Tackling Complex Text
Grades 6-12
NYS/NYC RBE-RN

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Desired Outcomes

- Experiencing a close-reading activity and analyzing the effectiveness of its phases.
- Examining sample close reading lessons to identify the qualities of close reading experience.
- Identifying specific strategies used by teachers in two videos to support student work.
- Working through the process for planning a close read for a text of choice.
The Process

- Determining a purpose for the reading
- Assessing the complexity of the text and determining what aspects require adaptive assistance.
- Using text structure to determine what kind of graphic organizer students might use
- Determining what vocabulary and/or concept words to pre-teach and which to allow students to consider on their own.
- Selecting annotation strategies
- Creating text-based questions
Understanding the Benefits of the Close Reading Experience

1. Read the text “The Federalist No. 2” on page 3 independently to get the gist or the sense of the whole.

2. On your second reading,
   - Underline key words and phrases in each paragraph that help you understand the purpose of the text
   - Make marginal notes to summarize arguments presented by the author and use arrows to show connections between arguments.

3. Answer text based questions & discuss responses in small groups (p. 4)

4. Write a summarizing statement for the text.
Examining the Close Read Experience

1. Use the chart on page 5 to identify the purpose of each element of the close reading experience based on your experiences with the Federalist No.2.

2. Include any thoughts you have about the benefit or limitation of any of the elements in helping you to understand the text.
Processing Question for Simulation

What did you learn from the close reading experience that will help you to better understand the experience of your students and how to best assist them?
“Teachers know that when students are asked to read complex texts by themselves, they struggle and often do not succeed because they do not have the appropriate bank of related language, knowledge, skills or metacognition to be able to comprehend the information...
...Teachers also realize that when they provide the needed instructional supports, students have greater success with reading materials that could be initially identified as being at their frustrational levels...
The text difficulty is not the real issue. Instruction is. Teachers can scaffold and support students, which will determine the amount of their learning and literacy independence.”

## Analyzing Sample Lessons

Pairs: Use the chart on page 8 as a reference as you analyze examples in the separate handout:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Unbroken</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>“A Brief Guide to Genomes”</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>The Federalist Papers 2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Questions for Analyzing Samples

1. What do the examples reveal about the qualities of a close reading experience?

2. How would the scaffolding in the lesson affect student motivation and performance?

3. How do the language/speaking opportunities support ENLs?

4. What questions do the examples raise?
Considering the Text:

- Text Complexity
- Text Structure
- Vocabulary
- Annotations
- Text-Based Questions
Practice Texts Are in Sample Passage Packet

Grade Level

6-8  “Screen Time and the Developing Brain”  p. 17

9-10 “Address to the United Nations Youth Assembly”  p. 18

11-12  “Changes in Biodiversity”  p. 20
“Teaching starts with a deep understanding about what makes text complex.”

Determining the Complexity of a Text

Use the Aussie Rubric (Separate Handout) to determine the complexity of the text closest to your own grade level:
Processing Questions for Text Complexity

1. How did the rubric affect your thoughts about the text?

2. What issues in the text require adaptive assistance?
Establishing a Purpose for Reading

**Grade:** 8th  
**Text:** “Space Conference is Latest Venue for Squabble about Pluto’s Status”

**State the purpose as a learning target:**  
**I can** separate different viewpoints by making distinctions between ideas, events, and people.

**Articulate clearly how students will show they have met this learning target.**  
I will show this by writing an essay explaining what has caused the debate over Pluto’s planetary status and using evidence from the text to discuss at least two different points of view presented in the article. RI.8.2
1. Determine the kind of structure used in the text:
   - Description: A list of information
   - Compare & contrast: Noted similarities and differences between two concepts
   - Temporal sequence: How events change or remain the same over time
   - Cause and Effect: Causal relationships
   - Problem and solution: Situation or issue and how it is solved

2. Consider the kind of graphic organizer that would help students to unpack the text. (Who will create the graphic organizer?)
Empowering Students to Handle Vocabulary  p. 11-12

1. Consider ways to help students to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words on their own.
   ▪ What words are cognates?
   ▪ What words can be understood through context clues?
   ▪ What words were introduced in prior units?
   ▪ What words can be understood through morphological analysis?

2. Identify term(s) or concept(s) you must pre-teach in order for students to engage with the text.

3. Identify words with multiple meanings that might confuse students.
Presenting the Text So That It is Manageable

1. Will you chunk the text? How?
Thinking Notes: A strategy to encourage close reading
ELA 9-10 (2 min)

“Thinking Notes”

* Main idea - central to the author’s purpose.

! I love this part! Great writing or idea

? Raises a question - possible discussion point for class

?? Something is unclear or confusing to
Guiding Annotation of the Text

1. What is the difference between asking students to highlight and asking them to annotate?

2. Read through the annotation strategies on pages 17-18.

3. Select the strategy that best fits the purpose for reading and the text itself.
Aligning Text-Based Questions to the CCLS

1. Review the sample questions for specific standards on p. 16-17
2. Select two to three standards on the charts provided for your lesson.
   - Grade 7-8 p. 18
   - Grade 9-10 p. 19
   - Grade 11-12 p. 20
3. Create a text-specific question for each of the selected standards.
Planning the Lesson: Use the Template on Pages 22-23

First Reading (Independent)
First Discussion (What do they understand)
Second Discussion (What challenges do they face?)

Second Reading (Think-Alouds and gathering evidence for text-based questions)
Third Discussion (Using evidence from the text to answer questions)
Journal Writing Demonstrating learning
“Perhaps one of the mistakes in the past efforts to improve reading achievement has been the removal of struggle. As a profession, we may have made reading tasks too easy. We do not suggest that we should plan students’ failure but rather that students should be provided with opportunities to struggle and to learn about themselves as readers when they struggle, persevere, and eventually succeed.”

Standards and Purpose

- Fill in the standards you have selected.

- State the purpose (learning target) and what students will do at the end of the lesson to demonstrate learning.
First Reading

- What annotation strategy will students use?
- What will students discuss with a partner after the first reading?
Second Reading
Modeling Strategies Appropriate to the Text:
- Decoding
- Using Context Clues
- Visualizing
- Predicting
- Inferring
- Summarizing
- Monitoring Comprehension

- What strategy might you need to model?
- What strategy might students practice using?
Providing Opportunities for Collaborative Argumentation

“Much of what students understand in the texts they read and write comes from their participation in discussion. Collaborative argumentation is a field of study that focuses on how learners construct meaning in the company of peers. The social aspect of collaborative argumentation is vital for learning as participants make claims, provide evidence, and consider the counterclaims of others.”

(Nussbaum, 2008) in Teaching Students to Read like Detectives by Fisher, Frey and Lapp, 2012, p. 28
Third Discussion

1. What kinds of questions will generate the kinds of discussion shown in the video?
2. What text-dependent questions will help students to understand your text more fully? (Indicate the standard to which each question is aligned.)
Journal Writing

- How will students demonstrate understanding?
  Make the directions explicitly clear.

- What metacognitive question will help students to reflect on the learning process?
  
  *What made this text difficult for you?*
  
  *What did you do when you got stuck in the text?*
Debriefing

1. How are you thinking about close reading as a result of today’s work?

2. What did you learn?

3. What difference will your learning make for your practice? for your students?