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Spotlight on....Close Reading Practices for K-12 Classrooms

Research has demonstrated that the complexity of text students can read is the greatest predictor of success in college (ACT, 2006). The unfortunate reality is that there is a wide gap between the complexity of text read by many high school students and the demands of college and career texts. Maine's updated English language arts (ELA) standards are designed to gradually increase the complexity of text over students' K-12 careers. These same standards place a strong emphasis on building students' academic vocabularies which helps to bolster comprehension. Additionally, the standards emphasize teaching students to obtain evidence from sources that can be used when composing—a crucial ability for college and career writing tasks. As educators examine their instructional practices to support students' proficiency with the ELA standards, understanding how to apply close reading practices can add a useful tool to their collection to work on all of these standards.

Close reading routines support students in learning to read complex text independently and proficiently. Close reading practices also tap into multiple standards from across the four strands—reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language. While close reading strategies have been used by English teachers at the secondary level for years, these instructional routines can be adjusted for use across the K-12 span and across multiple content areas. To help educators learn more about what close reading looks like in the primary grade levels as well as across content area classrooms, the Maine DOE has developed two webinars on these topics. We encourage you to view one or both of these webinars to further your understanding of how to utilize close reading in your own practice. The webinars can be accessed through the following links:

[Reading Like Detectives: Close Reading with Primary Grade Students](#)

[Close Reading in Middle and High School](#)

“A book burrows into your life in a very profound way because the experience of reading is not passive.”

~ Erica Jong



“Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.”

~ John Locke

Online Resources

The following online resources can support understanding of close reading as a tool for promoting student achievement of Maine’s ELA standards.

[Close Reading Prezi](#)

A prezi is a technology-based presentation that is more interactive and lively than a standard PowerPoint presentation. This prezi, entitled Close Reading and Text Dependent Questions by Justina Montano, provides an engaging examination of research about close reading while modeling the components of close reading routines across the K-12 span.

[Text Project](#)

The Text Project, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation founded in 2010. Its goal is to provide educators and parents with research-based information that supports beginning and struggling readers in attaining high levels of literacy through a variety of strategies and tools, particularly the texts used for reading instruction. The Text Project contains numerous resources related to text complexity as well as ideas for reading instruction and summer reading practice.

[Achieve the Core](#)

Achieve the Core is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping all students and teachers see their hard work lead to greater student achievement. Close reading model lessons with literary and informational texts for K-12 classrooms can be accessed through their website.

[College Board](#)

For secondary teachers, many tools are available to support instruction of close reading strategies but are listed as “rhetorical analysis.” One example is in AP preparation. Visit the College Board website for tools to support rhetorical analysis.

Professional Texts

Here are two professional texts that connect to the topic of close reading.

[Cracking the Common Core: Choosing and Using Texts in Grades 6-12](#)

by William Lewis, Sharon Walpole and Michael McKenna, 2014

This book guides teachers in grades 6-12 to strategically combine a



Upcoming Events

Maine Department of Education Training Calendar

To explore potential training sessions that may be of interest, be sure to check our extensive list of professional development offerings at:

www.maine.gov/doe/calendar/



variety of texts--including literature, informational texts, and digital sources--to meet their content-area goals and the demands of the Common Core State Standards. It presents clear-cut ways to analyze text complexity, design challenging text sets and help students get the most out of what they read. Provided are practical instructional ideas for building background knowledge, promoting engagement, incorporating discussion and text-based writing, and teaching research skills. Appendices offer sample unit plans for English language arts, history/social studies and science classrooms (Guilford Press Review).

Closer Reading: Grades 3-6

By Nancy Boyles, 2014

In this new text, literacy consultant Nancy Boyles provides practice ideas on how to:

- Connect close reading with other instructional practices
- Select rich texts and plan for initial close reading lessons
- Deliver initial and follow-up close reading lessons
- Coordinate comprehension strategies and close reading

Children's Literature

A particularly useful source of text for close reading routines is poetry. Poems are ideal for close reading because they can be reread multiple times in short periods of time. Additionally, poetry often uses unique structures, figurative language and a range of academic vocabulary ripe for study through close reading. Here are several poetry resources that might provide texts to use in close reading episodes.

K-5 Poetry Resources

The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury

Compiled by Jack Prelutsky, 1999

Poems to Learn By Heart

Compiled by Caroline Kennedy, 2013

[Poets.Org](#)

This online poetry resource contains a huge number of poems that can be searched by author and subject.



“You're never alone when you're reading a book.”

~ Susan Wiggs



Poetry 4 Kids

Poet Laurette, Ken Nesbitt, has compiled this website full of poem and poetry resources.

6-12 Poetry Resources

Poetry 180: A Poem a Day for High Schools

Presented by the Library of Congress

This website provides a list of 180 poems which you can download. The program offers information about how to read a poem out loud and a link to other poetry and literature resources.

Poetry Out Loud

This is a recitation competition which affords students the opportunity to demonstrate oral interpretation of a poem.

Poetry Slam

Are you interested in encouraging students to create original poems? Poetry Slam encourages the creation and presentation of poetry as performance art.

For additional information about this edition email:

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To subscribe to Literacy Links:

<https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/maineliteracy>

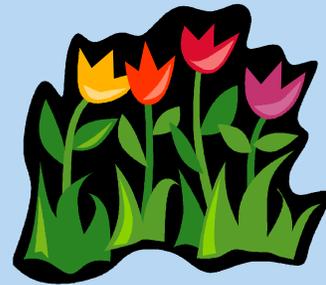
To view back editions of Literacy Links:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/ela/resources/literacy-links.html>

To view Maine DOE Newsroom and Commissioner's Updates:

<http://mainedoeneews.net/>

The Maine Department of Education's mission is to provide leadership and to collaborate with educators and learning communities in order to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to be successful.



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