



Text Complexity

for the Developmentally Delayed Reader and Non-Reader

Chancellor's Principal Conference

Saturday, May 17th, 2014

Raizy Blau, Director of Literacy, D75

Rblau@schools.nyc.gov

D75Literacy@schools.nyc.gov

The Hokey Pokey

Shakespearean Style

O proud left foot, that ventures quick within
Then soon upon a backward journey lithe.
Anon, once more the gesture, then begin;
Command sinistral pedestal to writhe.
Commence thou then the fervid Hokey-Poke.
A mad gyration, hips in wanton swirl.
To spin! A wilde release from heaven's yoke.
Blessed dervish! Surely canst go, girl.
The Hoke, the poke--banish now thy doubt
Verily, I say, 'tis what it is all about.

Session Overview

This Text Complexity Session for the Developmentally Delayed Reader & Non-Reader PD promotes how principals/instructional leaders understand the continuum of text complexity as it relates to non-conventional readers.

Participants will work in small groups to sequence Abraham Lincoln texts based upon the qualitative criteria (Layout, Purpose and Meaning, Structure, Language Features, Knowledge Demands) of text complexity. Participants will then examine the Text Complexity Gradients for Informational Texts and the District 75 Text Complexity artifacts created during the 2012 Summer Text Complexity Summit.

Finally, this professional development will provide participants with opportunities to understand and implement various instructional strategies to support and facilitate growth of all learners according to the aforementioned qualitative criteria.

Session Outcome & Questions:

SESSION OUTCOME:

- Participants will gain a unified voice/understanding of what “text complexity” looks like for the developmentally delayed reader and non-reader. Participants will outline strategies for developmentally delayed readers to engage in more complex texts.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

- How can we address text complexity regarding non-conventional texts to maximize comprehension and increase the rigor of all students?

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What is Text Complexity across the continuum of learners?
- What strategies can you use to support students to engage in more complex texts?

Activity One

Activating Prior Knowledge: Sequencing of Abraham Lincoln Texts

Outcome:

Participants will use the Text Complexity Gradient for Informational Texts and their knowledge of the characteristics of texts to sequence the Abraham Lincoln Texts.

Text Complexity Gradient

- Layout
- Purpose and Meaning
- Structure
- Language Features
- Knowledge Demands

Scaffolding Texts:

6 Texts on the Topic of Abraham Lincoln:

- *The Gettysburg Address (Book)*
- *“The Gettysburg Address” (Speech)*
- *A Picture Book of Abraham Lincoln*
- *“People Who Made a Difference: Abraham Lincoln”*
- *“Chapter 4: American Civil War”*
- *Abe’s Honest Words: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*

Task:

Working in groups, sequence texts based on the Text Complexity Gradient for Informational Texts.

Be prepared to share your method.

Activity Two

Expanding the Definition of Text +
Introducing the Pre-Conventional Gradient =
Examining the “Left Side” of the Text Complexity Gradient

Outcome:

Participants will create an inclusive definition of what text encompasses. Participants will then examine the “left side” of the Text Complexity Gradient to determine how developmentally delayed readers and non-readers receive access to text.

What is Text?

Traditional Definition:

Merriam-Webster Definition of text

- *noun* \ 'tekst\ : the original words of a piece of writing or a speech
- : the words that make up the main part of a book, magazine, newspaper, Web site, etc.
- : a book or other piece of writing; *especially* : one that is studied

Expanded/Functional Definition:

Sources that provide information

- Words as texts (lists, names)
- Pictures as texts, True Object Based Icons (TOBI's)
- Symbols as texts
- Real Objects/Actions/Environmental Cues as Texts

Texts Within Your Schools

- What types of texts are currently accessible to students in your school environment who are not yet reading conventionally?



Activity Three

How to Move Readers Across the Staircase of Complexity

Outcome:

Participants will use the document “Instructional Strategies to Support All Learners” to enhance their understanding of how to support learners as they progress from simple texts to very complex texts.

Next Steps / Reflections

Essential Questions:

- How can schools support teachers in connecting this new information to the 2014-2015 Citywide Instructional Expectations
(who, what, how, when)
- How will this information assist you (administrators) in making decisions about the selection of “text types” for your school community?
- How will schools devise professional learning centered around the use of the Pre-Conventional Gradient and Instructional Strategies to Support All Learners?

A First Grade Informational Text

Corduroy is a Material

Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911



Includes a
free rubric
and
2 assessments

By Don Freeman