Unit Item: Text Complexity

Operating Concepts and Principles:

Range, Quality, and Complexity of student Reading is measured with three factors:

- *Qualitative dimensions of text complexity.* In the Standards, *qualitative dimensions* and *qualitative factors* refer to those aspects of text complexity best measured or only measurable by an attentive human reader, such as levels of meaning or purpose; structure; language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands.

- *Quantitative dimensions of text complexity.* The terms *quantitative dimensions* and *quantitative factors* refer to those aspects of text complexity, such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion, that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and are thus today typically measured by computer software.

- *Reader and task considerations.* While the prior two elements of the model focus on the inherent complexity of text, variables specific to particular readers (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and to particular tasks (such as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed) must also be considered when determining whether a text is appropriate for a given student. Such assessments are best made by teachers employing their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject.

Examples (Do's and Don'ts):

Do

- Choose texts that are both non-fiction and fiction (50% each for K-3 and increasing more nonfiction starting in 4th grade)
- Select a wide range of text types including Stories, Dramas, Poetry, Literacy nonfiction
- Choose text students are interested in
- Include a variety of levels of texts so all students are reading different types of texts

Don't

- Select texts at just one grade level for the year
- Select text too hard or challenging for the students even though the topic matches the unit

Design Tips:

- Build a classroom library as you study the unit
- Ask students to add their books to the library
- Provide a wide variety of titles and genres that will expose student to different texts
- Show student how to read different text features to enable them to read on their own

Criteria for Success:

- Students are reading a variety of texts of increasing difficulty throughout the year
- Scaffolding is necessary and desirable, according to CCSS, but instruction must move generally toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence with the goal of students reading independently and proficiently within a given grade span by the end of the grade span (e.g. grades 2-3)

Additional Resources:

- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts K-5 and 6-12
- www.corestandards.org
- Common Core State Standards Appendix A