Green Lights & Red Flags

For CCSS Literacy Implementation

- **Scientific & historical texts** are given the same time and weight as literacy text.
- **Informational text** is more than 50% of what students read throughout the day.
- **Information texts** are selected to help students deepen their understanding of topics and themes over time.
- Students are asked questions that give them the opportunity to share evidence from text.
- Activities strengthen students’ listening skills as well as their speaking skills.
- Students write frequently about what they are reading and learning, drawing from evidence in the text.
- **Multiple texts**, presented in diverse formats, are used to integrate information on a given topic.
- **Primary sources** of information are used widely.
- **Reading & writing strategies** are presented consistently across all content areas.
- All content area teachers explicitly teach reading & writing strategies essential to learning and communicating in their discipline.

- Literature is the sole or vast majority of text used in ELA classes.
- All or majority of text is narrative in structure.
- Texts do not logically develop learning about a specific topic or theme.
- Teachers present the information in the text rather than expecting students to read for understanding.
- Text is used as a reference rather than a source of information.
- No connection between the reading and writing assignment.
- No instruction is provided in reading or writing strategies appropriate to the content area.
- A single text is used for all reading assignments.

Adapted from Sue Z. Beers, 2012
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- Rich & rigorous conversations are based on text.
- Students closely analyze text with evidence to back up their claims and conclusions.
- The majority of text-based questions focuses conversations & writing and require students to utilize information from text in their answers.
- Questions are of high value – they are worth thinking about & answering.
- Questions move beyond what is directly stated and ask students to make nontrivial inferences from evidence in the text.
- Background knowledge is used to illuminate the text and not replace it.
- Students explore how specific words, details, structure, & organization of text impact the meaning of the text as a whole.
- Students are required to use more than one source of information in their writing, in addition to writing in response to a single text.
- Students engage in multiple short research projects as well as more sustained research.
- Students can independently conduct research, without direction from the teacher.
- Evidence from text is required in writing assignments and oral discussions.
- The majority of writing emphasizes the use of evidence to inform or make an argument.
- Student writing analyzes and synthesizes sources of information and present their findings that include careful analysis, well-defended claims & clear information.
- Students must have read and analyzed a text in order to respond appropriately to a prompt.
- There is a consistent and prevalent focus on argument, opinion and informative writing.
- Frequent, short, constructed-response to text-dependent questions.
- All analytic writing requires the use of evidence as students paraphrase, infer and integrate ideas from text.

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All students encounter and are engaged with the same, grade-appropriate, high-quality text. Appropriate scaffolding is provided to help students understand complex text, based on their individual needs, building toward the goal of independent reading. Reading strategies are embedded in the activity of reading rather than as a separate body of material. Students are required to think critically about the text. Instruction is often centered on multiple close readings in order to develop deep understanding.

Teachers are aware of resources and know how to identify and evaluate the complexity of text in their content areas. Students read complex texts from a wide variety of text structures (narrative, cause and effect, compare and contrast, etc.)

Focus on words which are prevalent in complex texts across content areas (those words that constitute the vocabulary of a mature reader), as well as content-specific words to make meaning from text.

Instruction is provided on how to use context clues in the text to determine the meaning of words.

Direct instruction/support for understanding words students may not be able to figure out on their own using solely the text.

Varied contexts, different meanings for the same word, are provided for teaching word meaning.

Instruction causes students to think about words – why / how specific words are used, how words change the meaning of text, varied meanings based on context, and word choice.

Instruction is driven by addressing the diverse vocabulary levels of students.

Students are expected to apply appropriate academic vocabulary in writing and in discussions.

Students always receive different levels of text based on their reading ability.

No instruction is provided for reading strategies to approach complex text.

Students are given a summary of the text prior to reading it.

No support is provided for students who read below grade level.

Majority of text uses a single text structure.

Vocabulary instruction is limited to students copying definitions from dictionaries.

Vocabulary instruction is disconnected from the text under study.

Vocabulary tests simply ask students to match the word with its definition.

Words selected for vocabulary work are not related to the content or text being studied.

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