

## **Achieving the Learning Objectives Set Forth in the Common Core Standards Through Reading Workshop Approaches**

Dr. Frank Serafini

### **Common Core State Standards...**

*Offer a first step in providing our young people with a high quality education.*

*Offer a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn.*

*Offer fewer, clearer and higher standards.*

*Ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.*

*Are: (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked.*

*Provide minimum expectations for learning.*

*Are intended to be a living work: as new and better evidence emerges, the Standards will be revised accordingly.*

### **Some Major Shifts**

From a dominance of fictional literature to increasing amounts of informational texts

From constructing personal meaning to identifying literary elements, themes, craft and structures.

From a focus on multimodal features to focusing on the meaning in written text.

From a focus on content areas to teaching reading and writing across the content areas.

From writing as personal exploration and storytelling to writing in response to reading and providing evidence for an argument.

### **Some Good Things...**

The standards represent minimal requirements, not the entire literacy curriculum. Literature is conceptualized as a content area = focus on structures, genres, literary elements, archetypes, and language devices.

Students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts.

The Standards do not mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning.

There is support for teachers as reflective practitioners.

### **Teacher Judgment**

*“Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards.”*

**What does this really mean for teachers?**

### **Some Initial Questions**

What Actually is Close Reading?

What Texts will be Sanctioned and Made Available?

What is a Staircase of Text Complexity?

What will be the Role of Commercial Resources in the Reading Curriculum?

What does it Mean to be “Career & College Ready”?

Do these standards address 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies?

How much Instructional Autonomy and Professional Judgment will Teachers be actually Allowed?

### **Some Troubling Questions...**

The standards describe the “*kinds of interpretations of text that students must demonstrate.*” How will these be measured?

Reading well means *gaining the maximum insight or knowledge from the text itself.*

Who gets to say what the text says?

Publishers of instructional materials and experienced educators will develop new resources around these shared standards. Will these just be new scripts?

How will struggling readers handle even more complex texts without additional time, access and instruction?

### **7 Important Considerations**

1. Close Reading
2. Academic Vocabulary
3. Range of Reading and Text Complexity
4. Reading Informational Texts
5. Key Ideas and Details
6. Knowledge of Craft and Structure
7. Writing as Response to Reading & Persuasive Argument

### **Consideration #1: Close Reading**

Determine what a Text says Explicitly - *careful examination of the text itself*

Harkens back to the New Criticism of I. A. Richards and others

Use Text-Based Evidence to Support Claims that “*squares with all the evidence in the text*”

The CCSS suggest readers *focus on what lies within the four corners of the text.*

Close reading may be a necessary, but insufficient type of reading.

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Demonstrate how to do a “close reading”

Focus on noticings more than connections.

Use initial noticings as foundation for inquiry and discussion. *Text as Point of Departure*

Identify archetypes, themes, structures and elements of literature.

Differentiate between self-selected, voluntary reading and close reading.

Rethink the menu of research-based reading comprehension strategies.

Develop oneself as a deeper reader.

### **Teacher as Deeper Reader**

Read literature reviews, book critiques and analyses  
Read more informational texts  
Study elements of literature and archetypes  
Expand one's knowledge of various theories of literary criticism  
Read professionally (Beers & Probst, Nikolajeva, Appleman, Gillespie)  
Read professional development books  
Participate in quality book clubs and discussions

### **Consideration #2: Academic Vocabulary**

Developing a range of academic (Tier 2 words) and domain specific vocabulary.  
Acquisition vs. Instruction of Vocabulary  
Determine meaning of words and phrases as used in texts, including figurative language.  
Blend of *word solving strategies* and knowledge of specific words.  
Direct instruction on domain specific and Tier 2 words proves more effective than on developing general vocabulary.

**Tier 2 Words**=Words that appear frequently in a wide variety of texts of mature language users.

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Build Strategies for Independence (Dictionaries, Thesaurus, Glossary, Bold Words, Side Bars)  
Word Games / Word Play / Word Detectives  
Direct Instruction of Specific (Tier 2) and Domain Specific Vocabulary in Meaningful Contexts  
More Rigorous Classroom Talk  
More Rigorous Reading Materials  
Extensive Writing Opportunities  
Extensive Reading Opportunities

### **Consideration #3: Range of Reading & Text Complexity**

50-50% informational texts - literature in elementary / 80-20% by high school  
List of suggested *Exemplar* texts (Appendix B)  
K-1: decodable texts, common sight words, predictable language, read aloud more complex texts  
2-8: traditional tales, classic myths, informational texts, literature  
9-12: Foundational Documents of American History, American Literature, American Drama, Shakespearean play

### **Staircase of Text Complexity**

*Qualitative*  
Text Structure  
Knowledge demands  
Language clarity - conventions

### *Quantitative*

Word frequency and length

Sentence length

Text cohesion

### *Reader and Task Considerations*

Motivation

Knowledge and experience

Knowledge of book conventions and language

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Understand the parameters of text complexity and expand one's reading lists and classroom libraries to include more complex texts – especially complex picturebooks.

Provide time to read, explore and discuss complex texts.

Provide demonstrations focusing on how to manage the challenges of complex texts.

Develop strategies with students for managing challenging reading.

Help students select texts at an appropriate level of text complexity given the instructional support, assigned task and content knowledge of the reader.

Reading levels are to be achieved by year's END

### **Consideration #4: Reading Informational Text**

Focus on Craft and Structures of Informational Texts

K-1: who, what, when, where, how, and why

Grade 2-3: key (main) ideas, author's intentions in text

Grades 4-5: key (main) ideas, supporting evidence across texts

Grades 6-12: Themes, compare-contrast, supporting evidence, author bias across texts

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Read aloud and expose students to high quality informational texts.

Begin with Genre study (informational text as a genre) before content study (text as knowledge resource).

Develop students' ability to navigate informational texts.

Develop students' note-taking ability – close reading strategies.

Provide demonstrations on how to read informational texts and allow students to explore these texts.

Read informational texts for authentic reasons.

### **Consideration #5: Key Ideas & Details**

Determine central theme(s) from supporting details

Summarize the text – focus on plot points

Determine possible authorial intentions of a text

Quote accurately when explaining information from the text and when making inferences.

Explain relationship between two or more individuals, events, ideas or concepts in historical scientific or technical text based on specific information in the text

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Discuss the difference between reading for oneself and *Official Reading*.

Discuss the concept of key (main) idea and share strategies for identifying it (first sentence – major focus etc.)

Demonstrate strategies for comparing and contrasting two texts (t-Chart)

Discuss process of inferring (drawing inferences) and demonstrate through think alouds your own process of doing this.

Make stronger connections among the books selected for the units of study presented. *Purposeful Selection*

### **Consideration #6: Craft & Structure**

Structure = features of a particular genre or text, structures of language used, visual and textual components, and the coherence among these elements.

Craft = the literary devices, elements of literature and ways of using language in literature and informational texts.

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Develop units of study that focus on particular genres, formats, and text structures.

Gather picturebooks and other *microtexts* to be used to demonstrate various writing craft elements.

Develop units of study around Elements of Literature, Figurative Language and Archetypes

Discuss and demonstrate understanding of point of view and authorial perspectives.

Expose readers to a variety of literary perspectives and demonstrate how these lenses can be used.

### **Consideration #7: Writing as a Response to Reading**

Write about the information *found in* texts

Writing as a strategy to improve reading comprehension

Writing is reduced to responses to reading specific texts, citing evidence from text to support claims – evidence based book reports

30% written argument / informational texts in elementary increases to 80% in high school.

Writing is primarily the ability to synthesize, report, reflect, and persuade based on texts read.

### **How Can This be Achieved in the Reading Workshop?**

Gather real word examples of the types of texts students will be asked to write. *Hold It Up*

Develop units of study around particular genres or writing – persuasive essay, argument, book reviews.

Demonstrate how to focus a piece of writing that addresses the elements required by engaging in the act of writing.

Engage students in writing process and thinking about writing.

## **My Personal Journey into the Common Core State Standards**

### **Been There, Wrote That...**

There is a need for more informational texts in the Reading Workshop.

Teachers need a more expansive knowledge base concerning the craft, structure and literary elements in Children's and Young Adult literature.

Making connections, in particular personal connections, take us away from the actual text being read, sometimes too far.

Personal narratives should not be a dominant genre in the writing workshop.

The quality of literary discussions is directly related to the quality of the literature being read.

Teachers need to be better readers.

Teachers require professional development to increase student achievement.

### **Didn't See That Coming...**

Exemplar Texts from Appendix B may begin to dominate classroom reading and instruction.

Avoiding "*features that distract from the written text*" is being suggested.

*A Text is a repository of ideas, information and experience which readers need to access.*

Writing as response to reading and as persuasive argument would dominate the writing process.

### **Are You Kidding Me...**

Research and media skills (technology) are embedded throughout the standards rather than a focused area of attention.

The Standards lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century.

Meaning lies within the four corners of the text.

The relative absence of visual and digital literacies.

Publishers will be given guidelines for creating "teacher-proof" materials.... Again.

### **Remember ...**

The CCSS are political, as well as economic manifestos.

The CCSS emphasize they do not directly dictate instructional approaches, however the creators of the CCSS have provided publishing guidelines for the creation of resource materials which will influence (control) teaching.

The CCSS documents will be defined primarily by the assessments.

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