K-3 Literacy Pilot MoMEntum 2017

Common Literacy Professional Learning
Session 3
Text Complexity and Reading Diet

Learning Intentions

To build an understanding of text complexity and the impacts on student learning.

To build an understanding of the importance connected to a varied reading diet and the impacts on student learning.

To examine texts for complexity and reflect upon current reading diet.

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Engagement

- Developing readers need regular exposure to more complex texts so that they can experience acceptable levels of struggle.

- Reading requires automaticity – the systematic and automatic deployment of cognitive behaviors to make meaning of a text.

- Selecting texts based only on the quantitative score is a form of censorship.

- When a reader reads a text that is consistent with his or her language usage, the text is easier; when a reader reads a text that contains variations from the language that he or she uses, the text is harder.

- What people think of as "normal" varies, based on experience and expertise. A teacher who has worked with affluent high –preforming students may rate a text differently than a teacher who has supported struggling readers.

Text Complexity Matters

- While the reading demands of college, workforce training programs, and citizenship have held steady or risen over the past fifty years or so, K–12 texts have, if anything, become less demanding. This finding is the impetus behind the Standards' strong emphasis on increasing text complexity as a key requirement in reading.

- CCSS See Appendix A (p. 2-16)

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Text Complexity Matters
Complexity and the CCSS

Standard 10: By the end of the grade level, students will read and comprehend text (literary and informational) of appropriate complexity independently and proficiently.

This requirement raises the bar—all students need to be engaging with increasingly complex text.

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Turn and Talk

Do you think most of the students in your classroom experience texts of appropriate complexity for their grade level?

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Learning How To Assess Texts

Quantitative measures

Qualitative values

Task and Reader considerations

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Text Complexity Components

According to the CCSS for ELA, text complexity is composed of three primary components:

Quantitative information helps determine the approximate readability grade span for the text—provides a starting point.

Qualitative information helps determine where in the grade span the text would fall, or if the text actually falls outside the grade span.

Reader/Task considerations further guide text selection by teachers.

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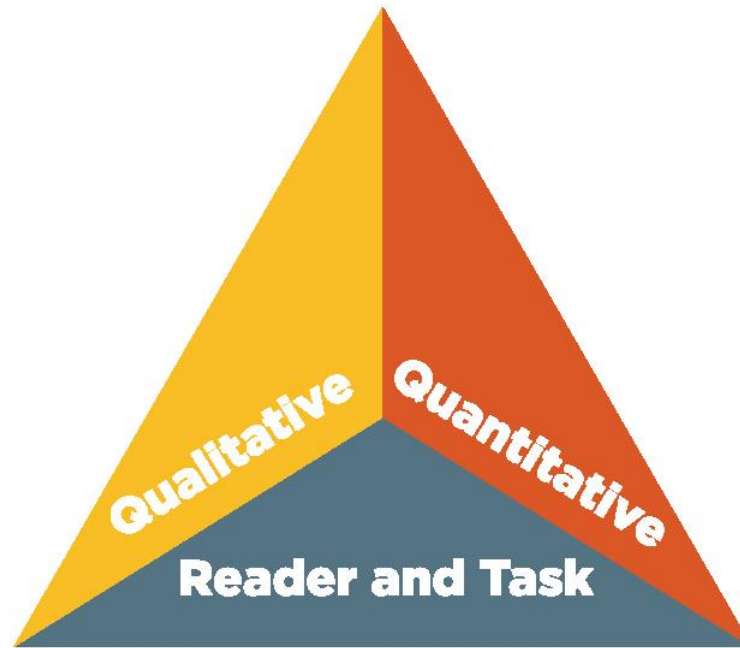
The Common Core Standards'
Model of Text Complexity

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Text Complexity
Quantitative Considerations

Factors that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and are typically measured by computer software.

Quantitative dimensions considered by these measures include:

- Word length
- Sentence length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Syllabication
- Text cohesion

Text Complexity
Qualitative Considerations

These aspects of text complexity are best measured by an attentive human reader.

Factors such as:
- levels of meaning or purpose;
- text structure;
- language features; and
- knowledge demands.

Tools to Measure

Rubrics
- Literary
- Informational

Fountas and Pinnell text gradient characteristics

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Text Complexity
Reader and Task Considerations

Educators will employ professional judgment to match texts to particular students and tasks.

Reader:

- cognitive capabilities (attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualization);

- motivation (a purpose for reading, interest in the content, self-efficacy as a reader);

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Reader and Task Considerations

- knowledge (vocabulary and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of comprehension strategies);

- and experiences.

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Reader and Task Considerations

Task

- Reader's purpose (which might shift over the course of reading),

- type of reading being done, such as skimming (getting the gist of the text) or studying (reading the text with the intent of retaining the information for a period of time), and

- intended outcomes, such as increased knowledge, a solution to a real-world problem, and/or engagement with the text.

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Text Complexity Continued
Example of Text Complexity Using CCSS Definition
(Based on *Text Project* by Elfrieda Heibert)

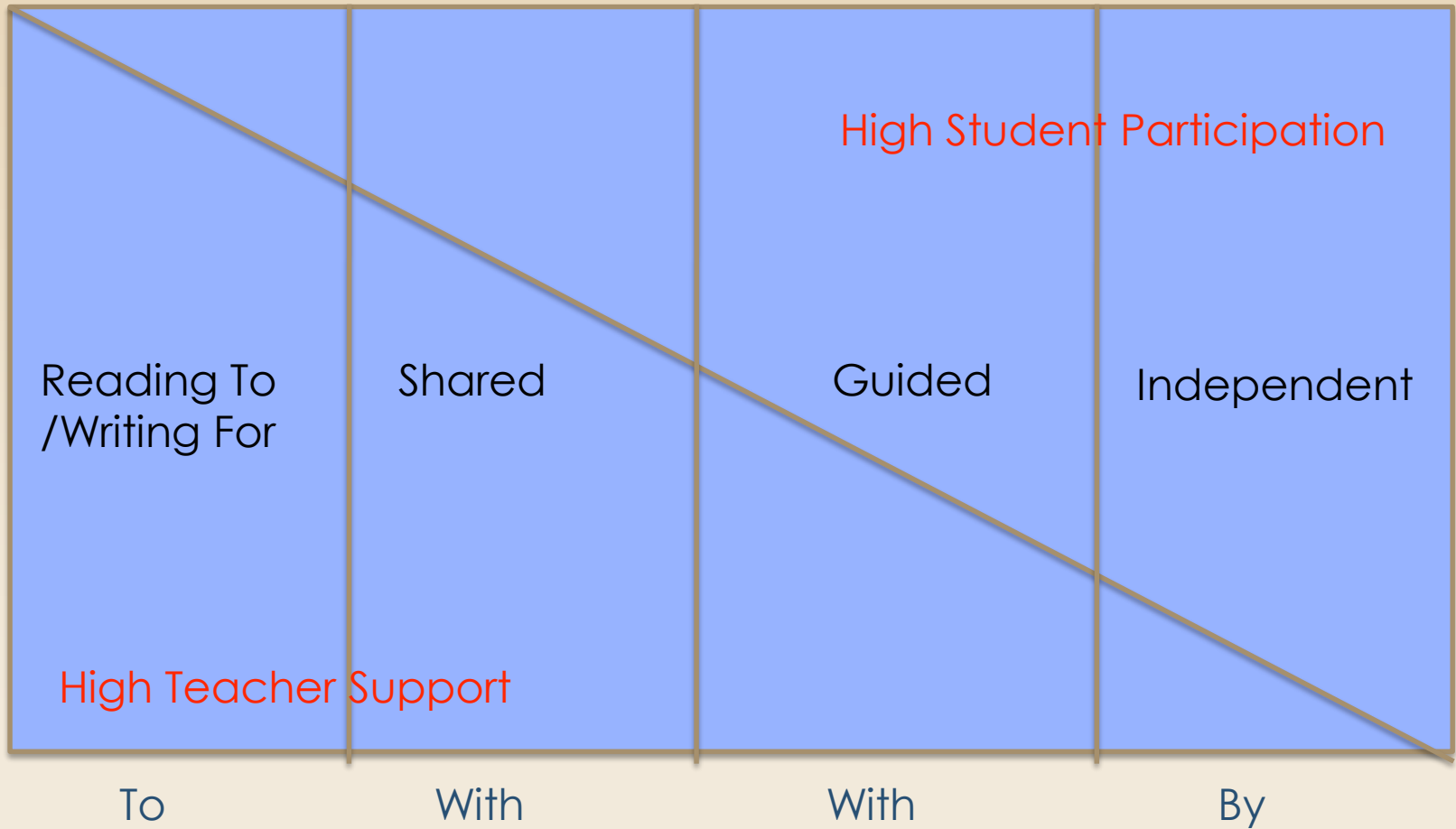| Text	Sarah Plain and Tall	Henry and Mudge	Fire Cat (Similar to Frog and Toad)
Quantitative	Lexile 430	Lexile 460	Lexile 480
Qualitative	Mid-Grade 3	Mid-Grade 2	End-Grade 1
Qualitative Dimensions	Numerous levels of meaning; high knowledge demands, straightforward narrative structure, some unique words	Single level of meaning; low knowledge demands, straightforward narrative structure, simple vocab	Single level of meaning; low knowledge demands, straightforward narrative structure, simple vocab
Reader and Task	Teacher led discussions	Repeated and independent reading	Repeated and independent reading

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Turn and Talk

What quantitative, qualitative and reader tasks measures do you consider when selecting texts for your students?

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Reading Approaches
Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, Pearson & Gallagher 1983

High Student Participation

Reading To /Writing For	Shared	Guided	Independent

High Teacher Support

To	With	With	By

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Reading Diet

Scholastic News

Easy Texts

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Decodable

Text Complexity Components

Tools to Determine the Complexity of Texts

http://maine.gov/doe/ela/professional/ module-two/index.html

Qualitative Measures: Literary Texts

TEXT COMPLEXITY MEASUREMENT: LITERARY TEXTS

Qualitative Measures

LEVELS OF MEANING

HIGH Multiple Levels of Complex Meaning	**MEDIUM HIGH** Multiple Levels of Meaning	**MIDDLE LOW** Single Level of Complex Meaning	**LOW** Single Level of Simple Meaning
☐ **Purpose:** Implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text ☐ **Theme**: Implicit or subtle, is often ambiguous and is revealed over the entirety of the text	☐ **Purpose:** Implicit and may be revealed over the entirety of the text ☐ **Theme:** Implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	☐ **Purpose:** Tends to be revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety ☐ **Theme:** Is clear and revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety	☐ **Purpose:** Usually stated explicitly in the title or in the beginning of the text ☐ **Theme:** Is obvious and revealed early in the text

STRUCTURE & LAYOUT**

HIGH	**MIDDLE HIGH**	**MIDDLE LOW**	**LOW**
☐ **Narrative Structure:** Complex, implicit, and unconventional ☐ **Narration:** Many shifts in point of view ☐ **Order of Events:** Not in chronological order ☐ **Use of Illustrations:** Minimal illustrations that support the text ☐ **Layout**: Very long passages of uninterrupted digital or non-digital text that may include columns or other variations in layout (e.g. non-linear or hybrid texts such as digital media, poetry or graphic novels) often with small, densely packed print	☐ **Narrative Structure:** Some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventionality ☐ **Narration:** Occasional shifts in point of view ☐ **Order of Events:** Several major shifts in time, use of flashback ☐ **Use of Illustrations:** Few illustrations that support the text ☐ **Layout:** Long passages of uninterrupted digital or non-digital text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often with smaller, more elaborate font	☐ **Narrative Structure:** Largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional ☐ **Narration:** Few, if any, shifts in point of view ☐ **Order of Events:** Occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time ☐ **Use of Illustrations:** Includes a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text ☐ **Layout:** May have longer passages of uninterrupted digital or non-digital text, often plain font	☐ **Narrative Structure:** Simple, explicit, conventional ☐ **Narration:** No shifts in point of view ☐ **Order of Events:** Chronological ☐ **Use of Illustrations:** Includes extensive illustrations that directly support and help interpret the written text ☐ **Layout:** Consistent placement of text in digital and non-digital formats, regular word and line spacing, often large, plain font

**A variable to consider when evaluating the layout of the text is the variety of adjustments (such as font size) available through digital devices. Also see Reader & Task.

Qualitative Measures: Informational Texts

TEXT COMPLEXITY MEASUREMENT: INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Qualitative Measures

LEVELS OF PURPOSE

HIGH	MEDIUM HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW
☐ **Purpose:** Implicit, subtle, or difficult to determine and may include the examination/evaluation of complex, sometimes theoretical and contested information	☐ **Purpose:** Implied, but fairly easy to infer and may include the explanation or interpretation of information	☐ **Purpose:** Implied, but easy to identify based upon context or source, and may convey a range of more detailed information	☐ **Purpose:** A single or simple purpose that is explicitly stated
☐ **Meaning:** Intricate with abstract, theoretical elements	☐ **Meaning:** Includes more complex concepts and a higher level of detail	☐ **Meaning:** More involved with a broader focus	☐ **Meaning:** Clear and concrete with a narrow focus

STRUCTURE & LAYOUT*

HIGH	MIDDLE HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW
☐ **Organization of Main Ideas and Details:** Highly complex; not explicit, must be inferred by the reader	☐ **Organization of Main Idea and Details:** Complex and largely implicit; may exhibit traits common to a specific subject or discipline	☐ **Organization of Main Idea and Details:** May be complex, but clearly stated and generally sequential	☐ **Organization of Main Idea and Details:** Clearly stated and sequential
☐ **Text Features:** If used, are essential in understanding content	☐ **Text Features:** If used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content	☐ **Text Features:** If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content	☐ **Text Features:** If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential
☐ **Use of Graphics:** Sophisticated graphics, essential to understanding the text, may also provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text	☐ **Use of Graphics:** Some sophisticated graphics, may occasionally be essential to understanding the text	☐ **Use of Graphics:** Largely simple graphics, supplementary to understanding of the text	☐ **Use of Graphics:** Use of simple graphics, unnecessary to understand text
☐ **Layout:** Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small, densely packed print	☐ **Layout:** Longer passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller more elaborate font.	☐ **Layout:** May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font	☐ **Layout:** Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large, plain font

*A variable to consider when evaluating the structure and layout of the text is the variety of adjustments (such as font size) available through digital devices. Also see Reader & Task

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Text Complexity Components

Text Complexity Analysis of
by
Text Type:

Text Description	Recommended Complexity Band Level

Quantitative Measure		
Quantitative Measure of the Text:	Range:	Associated Band Level:

Qualitative Measures

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION, PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM

Text Structure: (Briefly describe the structure, organization, and other features of the text.)

Language Features: *(Briefly describe the conventions and clarity of the language used in the text, including the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures.)*

Meaning/Purpose: *(Briefly explain the levels of meaning (Literary Text) or purpose (Informational text.)*

Knowledge Demands: *(Briefly describe the knowledge demands the text requires of students.)*

Socio-Cultural Considerations: *(briefly describe elements of the text which are specific to a culture, region, or understanding of society)*

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Reader and Task Considerations Guiding Questions

What aspects of the text will likely pose the most challenge for my students?

- **Content or theme concerns or challenges?**
- **Text structure challenges?**
- **Language feature challenges?**
- **Knowledge and experience demands?**
- **Motivation for interest in the text?**

What Common Core State Standards should I focus on when teaching this text?

- **What are natural areas of focus for this text?**
- **With what standards do my students need the most practice?**

What supports do I need to provide so that all of my students (even those who are struggling readers) can access the text?

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Application

Select a text/ Epic

Determine quantitative features (**lexile.com**)

Determine qualitative features (levels of meaning, text structure, language features)

Consider the reader and the task

Which instructional context would you use this text? (high teacher support/read a loud - low teacher support/ independent reading)

Do you think most of the students in your room classroom experience text of appropriate complexity for their grade level?

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A Word About Text Levels

What messages do leveled texts send to students?

- I think of you as a reader in terms of your reading level, rather than as what you can and are learning to do.
- I trust reading levels absolutely—not what you bring to reading.
- You might think you can read that higher level book, but you can't.

Rather than being used as a tool to help teachers examine texts for quantitative and qualitative dimensions, levels come to define students' reading diets.

Perception Shifts

- Focus more attention on how students read rather than only where in the gradient they read.
- Ensure that all students get to experience appropriately complex grade level text regularly.

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Debrief/Closure

Debrief: A key understanding about text complexity and reading diet.

Closure: How did we work as a community of learners today?

- Was everyone able to contribute?

- Did we have enough collaborative talk time?

- Were we respectful of everyone's contributions?