

Research and the Common Core: Can the Romance Survive?

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Goals for Today

- Remind ourselves of what the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are designed to do.
- Examine their potential
 - New possibilities: The high road on curriculum, text, and cognitive challenge
 - Explore their dark side: Pot holes, sink holes, and black holes
- Discuss some defensible positions to take on curriculum and pedagogy as we move into the all important implementation phase

Link to slides will be posted on the textproject website

A Confession:

My Relationship with CCSS

- Member of the Validation Committee
- Background work on text complexity with a grant from Gates Foundation
- Long (and occasionally checkered) history with standards going back to
 - NBPTS: Standards for Teaching
 - IRA/NCTE Standards
- Research and development work on assessment, especially the sorts of assessments that are privileged by the CCSS for ELA

What sold me on the standards



What they said about reading

- Students who meet the Standards readily undertake the **close, attentive, reading that is at the heart of understanding** and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the **critical reading** necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally. They actively seek the **wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement** with high-quality literary and informational texts that **builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens world views**. They reflexively demonstrate the **cogent reasoning and use of evidence** essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. (CCSSO/NGA, 2010, p. 3)

So what's not to Like?

- Nothing
- Everything I believe in about literacy learning

What they said about teacher choice

- By emphasizing required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. Thus, the Standards **do not mandate** such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. **Teachers are thus free** to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their **professional judgment** and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards. (CCSSO/NGA, 2010, p. 4).

Just the right balance

- Let the body politic at every level have a voice in the big overarching goals
- At every level along the way, from the state to the district to the school to the classroom, leave a little room for each player to place his or her “signature” on the effort...
- Identity, buy-in, the right kind of political negotiation among levels within the system...

So.....

- In 2010, I signed on the dotted line to say these standards are worthy of our professional support and implementation
- Ready to go on the road and seek converts.
- But the road to paradise has been a little rocky...

Today's Agenda

- Of the 5 research assumptions I have found that underlie the CCSS, examine the 2 that most pertain to comprehension, critique, and reasoning.
- For each assumption, answer 2 questions:
 - Is there research available to justify the claims implicit in the standards?
 - Is there reason to believe that the implementation of the standards will be guided by this research?

Research Assumptions of the CCSS

1. We know **how reading develops** across levels of expertise.
2. Literacy is best developed and enacted in the service **acquiring disciplinary expertise**.
3. **Standards** establish ends or **goals**; **teachers** and schools control the **means**
4. Students read better and learn more when they experience **adequate challenge** in the texts they encounter.
5. Comprehension involves **building models** of what a text **says**, what it **means**, and how it can be **used**.

Research Assumptions: Today's Focus and Order

- 1 (5). Comprehension involves **building models** of what a text **says**, what it **means**, and how it can be **used**.
- 2 (1). We know **how reading develops** across levels of expertise.
 - (2) Literacy is best developed and enacted in the service acquiring disciplinary expertise.
 - (3) Standards establish ends or goals; teachers and schools control the means
 - (4) Students read better and learn more when they experience adequate challenge in the texts they encounter.

Other assumptions are discussed

in:

- Pearson, P. D. (2013). Research foundations for the Common Core State Standards in English language arts. In S. Neuman and L. Gambrell (Eds.), *Quality reading instruction in the age of Common Core State Standards* (pp. 237-262). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Prepublication pdf and these slides at:
<http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/research/pdavidpearson>
- Link to these are on the textproject website

Assumption #1: Comprehension involves building models of what a text says, what it means, and how it can be used.

<http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/research/pdavidpearson>

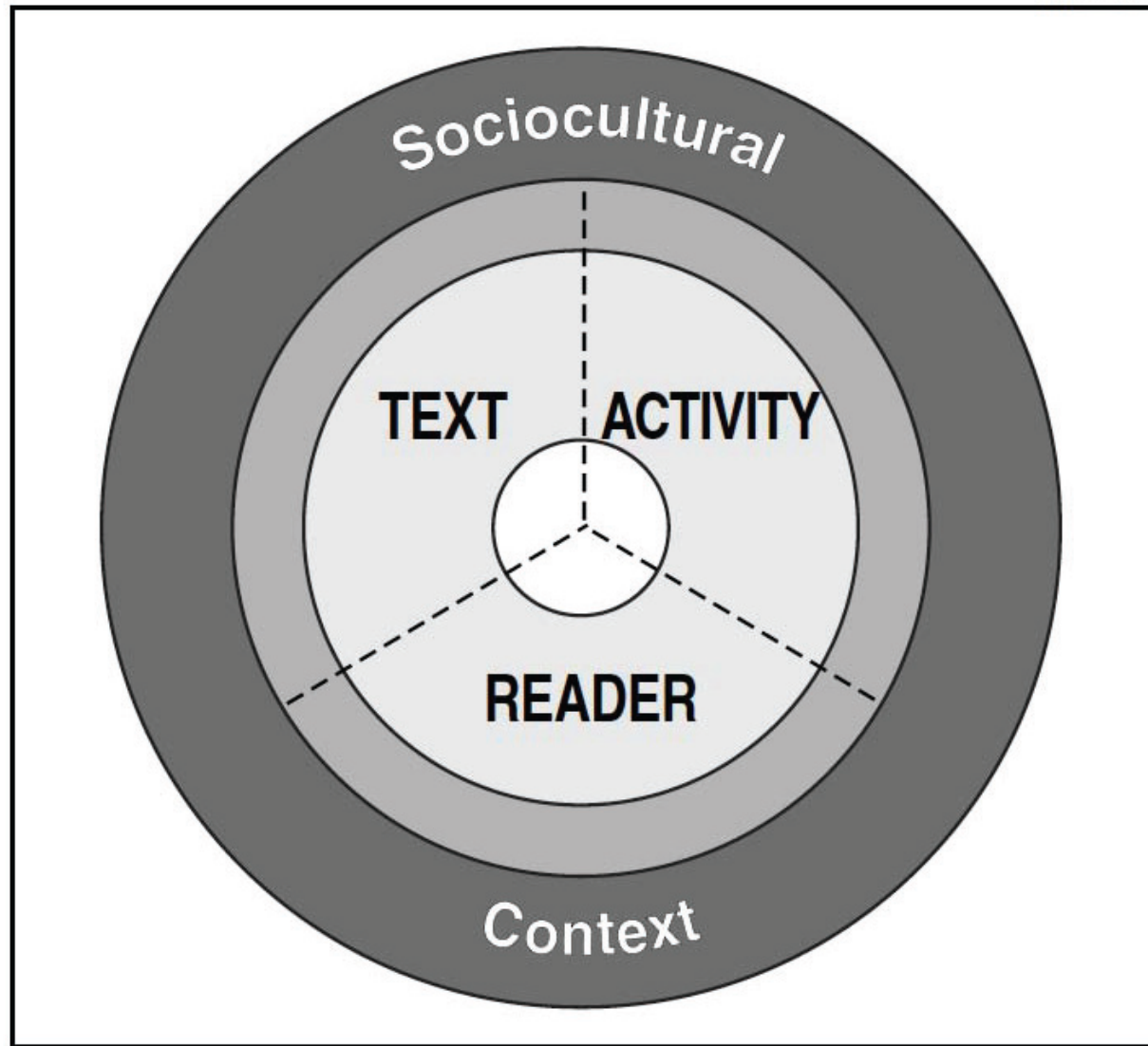
Prevailing research-based wisdom about comprehension...

- Kintsch's Construction-Integration Model
- Rand Report on Comprehension




Kintsch, W. (1998). *Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Rand



Kintsch's Construction-Integration Model

- As you read, for each unit, you
 - Construct a Textbase 
 - Integrate the Text and Knowledge Base to create a Situation Model 
 - Incorporate information from the Situation Model back into your knowledge base
 - Use your knowledge to nudge the world a bit. 
 - Start all over again with the next bit of reading
 - C-I-C-I, anon anon

My claim in 2010: The vision of comprehension in the CCSS maps onto important theoretical, assessment, and curricular research

- National Assessment of Educational Progress
- Four Resources Model of Freebody and Luke
- Kintsch's Construction-Integration Model

<http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/research/pdavidpearson>

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Common Core

- Standards 1-3: Key ideas and details
- Standards 4-6: Craft and structure
- Standards 7-9: Integration of knowledge and ideas

<http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/research/pdavidpearson>

NAEP

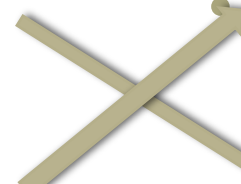
- Locate and Recall
- Interpret and Integrate
- Critique and Evaluate

CCSS

- Key ideas and details
- Craft and structure
- Integration of knowledge and ideas

NAEP

- Locate and Recall
- Interpret and Integrate
- Critique and Evaluate



Freebody and Luke's 4 Resources

- Reader as Decoder: Get the message: **SAYS**
- Reader as Meaning Maker: Integrate with background knowledge: **MEANS**
- Reader as Text Analyst: What's the real message and how is it crafted
- Reader as Text Critic: What's the subtext? The hidden (or not so hidden) agenda? **DOES**

Consistent with Cognitive Views of Reading

Locate a	Key Ideas and Details	Text says
Integrate	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Text means
Critique	Craft and Structure	Text does

For those who want to see everything at once...

Pearson	Kintsch	4 Resources	NAEP	CCSS
Says	Text Base	Decoder	Locate and Recall	Key Ideas and Details
Means	Situation Model	Meaning Maker	Interpret and Integrate	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Does	Put Knowledge to Work	Text Analyst	Critique and Evaluate	Craft and Structure

These consistencies provide...

- Credibility
- Stretch
- Research “patina”

I was ready to go on the road to sell these standards to anyone who would listen

And now... for something
completely different



Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3–12

David Coleman • Susan Pimentel

Text dependency of questions

- *Regarding the nature of texts:* “A significant percentage of **tasks and questions are text dependent...** Rigorous text-dependent questions require students to demonstrate that they not only can **follow the details of what is explicitly stated** but also are able to **make valid claims that square with all the evidence in the text.** Text-dependent questions **do not require** information or evidence from **outside the text** or texts; they establish what follows and what does not follow **from the text itself.**” (page 6)

Stay close to the text

- ***Staying close to the text.*** “Materials make the **text the focus of instruction** by avoiding features that distract from the text. Teachers’ guides or students’ editions of curriculum materials should highlight the reading selections...Given the focus of the Common Core State Standards, publishers should be **extremely sparing in offering activities that are not text based.**”

My concern

- We will operationally define text dependent as literal, factual questions
- Forgetting that LOTS of other questions/tasks are also text-reliant
- Compare
 - What were two reasons pioneers moved west? literal
 - What does the author believe about the causes of westward expansion in the United States? interpretive
 - How valid is the claim that author X writes from an ideological perspective? critical
- YOU DON'T NEED A LITERAL FACTUAL QUESTION TO PROMOTE CLOSE READING...
- Fundamental misunderstanding about reading theory:
 - Every text-dependent question is based on the use of prior knowledge. I wonder why Coleman and Pimentel are so down on prior knowledge?

Text *before* all else

“The Common Core State Standards call for students to **demonstrate a careful understanding of what they read before engaging their opinions, appraisals, or interpretations.** Aligned materials should therefore require students to **demonstrate that they have followed the details and logic of an author’s argument before** they are asked to **evaluate** the thesis or **compare** the thesis to others.” (page 9)

My concern

- We will view literal comprehension as a **prerequisite** to inferential or critical comprehension.
- Compare
 - We could read text X. Then read text Y. Then compare them on Z.
 - Or just ask them to conduct a comparative reading of X and Y on Z.
- Sometimes the **comparison** or **critique** question **better rationalizes** the close reading

Close reading

- The Common Core State Standards place a high priority on the close, sustained reading of complex text, beginning with Reading Standard 1. Such reading emphasizes the particular over the general and strives to focus on what lies within the *four corners* of the text.

My concern

- Lots of things lie within the four corners of the text—some general and some specific. Writers use both all the time.
 - How long is something in the text? For the page, the folio, the chapter, the book?
 - Is there a point, say when you are on page 10, at which you can't tell the difference between what you knew before you set eyes on the text and what you learned as you were reading page 3 of the text?
- The text drags prior knowledge along even if you don't want it to.
 - Schema Theory Tenet: Words INSTANTIATE schemata
 - **Business had been slow since the oil crisis...**
 - The text cries out for a schema to attach itself to.
 - Ideas that don't connect don't last long enough to allow learning (assimilation or accommodation) to occur
 - They drop out of memory pretty fast
 - In one eye and out the other!

Yet another role for knowledge: Monitoring

- How do we know that our understanding is good enough?
- We use two standards...
 - Does it square with the textbase I have built thus far in today's reading?
 - The last clause, sentence, paragraph, page, and more...
 - Does it square with what I know to be true about the world?

So what about Prior Knowledge

- Why has it taken a beating in the Publishers' Criteria
- One thought: Too much Indulgence at the trough of prior knowledge
 - Too much Know, not enough Want to Learn and Learn
 - Too much picture walk
 - Too much story swapping about our experiences with roadrunners before reading...
- Let's right the wrongs
- Need a mid course correction not a pendulum swing
 - Knowledge in proper perspective?
 - Balanced view of knowledge?
 - Knowledge in the service of understanding

But asking kids to hold their prior knowledge at bay...

- Is like
- Asking dogs not to bark or
- Leaves not to fall.
- It's in the nature of things
- Dogs bark.
- Leaves fall.
- Readers use their prior knowledge to render text sensible and figure out what to retain for later.

So what's a body to do?

- Embrace the construct of close reading
 - But make sure that it applies to several purposes for reading

This more comprehensive view of close reading is actually more consistent with historical precedents of close reading from the 1920s through the 1960s.

- Reading to critique
 - how good is the argument or the craft or
 - what is his bias/slant/perspective)
 - All of these approaches interrogate the text as an evidentiary base.
- Embrace the virtuous cycle
 - Knowledge begets text comprehension begets knowledge...

More a body can do...

- Stay closer to the standards than to the interpretations of the standards we have seen thus far.
- Enact a full model of close reading
 - Four Resources works for me
 - Just make sure to encompass literal, interpretive, and critical reading tasks
- Pay more attention to the anchor standards than to the grade level instantiations of them.
- Why?
 - I'm not convinced that they got the sequencing right (that is the next assumption I examine).
 - What matters most is the students are traversing the full range of cognitive moves involved in text understanding.

Assumption 2: We know how reading develops across levels of expertise.

Table 1. Progression of Standard 3 (How elements develop and interact) for Literary and Informational Texts Across Grades K-5

Grade	Literary	Informational
K		Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
1	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.
2	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions)	Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
4	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
5		

What is the logic that moves us from one grade to the next...and the next...?

Transitional Moves...

- Change the level of **support**: The **removal of scaffolding** in moving from K-1 for both L and I texts.
- Change the **number** of entities involved in the process. In moving L3-L4, the number of entities increases—from **characters** in L3 to **characters, settings or events** in L4.
- Change the **type** of entities: In moving from I1-I2 there is a change from **general to discipline-specific** entities. In moving from I4-I5, the change is from explaining **entities** to explaining **relationships and interactions**.
- Increase the **cognitive** demand of the **process**: There is a change from **description to explanation** in moving from L2-L3 and from I3 to I4; also moving from **explanation** to **comparison** in L4-L5.
- Add **evidentiary** requirements: This is the move represented in I3-I4.

Table 1. Progression of Standard 3 (How elements develop and interact) for Literary and Informational Texts Across Grades K-5

Grade	Literary	Informational
K	With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information.	With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information.
1	Describe major events in a story, using key details.	Describe individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
2	Describe how characters and events and challenges interact in a story.	Describe the connections between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.
3	Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
4	Describe a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).	Explain how individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
5	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	Explain the relationships between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

↓ SCAFFOLD

↓ SCAFFOLD

↑ DEMAND

Δ TYPE

↑ DEMAND ↑ #

+ EVIDENCE

Δ TYPE ↑ DEMAND

Standard 4: Literature: 6, 7, & 8

- 6. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a **specific word choice** on meaning and tone.
- 7. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of **rhymes and other repetitions of sounds** (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- 8. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of **specific word choices** on meaning and tone, including **analogies or allusions** to other texts.

What's the basis of progressions?

- Research?
- Tradition?
- Professional consensus?
- Best guesses?

My evidence

- Talked to the Standards Writers
- How did you decide on the grade level to grade level progressions
 - Evidence
 - Models for exemplary standards
 - States
 - High achieving countries like Finland and Korea
 - Professional consensus among the writers and reviewers

Implications of this approach

- The degree to which research is reflected in these progressions is a function of
 - Whether the models they examined were research-based
 - Whether the mental models of the authors/reviewers were research-based.
- Classic consensus process.
- Doesn't distinguish it from most other standards efforts.
 - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
 - State standards
 - NAEP achievement levels
- What does distinguish the CCSS from these other efforts:
 - Grade level specificity

So what to do about the sequencing problem

- Watch carefully:
 - Is the 4th grade version harder than the 3rd grade version?
 - Are the width of the steps between grade levels about the same size?
 - Do we postpone the task till it shows up? Do we dump it after it is no longer required?
- When you find discontinuities, send them to the CCSS folks or to me.
- Concern yourself more with the big picture (the anchor standards) than the specific versions of the standards at each level.

Hopes for the standards...

- I'm hangin' in there for the near term.
- They are still the best game in town
- They are moving in the right direction in terms of reading theory and research—deeper learning.
- Hoping they prove to be a living document
 - Regularly revised with advances in
 - our knowledge of reading
 - research on their “consequences”

So, can the romance survive?

- Fleeting infatuation or long-term commitment?
- Depends on two kinds of leadership
 - Leadership among the founders and authors of the standards to respond to feedback from the field
 - Leadership among those of us who implement the standards
 - Speak truth to power
 - Make and share improvements

<http://www.scienceandliteracy.org/research/pdavidpearson>