractors more critically. Many realized for the first time that the most sophisticated-sounding answer was often not the correct one. That shift of recognizing the difference between what sounds right and what answers the question became a turning point.

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Beyond skill development, students gained confidence. Dr. DiGeorgio encouraged them to trust their preparation, revisit UWorld’s explanations when they were stuck, and rely on metacognitive strategies rather than overthinking.

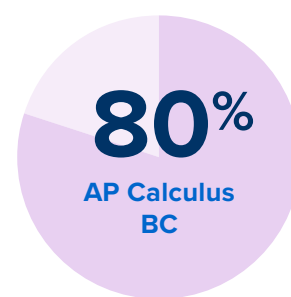
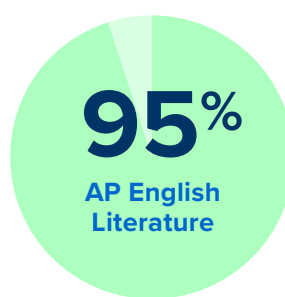
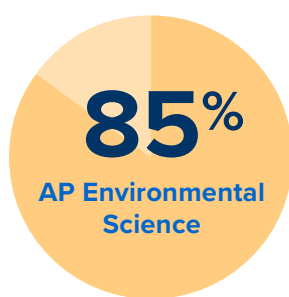
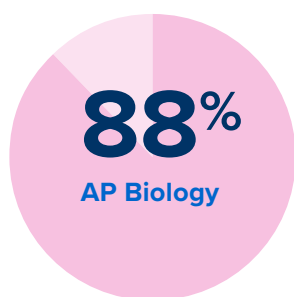
When scores were released in July, students returned to his classroom, exam printouts in hand, telling him, “You were right.”

THE IMPACT:

Schoolwide Gains Through Consistent, High-Quality Practice

The improvement in Dr. DiGeorgio's AP Lang class wasn't an isolated success. Across Bishop Kenny High School, teachers who consistently integrated UWorld's Courses for AP into their instruction saw notable gains in student performance. The pattern was clear: When students were given regular exposure to rigorous practice aligned with the CED, scores rose.

In subjects where UWorld was used as part of day-to-day instruction, AP exam pass rates were strong across the board during the **2024–25 school year**:



Looking more broadly, during the **2022–23 school year**, teachers who regularly incorporated UWorld saw an average AP exam **pass rate of 95%**, compared to those who used the platform only sporadically. That consistency translated to a **37% increase in pass rates** among teachers who made UWorld a core component of their instructional approach.

The school's results reinforced a simple conclusion: When teachers pair strong instruction with high-quality, repeatable practice, students build the confidence and skills needed to succeed, regardless of subject area. Dr. DiGeorgio's AP Lang class exemplified this principle, and the impact extended well beyond his own classroom.



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