Reading Wars II: Part A
Why attend this session?

• Understand the rigor of the Common Core with a focus on text complexity, close reading and strategic instruction.

• Learn about the “either/or” mentality of the Reading Wars, and how to ground your work in the midst of change.

• Live as readers in order to apply these concepts in light of new demands facing K-12 teachers and students.
Introductions

**Generation Ready** formed in late 2012, combining the deep expertise and resources of two long-renowned education organizations: Editure/AUSSIE Professional Development and JBHM Education Group.

Today, we’re one of the largest providers of professional development and school improvement services in the country, partnering with districts, schools and state departments of education.

**We turn theory into practice to help students thrive.**
An Integrated Approach to PD

Generation Ready's Six Essential Practices of Effective Schools

- Rigorous standards-based curriculum
- A culture and climate that promotes learning
- Effective teaching in every classroom
- A schoolwide assessment framework
- Strong home, school and community partnerships
- Organizational structures that promote learning
Shift of the Common Core Standards

1. Balancing Informational and Literary Text
2. Building Knowledge in the Disciplines
3. Staircase of Complexity
4. Text-based Answers
5. Writing from Sources
6. Academic Vocabulary
Shift of the Common Core Standards

1. Balancing Informational and Literary Text

2. Building Knowledge in the Disciplines

3. Staircase of Complexity

4. Text-based Answers

5. Writing from Sources

6. Academic Vocabulary
Shift #3: Staircase of Complexity

In order to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts, each grade level requires a “step” of growth on the “staircase.”

Students read the **central, grade appropriate text** around which instruction is centered.

Teachers are patient, create more time and space in the curriculum for this **close and careful reading**, and provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for students reading below grade level.
How do we measure Text Complexity?

Measuring Text Complexity: Three Factors

- **Quantitative Evaluation of the Text** - Refers to word length or frequency, sentence length and text cohesion, that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently: readability measures

- **Qualitative Evaluation of the Text** - Best measured or only measurable by an attentive human reader, such as levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands

- **Matching Reader to Text and Task** - Reader variables such as motivation, knowledge and experiences and task variables such as purpose and the complexity generated by the task assigned and the questions posed

Inherent complexity of text

Variables specific to readers

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Student’s perspectives on what makes some texts difficult

- Some vocabulary is difficult; there is a lot to look at on a page; there is a lot to read on a page you get uninterested.
- There are some difficult words that I won’t remember what they mean: two different columns: you have to figure out what is most important: the text moves from one idea to another too quickly.
- The tight writing and the long paragraphs; it won’t help if there are paragraphs around the whole page instead of it being on one page; it is not broken down into small parts.
- Remembering the things; so many different ideas; to find out the most important bits.
- There are run on sentences and tricky words.
- A lot of the information is hard to remember.
- Trying to keep it all in for if there is a test.
- No lines between columns.
- No headings to tell me what I am about to read.
- It is a whole bunch of facts squished together and it is not entertaining like a story.
- When they don’t explain one idea and then just give more ideas.
- Not explaining one idea before going on to another.
- Long sentences make it hard to read.
- Small print.

*Secondary Literacy Pilot, 2010 NYC Department of Education*
# Text Complexity Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layout</th>
<th>Simple Texts</th>
<th>Somewhat Complex Texts</th>
<th>Complex Texts</th>
<th>Very Complex Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font</td>
<td>May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font</td>
<td>Longer passages of uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller more elaborate font</td>
<td>Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small densely packed print</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive illustrations that directly support and help interpret the written text</td>
<td>A range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text</td>
<td>A few illustrations that support the text</td>
<td>Minimal illustrations that support the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive signposting and enhancements</td>
<td>Reduced signposting and enhancements</td>
<td>Minimal signposting and/or enhancements</td>
<td>Integrated signposting conforming to literary devices. No enhancements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose and Meaning</th>
<th>Simple Texts</th>
<th>Somewhat Complex Texts</th>
<th>Complex Texts</th>
<th>Very Complex Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose usually stated explicitly in the title or in the beginning of the text</td>
<td>Purpose tends to be revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety</td>
<td>Purpose is implicit and may be revealed over the entirety of the text</td>
<td>Purpose implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One level of meaning</td>
<td>More than one level of meaning, with levels clearly distinguished from each other</td>
<td>Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify/separate</td>
<td>Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify/separate and interpret</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme is obvious and revealed early in the text</td>
<td>Theme is clear and revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety</td>
<td>Theme may be implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text</td>
<td>Theme is implicit or subtle, is often ambiguous, and is revealed over the entirety of the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Simple Texts</th>
<th>Somewhat Complex Texts</th>
<th>Complex Texts</th>
<th>Very Complex Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organization of the text is clear, chronological and/or easy to predict</td>
<td>The organization of the text may have additional characters, two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict</td>
<td>The organization of the text may include, subplots, time shifts and more complex characters</td>
<td>The organization of the text is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections among events or ideas are explicit and clear.</td>
<td>Connections among events or ideas are sometimes implicit or subtle.</td>
<td>Connections among events or ideas are often implicit or subtle</td>
<td>Connections among events or ideas are implicit or subtle throughout the text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One mode of communication is evident</td>
<td>May include different modes of communication</td>
<td>Includes smaller sections that utilize different modes of communication of varying complexity</td>
<td>Includes sustained sections that utilize different modes of communication and/or hybrid or non-linear texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Features</th>
<th>Simple Texts</th>
<th>Somewhat Complex Texts</th>
<th>Complex Texts</th>
<th>Very Complex Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly simple sentences</td>
<td>Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions</td>
<td>Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses</td>
<td>Many complex sentences, often containing intricate detail or concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple, literal language</td>
<td>Mainly literal, common language</td>
<td>Some figurative or literary language</td>
<td>Much figurative or literary language such as metaphor, analogy, and connotative language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary is mostly familiar</td>
<td>Some unfamiliar vocabulary</td>
<td>Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain specific (content) vocabulary</td>
<td>Includes extensive academic and domain specific (content) vocabulary, and possibly archaic language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Demands Fiction</th>
<th>Simple Texts</th>
<th>Somewhat Complex Texts</th>
<th>Complex Texts</th>
<th>Very Complex Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little assumed personal experience or cultural knowledge</td>
<td>Some assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge</td>
<td>Much assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge</td>
<td>Extensive, demanding, assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple ideas</td>
<td>Both simple and more complicated ideas</td>
<td>A range of recognizable ideas and challenging concepts</td>
<td>Many new ideas and/or complex, challenging concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sheena Hervey, Generation Ready, for NYC Department of Education* © Copyright Generation Ready 2013
Qualitative Traits of Texts
Our school has tools/processes in place to:
• Help teachers understand the qualitative demands for the grade level they teach
• Purposefully revise instructional text choices in order to provide students access to texts that are quantitatively appropriate for their grade level (using scaffolding when appropriate)
• Secure texts across a range of qualitative complexity

Quantitative Traits of Texts
Our school has tools/processes in place to:
• Help teachers understand the quantitative range of demand for the grade level they teach
• Purposefully revise instructional text choices in order to provide students access to texts that are quantitatively appropriate for their grade level (using scaffolding when appropriate)
• Secure texts across a range of quantitative demand

Reader and Task Considerations
Our school has tools/processes in place to:
• Determine the knowledge and experience students bring to reading in each discipline
• Determine which texts are most suitable for a given student or group of students
• Determine which texts are most suitable for a given task (assignment)

* Adapted from CCSS: ELA Appendix A
“A Network of Processing Systems for Reading”

* Irene Fountas & Gay Su Pinnell
Close Reading, what it IS and is NOT

“Close reading is not one thing; there are many versions of it.

Understand the steps. Get a structure for close reading in mind. But then let the text dictate the terms of engagement.

Some texts could be read closely in a couple of reads. Some might require attention to author’s word choices, while others might raise more structural issues.”

* Tim Shanahan, March 24, 2013
Close Reading, what it IS and is NOT

“Close reading was not put forth as a teaching technique. It was always espoused—when it was discussed overtly at all—as a sophisticated and powerful way of reading.

It is in that vein that close reading is being espoused now within Common Core. Close reading is an outcome or a goal. Close reading is NOT a teaching technique that we all now must adopt. It is an outcome to be strived for.”

* Tim Shanahan, March 24, 2013
Close Reading, what it IS and is NOT

1. Close readings involve interpretations of what a text conveyed both in terms of the message coded into the text by the author and the choices that the author made in how to convey that message;

2. Close readings require a lot of attention to the text itself (note: we must therefore infer that close reading requires short texts or excerpts from longer texts);

3. Close reading usually will require at least partial re-readings of the text.

How these play out should not be easily described, because they should vary a bit each time depending on the demands and qualities of the text to be read closely.

* Tim Shanahan, March 24, 2013
Thank You!

We are the nation’s leading partner for educators with roots that go back 20 years, working with superintendents, principals, and teachers to elevate student achievement through professional learning services and targeted school and district solutions.

Generation Ready offers a unique system of job-embedded consultancy, best practices and embedded technology that has helped build teacher skills and capacity at thousands of schools. It’s professional development with a difference – evidence-based and proven to deliver results.