



AREA V REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

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Instructional Implications of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

Text-Dependent Questions, Grades 6 – 12 ELA & Content Areas

Session Description

Participants will become familiar with the increased emphasis on close reading and textual evidence in the Common Core State Standards and classroom practices that foster these.

Expected Outcomes

- Become familiar with the emphasis on reading instruction that stays close to the texts.
- Understand the important place argument and evidence has in the CCSS.
- Identify some examples and non-examples of classroom practices that encourage students to return to the text for text-dependent questions and evidence.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
- Text-dependent questions; classroom practices that foster close reading (20 minutes)
 - Partner activity – Planning for close reading (10 minutes)
- Reflection (10 minutes)
 - Partner activity – How did we do?
 - Suggested follow-up activities
 - Reflection

Time

- 45 minutes

Audience

- Designed to be used with groups of 6-12 ELA and content area leaders and teachers working with grade level or cross-grade level partners.

Materials

- Handout copy of PowerPoint slides
- Handout Informational Text for Grades 6-12 ELA
- Handout Informational Text for Grades 6-12 History/Social Studies
- Handout Informational Text for Grades 6-12 Science & Technical Subjects
- Handout Reflections Module 1, ELA & Literacy

Resources/References

- Appendix A, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
- Appendix B, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf
- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

Slide 1

Welcome participants, and introduce the subject for today.

Suggest that participants sit in small groups with others who teach the same grade level(s).

Check to see that everyone has the handouts.

Explain that one of the instructional implications of implementing the CCSS will be an increased emphasis on close reading and text-dependent questions.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“We have seen how preparing students to be college and career ready by graduation will mean an increased emphasis on reading informational text and an increase in the level of text complexity. As part of this, students will need to learn to read closely and form habits of returning to the text for evidence to support their conclusions.

Students who are college and career ready value evidence:

- They cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text;
- They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener;
- And they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.

Let’s look at how this is reflected in standards for Grades 6 – 12.”

Slide 2

Go over the expected outcomes for this session.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Today we will consider close reading and textual evidence, and we will look at some of the classroom practices that encourage this, as well as the prominent place that argument and evidence have throughout the CCSS.

Slide 3

Explain that two of the inclusive Reading and Writing Anchor Standards directly address textual evidence.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“These two CCSS Anchor Standards set expectations for students to cite specific evidence from literary and informational texts to support their inferences, conclusions, analyses, reflections, and research.

As they progress through the grades, students need to become increasingly adept at drawing evidence from the text and explaining that evidence orally and in writing. This will require that teachers make sure that classroom experiences stay connected to the text and that students develop habits of reading closely and backing up their claims, in discussion as well as in writing, with text-dependent questions.”

Slide 4

Explain that argument and evidence are important threads that run through the Common Core State Standards.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Understanding argument and evidence – both from a reader’s perspective as well as a writer’s/speaker’s perspective, is an important thread that runs through the CCSS. So, students are expected not only to marshal text-dependent evidence in support of their own conclusions and positions, but also evaluate a speaker’s use of evidence.”

Slide 5

Explain that these are several classroom practices that keep reading instruction close to the text and allow students to generate their own judgments, supporting them with text-dependent questions.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Here are some classroom practices that support text-dependent reading instruction:

First, teacher modeling demonstrates what a “close read” might entail.

The works, or passages from longer works, merit the close attention and time devoted to them, and questions relating to them are ones worth consideration.

Pre-reading activities that activate prior knowledge and create a connection (or a “hook”) for students derive from the texts themselves rather than focus outward on external connections, experiences, etc.

Scaffolding and pre-teaching vocabulary and essential background make the text accessible to students; they do NOT pre-teach the *content* of the text.

Sufficient time is allotted for students to access, consider, and respond to texts.

Students have rich and rigorous conversations which are dependent on students reading a central text.

Among the myriad related activities possible, the teacher chooses ones that stay close to the texts.

“Finally, all students should have the opportunity to formulate and support with textual evidence their own conclusions – not just ones they have heard from the teacher or other students.”

Slide 6 (Intentionally Deleted)

Slide 7

There are differences between text-dependent classroom instruction that draws the student deeper into the text and practices that replace the text or draw the reader away from it.

For instance, the teacher might say,

“What distinguishes classroom practices that engage students in close reading and citing evidentiary text from those practices that do not?”

First, scaffolding strategies and pre-reading activities should support students in deriving meaning from the text – not deliver the information in advance. To become college and career-ready readers, students need to be able to learn by reading. In our efforts to help struggling readers, we don’t want to inadvertently remove the need to read the text by conveying the information in simpler terms during a discussion, in an advance organizer, glosses or summaries that editors have included with the text itself.

Part of that is also letting the reader experience the text as the author unfolds it, preserving the rewarding aspects of reading high-quality writing. We don’t want to pre-empt the discovery of what is interesting, challenging, beautiful, surprising in a piece. We sometimes see these in the inserts and in examples of “hooks” for kids. For instance, a website offers this example: ‘You’ve told me how you would create a society where everyone is happy, and in *Brave New World* everyone is happy, but if they had to give up a few things...’ In a way, these well-intended introductions are little thieves; they have usurped the author’s role and stolen a little (or sometimes a lot) of what should belong to the reader.

Just as important, discussions and activities after reading should stay deeply connected to the text, allowing students to draw conclusions on their own, encouraging the reader to engage with the author and what the author is trying to say.”

Slide 8

Explain that it is important to differentiate between learning activities that are aimed at building content knowledge from those that are aimed at building independent reading proficiency.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“It is helpful and important to keep in mind the distinction between learning activities that are designed primarily to help students’ acquire content knowledge and those that are designed to build students’ ability to read complex text independently. These practices will differ. Ultimately, to be college and career ready, students need to be able to read informational text with enough proficiency and independence to build their knowledge base with little or no teacher support.

So, the sequence of presenting content in classroom activities first, before the student reads the chapter or work, may be very appropriate if the objective is mastery of highly complex content that requires scaffolding. However, it is important that, in addition, other instructional time and activities be dedicated primarily to supporting students’ ability to read complex material.”

Slide 9

Invite participants to read the text, which is included in the handout.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Let’s look at a concrete example. This reading passage is included in CCSS Appendix B as an example of high quality informational text at the 6-8 grade level of text complexity.

As you read this to yourselves, try to be aware of what the text selection has to offer as it unfolds. This was part of one of the most powerful, pivotal speeches of the 20th Century. It remains one of the most well-known and quoted in the 21st Century. Where does its power and appeal come from? What are the rhetorical pleasures, the surprises, the powerful turns of phrase?

“After you have finished reading the excerpt, we will examine instructional practices that support text-dependent reading of this selection and those that do not”

[Allow a few minutes for participants to read the passage.]

Slide 10

Explain the examples of practices that do not support text-dependent instruction.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Let’s start with a few negative examples -- practices that we want to avoid. Here’s what we do not want to do:

In the first non-example, we are telling the students in advance what we would like them to come up with themselves. Deriving the main ideas from texts is critical, and this obviously precludes students’ opportunity to practice the skill themselves and limits the possibility that they will see the text a bit differently.

The second is a non-example that takes away much of the ‘punch’ of this piece in advance, dissecting and decontextualizing what should be discovered and experienced as Churchill presented it.

Helping students make connections between the text and themselves, other texts, and the world has been an important part of getting students engaged with the text and making meaning from it. The caution

here is that the connections should be central to the meaning of the text and should lead students *more deeply into* the text, not away from it. Non-example three does not do this.

Finally, while activities designed to build content knowledge or writing skill may not be text dependent, *reading activities* always bring the students back to the text for a close read and text-dependent answers to support conclusions.”

Slide 11

Explain that these are examples of classroom practices that allow the text to unfold to the reader.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Let’s look at some scaffolding and pre-reading activities that would be appropriate, enabling students to experience the complexity of the text, rather than avoid it.

The passage has a number of words that may be unfamiliar to students, like *lamentable*, or that have a meaning specific to the context, like *minister*. The teacher might select a few academic words to teach in depth; in this piece, several of the words cluster around similar meanings.

Some background knowledge of the context of the speech would help students understand Churchill’s purpose and the need for a powerfully persuasive speech, as well as understand the references. It is important that this simply ‘set the stage’ for the speech rather than summarize it or what happened as a result of it.

Advanced organizers, such as one based on the detail in the next slide, could help selected students navigate the structure of this passage.”

Slide 12

Present the example of an advance organizer.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Here is an example of a detail from a note-taking worksheet that might be given to selected students, before or after the first reading. It is reproduced on the handout.

It is important to ensure that all students demonstrate a careful understanding of what they read before engaging their opinions, appraisals, or interpretations. Before students are asked to go beyond the text and apply their learning, they should demonstrate their grasp of the specific ideas and details of the text.

Close reading often focuses on the importance or role played by specific sentences, phrases, or words. For instance, students might be asked to consider how the meaning or impact might change if the author had chosen a different word, key detail, order or pattern of presentation, etc.”

Slide 13

Explain that teachers can craft advance organizers for selected students that will help them focus on specific aspects of text included in the Reading Standards. These standards will, in turn, guide the text-dependent questions that will lead students back to the text for closer attention.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

“Let’s revisit some of the Reading Anchor Standards that describe ways in which we want students to be able to interact with the text. Each one, of course, is translated slightly differently as each grade-specific content standard.

A teacher might use the note-taking advance organizer in the previous slide to prepare selected students to respond to questions about central ideas (Reading Anchor Standard 2).

Or, in preparing students to analyze the structure of texts (Reading Anchor Standard 4), the teacher might set up an advance organizer for selected students that causes them to note parallel beginnings of the paragraphs (Para 2 – *You ask, what is our policy?*; Para 3 – *You ask, what is our aim?*) or show how the paragraphs provide three reasons supporting the policy of war."

Slide 14

Explain that these are examples of specific questions that are responsive to the Reading Anchor Standards and invite students to formulate conclusions that they can support with textual evidence.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

"Here are some example prompts that a teacher might use to encourage students to closely examine the text prior to drawing conclusions, making comparisons across texts, or other text analysis activities.

Struggling readers may benefit from having copies of the text so they may make notations on the text itself. Two examples of this are included on the handout."

Slide 15

Explain that several Reading Standards can be addressed with a single complex activity if the sequence allows students to read closely and demonstrate their understanding of the text first, then go on to comparative analyses.

For instance, the facilitator might say,

"In planning instruction that includes audio, video, or multimedia versions of the text, the teacher can preserve the opportunity for initial close reading and text-dependent evidence by having students first experience the text and demonstrate that they follow the details of what is explicitly stated as well as inferred. After the multimedia version is viewed/heard, then students return to the text for their comparative analysis. This gives a second opportunity for students to formulate positions and support them with text-dependent questions."

Slide 16

Invite participants to read one of the other text examples on the handout and identify examples and non-examples of classroom practices that encourage close reading and elicit text-dependent answers. Allow time to work.

Invite participants to share.

Slide 17

Invite participants to turn to partners to answer the questions.

Slide 18

Suggest the activities listed as possible follow-ups to this session.

Invite participants to fill out the Reflections page.