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Texts, Tasks, and Talk: Instruction to Meet the Common Core in Grades 9–12

By Brad Cawn

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Texts, Tasks, and Talk: Instruction to Meet the Common Core in Grades 9–12* by Brad Cawn. *Texts, Tasks, and Talk* focuses on strategies for aligning classroom instruction and its goals with the intellectual requirements of next-generation standards, including the Common Core.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Five Essentials to Teaching With Next-Generation Standards

1. List the five key ideas for teaching with next-generation standards.
2. In short, what steps do teachers need to take to build their instructional ladders?
3. How does the classroom process of *reading closely* differ from the process of *close reading*?
4. Why does progression carry more importance than prioritization when applying next-generation standards?
5. To create a learning progression that is suitable to instruction, what elements need to be included in the creation process?

Chapter 2

Shifting to Complex Texts

1. What is the fundamental difference between next-generation standards and earlier state learning benchmarks?
2. According to Louise Rosenblatt, with which two kinds of reading does a mature reader engage?
3. What did a 2006 ACT report's findings reveal about students' ability to read complex texts on their own?
4. What two vital factors affect a reader's ability to comprehend a text?
5. Why are textbooks by themselves insufficient for helping students master the Common Core standards? What necessary features do textbooks lack?

Chapter 3

Creating a Long-Term Vision for Complex Texts

1. What questions should teachers answer as they strengthen their curriculum and instruction to meet the necessary standards?
2. In your own words, define a *text staircase*. What are some potential sources of evidence for building a text staircase?
3. List the three factors to consider when selecting appropriate supplemental texts.
4. Briefly describe the five reader and task considerations that educators should address as they decide what contexts and tasks will be included in their instruction.
5. What questions do teachers need to answer in order to create a fully mapped course plan?

Chapter 4

Preparing Texts for Daily Instruction

1. When deciding to use a complex primary source, what should the goal be?
2. Define a *text set*. What questions can help manage the brainstorming and developing of text sets?
3. What instructional decisions go into excerpting texts? What are the general rules for text excerpting?
4. How should teachers mirror expectations placed on students when they adapt a text?
5. What three-pronged approach can help make instruction adaptation decisions?

Chapter 5

Collaborating—Reading to Teach

1. List the six steps that educators should take as they comprehend a text they are considering using as a teaching tool.
2. What questions can teachers ask as they check that they collectively understand a text they will be using with students?
3. In the text complexity examination process, what do *organization* and *intertextuality* refer to?
4. Briefly describe the vital features for carrying out high-quality collaboration and creating practical instruction plans.
5. What two purposes do reading and discussing in structured ways serve?

Chapter 6

Creating Rigorous Tasks

1. In your own words, describe what should occur in the cognitive processes of enactment and synthesis.
2. Consider the sample intellectual problems listed on page 82, and then devise your own intellectual problem that reflects the subject matter covered in your classroom.
3. What qualities do analytical writing tasks include?
4. Briefly describe the steps that can help foster strategy instruction that supports reading and writing of complex texts.
5. What does chunking instruction into mini-units enable teachers to do on behalf of students' learning?

Chapter 7

Teaching Close Reading

1. What are the two common uses of close reading?
2. What four foci ensure that students read a text closely and effectively engage with the text?
3. In your own words, define *mentor texts* and *inquiry frames*.
4. What three components of text must students be able to show comprehension of as they engage in sustained reading work?
5. For annotation to be an effective part of students' close-reading process, what must it help students do? How can this be accomplished? Also, for annotation to be effective for teachers, what must it do?

Chapter 8

Setting the Standard for High-Quality Talk

1. In the sample framework for organizing discussions about texts, what happens in the Setting Up for Discussion portion, the Participating in Discussion portion, and the Assessing and Extending Discussion portion?
2. Briefly describe what is involved in creating purposeful talk, structuring talk, teaching talk, facilitating talk, and evaluating talk.
3. To inspire discussions that lead to independence and proficiency, what two kinds of structure are needed?
4. What are the common features of exploratory talk? What kinds of responses does exploratory talk pursue?
5. According to Anna Soter and her colleagues, what three types of reasoning words most commonly come up in a critical-analytic approach to text discussion?

Chapter 9

Moving Collaboration to the Core

1. Why are there no experts on next-generation standards?
2. List the steps of the inquiry cycle. Why does the author use the term *inquiry cycle* to describe this process?
3. What questions should the debriefing process focus on? What can teacher teams determine by answering these questions?
4. What steps can teacher teams take to undertake the inquiry approach?
5. How do effective teachers learn from and through practice? What actions should teachers take in order to gain a richer knowledge base for teaching effectively?