With Literacy for All: Making Challenging Texts Accessible for Students

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Essential Question

How can I achieve the CCGPS expectation that students will meet grade level standards and read grade level texts when my students come to me reading significantly below grade level?
Learning Targets

1. I can explain a three-prong, structured program for improving students’ reading and literacy skills.

2. I can confidently define complex text, close reading, and scaffolding.

3. I can list and describe 4-5 strategies for helping students access complex texts successfully.
Learning Targets

1. I can explain a three-prong, structured program for improving students’ reading and literacy skills.
Three-Prong Approach

Prong 1
- Daily reading of grade-level texts
- Varying degrees of scaffolding

Prong 2
- Daily reading of student-level texts
- Intellectually challenging

Prong 3
- Intensive, individualized reading instruction
- For struggling readers by trained specialists
Implementing a Three-Prong Approach

1. WHO is responsible for ensuring this happens?
   a. Planning
   b. Implementing
   c. Monitoring

2. WHAT do we need to make this happen?
   a. Knowledge
   b. Skills
   c. Professional learning
Implementing a Three-Prong Approach

3. WHEN will this *daily* reading take place?

4. WHERE will this *daily* reading take place?

5. HOW can we help students be successful with more challenging/complex texts?
Recommendations from Student Achievement Partners

1. In the early grades, increase read alouds that incorporate uncommon vocabulary and complex syntax.

2. In upper elementary, ensure that students close read one complex text per week, alternating among content areas: social studies, science, ELA, etc.

3. In secondary grades, ensure that each teacher includes the close reading of one complex text per month.

Learning Targets

1. I can explain a three-prong, structured program for improving students’ reading and literacy skills.

2. I can confidently define *complex text, close reading, and scaffolding.*
What Makes a Text Complex?

*Text complexity* – The inherent difficulty of reading and comprehending a text, including word length, syntax, subject matter, and reader/task considerations.
Features of a Complex Text

1. Subtle and/or frequent transitions
2. Multiple and/or subtle themes and purposes
3. Density of information
4. Unfamiliar settings, topics, or events
5. Lack of repetition, overlap, or similarity in words and sentences
6. Complex sentences
7. Uncommon vocabulary
8. Lack of words, sentences, or paragraphs that review or pull things together for the student
9. Longer paragraphs
10. Any text structure that is less narrative and/or mixes structures
11. Use of passive voice

Determining Appropriately Complex Texts

- Number of combinations = 11 features to the 11th power (285,311,670,611)

- Text may lack complexity on a number of features, while the complexity of one or two features deems it appropriate for a specific grade band

- Determining appropriately complex texts provides powerful professional learning for grade band teachers

- See Handouts 1, 2, and 3: Qualitative Features of Complex Texts, Qualitative Dimensions Tool, and Qualitative Measures Rubric
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What is Close Reading?

*Close Reading* – A careful and deliberate reading and rereading of a *complex text* to determine such things as surface and underlying meanings, author’s purpose, bias, etc. Readers may respond to text-based questions, determine word meanings contextually, evaluate arguments, use textual evidence to support a theme or warranted conclusion, etc.
Purpose of Close Reading

Students need the knowledge and skills to determine, *independently*, explicit and implicit meanings in *texts they have never seen before* and to locate and use evidence from these texts to support the meanings they determine.
Close Reading Graphic

Explicit Meaning
Inferred Meaning
Theme
Central Idea

Structure & Syntax
Word choice/diction
Patterns
Historical/Cultural references or allusions
Point of view/perspective
Figures of speech
Rhetorical devices

Figure 1
Two Approaches to Teaching Close Reading

1. Whole to part
   a. Begin with a complex, short text or passage.
   b. Have students read text silently before listening to teacher (or a recorded reader) read it aloud.
   c. Work through the text slowly, in small segments (phrases, clauses, sentences) asking students to paraphrase, summarize, or respond to text dependent questions.
   d. Repeat the process with increasingly complex and or longer texts while also moving students toward more independent close reading.

For multiple examples of whole to part, see: http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools/close-reading-exemplars
Two Approaches to Teaching Close Reading

2. Part to whole
   a. Provide explicit instruction related to the outer circles, one at a time; for example, focus one or more lessons or mini-lessons on diction.
   b. Apply learning on the specific element to a number of texts over a relatively short time.
   c. Repeat a. and b. with a second element (point of view/perspective, for example).
   d. Continue to repeat, as relevant, to build students’ grade-appropriate tool boxes, while also moving students toward more independent close reading.
Part to Whole Note

Part to whole close reading is CUMULATIVE—that is, once students have added an element such as diction to their toolboxes, they continue to use this tool as they add others to their toolboxes.
What is Scaffolding?

Scaffolding – Temporary instructional support to help students successfully read texts that are supposedly too hard for them.
Scaffolded Science Text Example
Learning Targets

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Direct Vocabulary Instruction

• Specific instruction in Tier 2 words (Handout 4)

• Glosses, and/or instruction in Tier 3 words

• Specific instruction in prefixes, suffixes, and roots

• Strategy instruction in determining meaning from context

• Word play
Multiple Means of Engagement

• Allow students to choose from a number of different topics of interest and scaffold these complex, high interest texts

• Create “electronic” texts that incorporate cues, vocabulary support, and strategy support
Text Ladders

• Begin with shorter, easier texts to engage students and build up to more difficult texts on the same topic

• Jigsaw texts so students read shorter segments of complex texts and discuss the entire text in small groups

• Allow students to reread more difficult texts without scaffolding as they become easier
Productive Work with Texts

Students

- Participate in a text-based discussion
- Write about a text, incorporating textual evidence
- Create visual representations for major ideas in a text
- Use an organizer to summarize or record major ideas from a text
Oral Fluency Work

• Supervised paired reading
• Listening to the teacher read aloud
• Listening to an audio recording
• Reading along with an audio recording
• Reading aloud to the teacher with feedback
Learning Targets

1. I can explain a three-prong, structured program for improving students’ reading and literacy skills.

2. I can confidently define complex text, scaffolding, close reading, and Tier 1 and Tier 2 words.

3. I can list and describe 4-5 strategies for helping students access complex texts successfully.
Resources—Literacy


Resources—Close Reading


Resources—Scaffolding a Text


Resources—Text Complexity


Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"
www.gadoe.org
Link to Session PP and Materials

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