CONTENT AREA READING

Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum

TWELFTH EDITION

RICHARD T. VACCA | JO ANNE L. VACCA | MARYANN MRAZ

Content Area Reading

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Twelfth Edition

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Is Available On Request

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PEARSON

eText plus LLV:
ISBN 10: 0-13-406882-3
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-406882-4

LLV:
ISBN 10: 0-13-422806-5
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-422806-8

eText:
ISBN 10: 0-13-406886-6
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-406886-2

To Joseph M.,

a high school student in Kenya, who, like so many others,
loves learning and works hard at his studies. May he do so in peace and safety;
he has much to offer our world.

—Rich and Jo Anne Vacca

To friends

who are cherished as family,
especially the Chapmans,
the Kavels, and Auntie Gail and Uncle Doug Koller.

—Maryann Mraz

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Brief Contents

Preface xv

Part I Learners, Literacies, and Texts

Chapter 1 Literacy Matters 1

Chapter 2 Learning with New Literacies 25

Chapter 3 Culturally Responsive Teaching in Diverse Classrooms 51

Chapter 4 Assessing Students and Texts 82

Chapter 5 Planning Instruction for Content Literacy 111

Part II Instructional Practices and Strategies

Chapter 6 Activating Prior Knowledge and Interest 145

Chapter 7 Guiding Reading Comprehension 170

Chapter 8 Developing Vocabulary and Concepts 201

Chapter 9 Writing Across the Curriculum 239

Chapter 10 Studying Text 271

Chapter 11 Learning with Multiple Texts 301

Chapter 12 Supporting Effective Teaching with Professional Development 334

Appendix A: Affixes with Invariant Meanings 356

Appendix B: Commonly Used Prefixes with Varying Meanings 359

Appendix C: Graphic Organizers with Text Frames 361

Contents

Preface xv

Part I Learners, Literacies, and Texts

Chapter 1 Literacy Matters 1

Chapter 1 Overview 1
Organizing Principle 1
Frame of Mind 3
Effective Teaching in Content Areas 4
What Makes a Teacher Effective? 4
Effective Teachers and the Common Core State Standards 5
■ Box 1.1 / Voices from the Field: Erin, Literacy Coach 9
Effective Teachers Differentiate Instruction for a Wide Range of Students 9
Literacy in a Twenty-First Century World 10
■ Box 1.2 / Voices from the Field: Charles Robinson, International Educator 11
New Literacies, New Ways of Learning 12
Adolescent Literacy 13
■ Box 1.3 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Fifteen Elements of Effective Adolescent Literacy Programs 14
Disciplinary Literacy in Perspective 16
■ Box 1.4 / What Is Disciplinary Literacy? 16
Disciplinary Literacy: A Brief Historical Overview 17
Reading to Learn in a Discipline 18
The Role of Prior Knowledge in Reading 19
Reading as a Meaning-Making Process 20
Reading as a Strategic Process 21
Reading Comprehension 22
Check Your Understanding 23
Looking Back, Looking Forward 24
eResources 24

Chapter 2 Learning with New Literacies 25

Chapter 2 Overview 25
Organizing Principle 25
Frame of Mind 27
New Literacies and Multiliteracies: An Overview 28
From the Arts to Media Literacy 28
Nonlinear Characteristics of New Literacies 29
Linking In-School with Out-of-School Literacies 30
■ Box 2.1 / Voices from the Field: Sarah, a BYOT High School Earth Science Teacher 30
New Literacies and Content Standards 32
■ Box 2.2: ISTE Educational Technology Standards for Students 33
Engage and Empower Learning: Getting Started 34
Model How to Think and Learn in Multimodal Environments 34
Developing a Framework for New Literacies 35
Show Learners How to Evaluate Websites 36
Strategies for Writing to Learn 38
Blogs and Wikis 40
Threaded Discussions 42

Strategies for Multimodal Learning 46
Internet Workshops 46
Internet Inquiries 46
Adapting Learning Strategies with Technology 48
Check Your Understanding 50
Looking Back, Looking Forward 50
eResources 50

Chapter 3 Culturally Responsive Teaching in Diverse Classrooms 51

Chapter 3 Overview 51
Organizing Principle 51
Frame of Mind 53
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 54
Teaching for Cultural Understanding 55
■ **Box 3.1:** Understanding the Components of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 56
Integrating Multicultural Literature Across the Curriculum 57
Multicultural Books: A Closer Look 57
Ways of Knowing in a Culturally Responsive Classrooms 59
Funds of Knowledge 60
Drawing on Students' Funds of Knowledge Across Content Areas 61
Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Instruction 62
Linguistic Differences in Today's Schools 64
■ **Box 3.2 / Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Standard English Is Not the Only English 64
Dialect Use in the Classroom 65
■ **Box 3.3 / Voices from the Field:** Lakia, Middle School English Language Arts Teacher 65
English Language Learning 67
Books for English Learners 70
■ **Box 3.4:** Picture Books in Mathematics 72
Sheltered Instruction for English Learners 73
The SIOP Model 73
Adapting Instruction in Content Classrooms 73
■ **Box 3.5 / Voices from the Field:** Cindy, Middle Grades EL Teacher 76
Check Your Understanding 80
Looking Back, Looking Forward 80
eResources 81

Chapter 4 Assessing Students and Texts 82

Chapter 4 Overview 82
Organizing Principle 82
Frame of Mind 84
Approaches to Assessment 84
Legislation, Standards, and Accountability 85
High-Stakes Testing: Issues and Concerns 86
Standardized Testing: What Teachers Need to Know 88
Authentic Assessment: The Teacher's Role 89
■ **Box 4.1 / Disciplinary Literacy:** Using Assessments to Teach What Matters 91
Portfolio Assessment in a Digital Age 93
Adapting Portfolios to Content Area Classes 95
■ **Box 4.2 / Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Steps in the Implementation of Portfolios 96
Checklists and Interviews 100
Rubrics and Self-Assessments 100
Assessing Text Complexity 102
Content Area Reading Inventories 104
Reading Rates 106
Readability 106
■ **Box 4.3 / Voices from the Field:** Brian, Middle School Language Arts Teacher 107
Check Your Understanding 109
Looking Back, Looking Forward 110
eResources 110

Chapter 5 Planning Instruction for Content Literacy 111

Chapter 5 Overview 111
Organizing Principle 111
Frame of Mind 113
Explicit Strategy Instruction 114
- Box 5.1: RTI for Struggling Adolescent Learners: Planning, Implementing, and Differentiating Strategies to Meet the Needs of All Learners 115

Strategy Awareness and Explanation 115
Strategy Demonstration and Modeling 117
Guided Practice 117
Strategy Application 117
Planning Lessons 117
Lesson Plan Formats 118
B–D–A Instructional Framework 118
Some More Examples of B–D–A–Centered Lessons 123
Planning Units of Study 125
Components of a Well-Designed Unit 126
An Inquiry/Research Emphasis in Units of Study 128
- Box 5.2 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Procedures for Guiding Inquiry/Research Projects 129

A Multiple-Text Emphasis in Units of Study 130
Planning Collaborative Interactions 131
Cooperative Learning 132
Small-Group Processes 137
Planning Discussions 140
Creating an Environment for Discussion 142
Check Your Understanding 143
Looking Back, Looking Forward 144
eResources 144

Part II Instructional Practices and Strategies

Chapter 6 Activating Prior Knowledge and Interest 145

Chapter 6 Overview 145
Organizing Principle 145
Frame of Mind 147
Self-Efficacy and Motivation 148
- Box 6.1: Surveying Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy 148
- Box 6.2 / Disciplinary Literacy: Thinking Before Reading: Using Vocabulary to Help Students Prepare to Read 150
- Box 6.3 / Voices from the Field: Drew, Mathematics Coach 152

Curiosity and Interest 154
- Box 6.4 / Voices from the Field: Derrick, High School Assistant Principal 154

Creating Story Impressions 156
Establishing Problematic Perspectives 156
Guided Imagery 159
- Box 6.5 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: PreP Procedure 161

Making Predictions 161
Anticipation Guides 162
Adapting Anticipation Guides in Content Areas 162
Imagine, Elaborate, Predict, and Confirm (IEPC) 164
Question Generation 166
Active Comprehension 167
ReQuest 167
- Box 6.6 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: ReQuest Procedure 168

Check Your Understanding 168
Looking Back, Looking Forward 169
eResources 169

Chapter 7 Guiding Reading Comprehension 170

Chapter 7 Overview 170
Organizing Principle 170
Frame of Mind 172
Modeling Comprehension Strategies 172
- Using Think-Alouds to Model Comprehension Strategies 173
- Using Reciprocal Teaching to Model Comprehension Strategies 175
- Using Question–Answer Relationships (QARs) to Model Comprehension Strategies 176
- Questioning the Author (QtA) 178

■ Box 7.1 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Steps in a QtA Lesson 179

Instructional Strategies 180
- The KWL Strategy 181
- Discussion Webs 185
- Guided Reading Procedure (GRP) 189

■ Box 7.2 / Voices from the Field: Rebecca, Middle School Reading Specialist 191
- Intra-Act 192
- Directed Reading–Thinking Activity (DR–TA) 194

Reading Guides 196
- Comprehension Levels 197
- Three-Level Comprehension Guides 198

Check Your Understanding 199
Looking Back, Looking Forward 199
eResources 200

Chapter 8 Developing Vocabulary and Concepts 201

Chapter 8 Overview 201
Organizing Principle 201
Frame of Mind 203

Box 8.1 / Voices from the Field: Joyce, Middle School Teacher 206

Experiences, Concepts, and Words 207
- What Are Concepts? 208
- Concept Relationships: An Example 208

Using Graphic Organizers to Make Connections Among Key Concepts 210
- A Graphic Organizer Walk-Through 210
- Showing Students How to Make Their Own Connections 214

Activating What Students Know About Words 215
- Word Exploration 215
- Brainstorming 215
- List–Group–Label 215
- Word Sorts 216
- Knowledge Ratings 218

■ Box 8.2 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Two Examples of Knowledge Ratings 218

Defining Words in the Context of Their Use 219

■ Box 8.3 / Disciplinary Literacy: Using Problem-Solving Circles to Help Math Make Sense 220
- Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy 221
- Concept of Definition (CD) Word Maps 222

Reinforcing and Extending Vocabulary Knowledge and Concepts 223
- Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) 223
- Categorization Activities 224

■ Box 8.4 / Voices from the Field: Tracy, Tenth-Grade Biology Teacher 225
- Concept Circles 227
- Vocabulary Triangles 228
- Magic Squares 229

Vocabulary-Building Strategies 230
- Using Context to Approximate Meaning 231
- Context-Related Activities 234
- Word Structure 235
- Using the Dictionary as a Strategic Resource 237

Check Your Understanding 238
Looking Back, Looking Forward 238
eResources 238

Chapter 9 Writing Across the Curriculum 239

Chapter 9 Overview 239
Frame of Mind 241
Write to Read, Read to Write 242
Reading and Writing as Composing Processes 242
■ Box 9.1: Helping Struggling Writers 242
Reading and Writing as Exploration, Motivation, and Clarification 243
Writing to Learn (WTL) 244
Microthemes 244
Point of View Guides (POVGs) 245
Unsent Letters 247
Biopoems 248
Text Response Task Cards 250
Admit Slips and Exit Slips 252
Academic Journals 253
■ Box 9.2: Writing Like a Thinker: Using Mentor Texts to Learn the Discipline of Writers 255
Response Journals 256
Double-Entry Journals (DEJs) 260
Learning Logs 261
Writing in Disciplines 263
RAFT Writing 263
■ Box 9.3 / Voices from the Field: Ashley, Eighth-Grade Lead Science Teacher 265
Research-Based Writing 266
Guiding the Writing Process 267
Check Your Understanding 269
Looking Back, Looking Forward 269
eResources 270

Chapter 10 Studying Text 271

Chapter 10 Overview 271
Organizing Principle 271
Frame of Mind 273
■ Box 10.1 / Disciplinary Literacy: Studying Historical Text 274
The Importance of Text Structure 275
External Text Structure 275
■ Box 10.2 / Voices from the Field: Betsy, High School Reading Specialist 276
Internal Text Structure 277
Signal Words in Text Structure 278
Graphic Organizers 279
■ Box 10.3 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Graphic Organizers 280
Using Graphic Organizers to Reflect Text Patterns 281
Using Questions with Graphic Organizers 285
Semantic (Cognitive) Mapping 286
Writing Summaries 288
■ Box 10.4 / Evidence-Based Best Practices: Differentiating the Main Idea from the Details 288
Using GRASP to Write a Summary 289
Polishing a Summary 290
Making Notes, Taking Notes 290
Text Annotations 291
Note-Taking Procedures 292
Study Guides 296
Text Pattern Guides 296
Selective Reading Guides 297
Check Your Understanding 299
Looking Back, Looking Forward 300
eResources 300

Chapter 11 Learning with Multiple Texts 301

Chapter 11 Overview 301
Organizing Principle 301
Frame of Mind 303
Why Use Trade Books? 304
■ Box 11.1 / Voices from the Field: Melissa, High School English Teacher 306

Learning with Trade Books 307
■ **Box 11.2 / Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Appreciating Art and Artists Through the Use of Trade Books 309
■ **Box 11.3 / Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Linking Physical Education with Literacy Learning 313
Books for Unmotivated Readers 317
■ **Box 11.4 / Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Exploring Different Points of View Toward Historical Events 318
Instructional Strategies for Using Trade Books 319
Creating Classroom Libraries and Text Sets 319
Sustained-Silent Reading 321
Teacher Read-Alouds 322
Group Models for Studying Trade Books 323
Reader Response Strategies 325
Writing as a Reader Response 325
Expository Texts as Models for Writing 327
Process Drama as a Heuristic 328
Idea Circles 330
Using Technology to Respond to Literature 331
Check Your Understanding 332
Looking Back, Looking Forward 333
eResources 333

Chapter 12 Supporting Effective Teaching with Professional Development 334

Chapter 12 Overview 334
Organizing Principle 334
Frame of Mind 336
Purposes and Policy Frameworks 336
Standards and Policies 337
Professional Development Guidelines 338
Linking New Literacies to Professional Development 338
Programs and Strategies 340
Professional Development Schools 341
Professional Learning Communities 341
■ **Box 12.1 / Voices from the Field:** Tracy, University Liaison for a Professional Development School 342
■ **Box 12.2 / Voices from the Field:** Alonda, Academic Facilitator 344
State Agency/Professional Association Partnership 345
Literacy Coaches 346
Roles and Expectations for Literacy Coaches 347
Literacy Coaches, Teachers, and Principals 348
■ **Box 12.3 / Voices from the Field:** Laura, Middle School Principal 348
Literacy Coaches and Students 351
Professional Inquiry and Growth 353
Check Your Understanding 354
Looking Back, Looking Forward 354
eResources 355

Appendixes

Appendix A: Affixes with Invariant Meanings 356
Appendix B: Commonly Used Prefixes with Varying Meanings 359
Appendix C: Graphic Organizers with Text Frames 361

References 364
Name Index 389
Subject Index 395

Preface

A new era has begun for *Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum*. This is the first all-digital edition of our book. Although there will no longer be a hardcover, paperbound text, there is a loose-leaf paper version available for those who are accustomed to turning pages, underlining text, and jotting down side notes as they study. Changes are interwoven throughout the eText in the form of new disciplinary literacy boxes and updated content in many of the chapters, updated references, and new examples of instructional strategies. A wealth of practical activities and instructional strategies for content literacy remain at the core of this edition. These activities and strategies are sensible and powerful tools for helping students think and learn with text. How teachers adapt them to align with the peculiarities and conventions of their disciplines is the key to literacy and learning in content areas.

New to This Edition

This edition continues to reflect an ever-expanding knowledge base grounded in research and practice in the areas of content literacy, cognition and learning, educational policy, national and state standards, new literacies, instructional scaffolding, teacher effectiveness, differentiated instruction, writing to learn, and student diversity. Chapter content has been rigorously updated to reflect current theory, research, and practice related to literacy and learning across the curriculum. Expanded emphasis has been given throughout many of the chapters on what it means to be literate in the twenty-first century. New and updated content and features of this text include the following:

- **Video* Links** to discussions and hands-on examples of topics addressed within each chapter
- **Sample Strategy Application Links** show how some of the strategies featured can be applied to a variety of content areas.
- **Disciplinary Literacy** features in many of the chapters show how teachers in a particular discipline adapt various aspects of content literacy instruction to meet the demands and peculiarities of their disciplines.
- **Chapter 1, Literacy Matters,** includes sections on effective teaching, differentiated instruction, disciplinary literacy, and the Common Core State Standards.
- **Chapter 2, Learning with New Literacies,** is updated to include expanded coverage of content standards related to digital learning and new instructional strategy examples throughout various sections of the chapter.
- **Chapter 3, Culturally Responsive Teaching in Diverse Classrooms,** contains new information on code-switching and the role of standard American English as well as updated information on culturally relevant pedagogy.

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* *These features are only available in the Pearson eText, available exclusively from www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks or by ordering the Pearson eText plus Loose-Leaf Version (isbn 0134068823) or the Pearson eText Access Code Card (isbn 0134228324).*

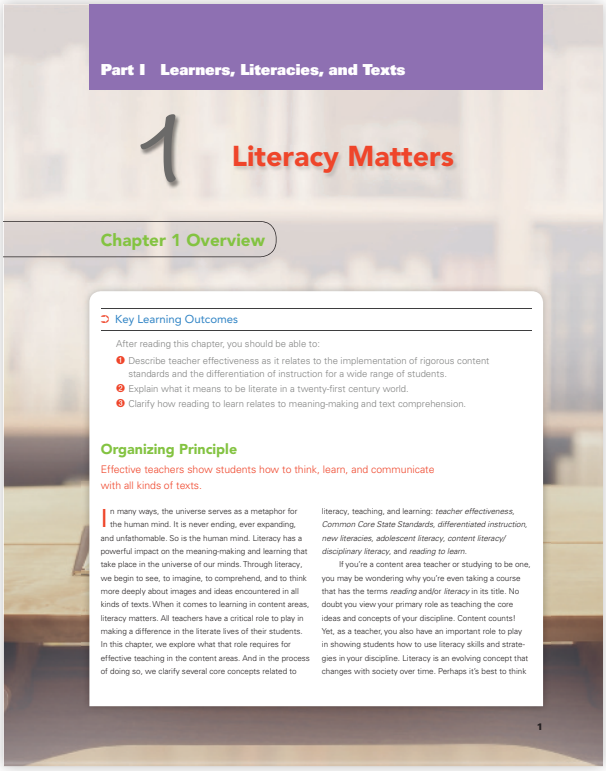
- **Chapter 4, Assessing Students and Texts,** includes updated content on current issues related to high-stakes testing, legislation, standards, and accountability; an extended discussion of the evolution of NCLB as well as of current legislative initiatives, in particular the Common Core State Standards; revised sections on portfolios, text complexity, and Lexile levels; and a new Disciplinary Literacy box feature.
- **Chapter 6, Activating Prior Knowledge and Interest,** incorporates a multitude of content and examples throughout, including a detailed discussion of the importance of self-efficacy and a survey to assess teachers' self-efficacy as part of their preservice training or in-service professional development. New examples of strategy applications enhance the chapter, as do the additional Disciplinary Literacy box and new Voices from the Field.
- **Chapter 7, Guiding Reading Comprehension,** includes numerous updated strategy examples as well as new content on close reading and comprehending digital versus print text.
- **Chapter 9, Writing Across the Curriculum,** contains updated strategy examples in several major sections of the text.
- **Chapter 11, Learning with Multiple Texts,** underscores the importance of integrating trade books and digital texts with traditional textbook study.
- **Chapter 12, Supporting Effective Teaching with Professional Development,** reflects the current emphasis placed on teacher effectiveness and the challenges and trends associated with ongoing professional development. The chapter contains new sections on professional development schools and professional learning communities.
- **Voices from the Field** features in many of the chapters include the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and literacy coaches and specialists related to content literacy policies and practices. This feature captures the particular challenges that various school personnel have encountered relative to chapter topics and the strategies used to address those challenges.
- Many **instructional examples** have been replaced and updated.
- **Updates of new research** and ways of thinking about literacy, learning, and instructional practice appear throughout the chapters.

Organization and Features of This Edition

As part of the revision process for this edition, we decided to keep the same structure as the previous edition by organizing chapters into two main parts. Part I, Learners, Literacies, and Texts, places the focus on the cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity of today's learners; their personal and academic literacies; and the kinds of texts that are integral to their lives in and out of school. Part II, Instructional Practices and Strategies, contains a multitude of evidence-based instructional strategies waiting to be adapted to meet the conceptual demands inherent in disciplinary learning.

This edition of *Content Area Reading* retains many of the features of the previous edition while improving its overall coverage of content literacy topics. It continues to emphasize a contemporary, functional approach to content literacy instruction. In a functional approach, content area teachers learn how to integrate literacy-related strategies into instructional routines without sacrificing the teaching of content. Our intent is not to morph a content teacher into a reading specialist or writing instructor. Rather, our goal has always been, and shall continue to be, to improve the overall coverage of instructional strategies and practices that remain at the heart of this book. In every chapter, special pedagogical features are provided to aid in this effort.

FEATURES AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH CHAPTER INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:


Part I Learners, Literacies, and Texts

1 Literacy Matters

Chapter 1 Overview

Key Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe teacher effectiveness as it relates to the implementation of rigorous content standards and the differentiation of instruction for a wide range of students.
2. Explain what it means to be literate in a twenty-first century world.
3. Clarify how reading to learn relates to meaning-making and text comprehension.

Organizing Principle

Effective teachers show students how to think, learn, and communicate with all kinds of texts.

In many ways, the universe serves as a metaphor for the human mind. It is never ending, ever expanding, and unfathomable. So is the human mind. Literacy has a powerful impact on the meaning-making and learning that take place in the universe of our minds. Through literacy, we begin to see, to imagine, to comprehend, and to think more deeply about images and ideas encountered in all kinds of texts. When it comes to learning in content areas, literacy matters. All teachers have a critical role to play in making a difference in the literate lives of their students. In this chapter, we explore what that role requires for effective teaching in the content areas. And in the process of doing so, we clarify several core concepts related to literacy, teaching, and learning: *teacher effectiveness, Common Core State Standards, differentiated instruction, new literacies, adolescent literacy, content literacy/disciplinary literacy,* and *reading to learn.*

If you're a content area teacher or studying to be one, you may be wondering why you're even taking a course that has the terms *reading* and/or *literacy* in its title. No doubt you view your primary role as teaching the core ideas and concepts of your discipline. Content counts! Yet, as a teacher, you also have an important role to play in showing students how to use literacy skills and strategies in your discipline. Literacy is an evolving concept that changes with society over time. Perhaps it's best to think

1

◀ **Key Learning Outcomes** reflect the major objectives of the chapter under study.

◀ The **Organizing Principle** provides readers with a "heads up" by introducing the rationale for the chapter and highlighting its underlying theme.

Graphic organizer ▶ depicts the relationships among ideas presented in the chapter.

between literacy and learning: Effective teachers show students how to think, learn, and communicate with all kinds of texts.

Study the Chapter Overview. It's your map to the major ideas that you will encounter in the chapter. The graphic display shows the relationships that exist among the concepts you will study. Use it as an organizer. What is the chapter about? What do you know already about the content to be presented in the chapter? What do you need to learn more about?

In conjunction with the Chapter Overview, take a moment or two to study the Frame of Mind questions. This feature uses key questions to help you think about the ideas that you will read about. When you finish reading, you should be able to respond fully to the Frame of Mind questions.

Response Journal

Write a "five-minute essay" in your response journal on your initial reaction to the organizing principle.

Frame of Mind questions ▶ get readers thinking about chapter topics.

Frame of Mind

1. What is the difference between content and process knowledge?
2. What are the characteristics of effective teaching?
3. How do the Common Core State Standards affect literacy and learning in content areas?
4. Why is differentiated instruction an important aspect of content literacy and learning?
5. What are new literacies, and how are they changing the way we think about learning and literacy in the twenty-first century?
6. What is adolescent literacy, and why is it important to twenty-first century society?
7. How are content literacy and disciplinary literacy alike? How are they different?
8. What comprehension strategies are critical to reading? What role does prior knowledge play in comprehension?

There are no pat formulas for teachers who want students to develop core concepts and good habits of thinking within a discipline. Nor are there magic potions in the form of instructional strategies that will make a difference with all students, all the time. Teaching is a problem-solving activity: There's just you, the academic texts and instructional strategies that you use, and the students whose lives you touch in the relatively brief time that they are under your wing. Teaching is a daunting but immensely rewarding enterprise for those who are up to the challenge.

Highly effective content area teachers plan lessons that are engaging. These teachers recognize that "engaging the disengaged" is not an easy task. Yet they continually strive to make learning intellectually challenging for the students they are teaching. A top instructional priority, therefore, is to involve students actively in learning the important ideas and concepts of the *content* they are studying. But the effective teacher also knows that an intellectually challenging instructional environment engages students not only in the acquisition of content but also in the *thinking processes* by which they learn that content.

No wonder the classroom is like a crucible, a place where the special mix of teacher, student, and text come together to create wonderfully complex human interactions that stir the minds of learners. Some days, of course, are better than others. The things that you thought about doing and the classroom surprises that you didn't expect fall into place. A creative energy imbues teaching and learning.

Sometimes, however, lessons limp along. Others simply bomb—so you cut them short. The four or so remaining minutes before the class ends are a kind of self-inflicted wound. Nothing is more unnerving than waiting for class to end when students don't have anything meaningful to do.

Consider a high school science teacher's reflection on the way things went in one of her chemistry classes. "Something was missing," she explains. "The students aren't usually as quiet and passive as they were today. Excuse the pun, but the chemistry wasn't there. Maybe the text assignment was too hard. Maybe I could have done something differently. Any suggestions?"

This teacher's spirit of inquiry is admirable. She wants to know how to improve her teaching—how to engage students in learning the important concepts of her chemistry course and how to involve them in thinking like scientists.

IN-TEXT FEATURES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Videos* in each chapter help readers approach the text in a critical frame of mind as they analyze and interpret information presented.


16 PART ONE Learners, Literacies, and Texts

These two videos underscore the importance of promoting content literacy throughout the curriculum at all grade levels.

The terms *content literacy* and *disciplinary literacy* are frequently used to describe a discipline-centered instructional approach to literacy and learning in content area classrooms. From our perspective, content literacy and disciplinary literacy reflect many of the same instructional attributes, although critics of content literacy pedagogy claim some real differences between the two approaches to literacy and learning (Draper, 2008; Moje, 2007, 2008). In the next section, we explore the common ground between content literacy and disciplinary literacy and discuss how the two concepts may differ in terms of teaching practices.

Disciplinary Literacy in Perspective

For many years, the term *content area reading* was associated with helping students better understand what they read across the curriculum. However, the concept of content area reading was broadened in the 1990s to reflect the inclusive role language plays in learning with texts. Hence, the relatively new construct of *content literacy* refers to the ability to use reading, writing, talking, listening, and viewing to learn subject matter in a given discipline (Vacca, 2002a). Content literacy involves the use of research-based cognitive learning strategies designed to support reading, writing, thinking, and learning with text. Most recently, *disciplinary literacy* is having an impact on the way researchers and educators think about literacy and learning in content areas (Buehl & Moore, 2009; Lee, 2004; Moje, 2007, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Box 1.4 provides a succinct explanation of the concept of disciplinary literacy.

BOX 1.4 What Is Disciplinary Literacy?

Disciplinary literacy practices challenge the way students approach texts by providing the skills necessary for students to adapt a mind-set that allows them to think like the real people, in the real world, who work in the respective content areas. Disciplinary literacy seeks to help students read, write, and think in a way that is aligned with the methods that professionals utilize in their respective fields. As a result, disciplinary literacy practices refer to shared methods of reading, writing, thinking, and reasoning within each academic field (Rainey & Moje, 2012). Changing the way students approach texts and react to what they learn challenges them to work beyond telling to knowing. Providing them with real-world tasks to which they can relate also helps students build and access their background knowledge (Achugara & Carpenter, 2012; Girard, & Harris, 2012; Pytash, 2012).

For example, in *social studies* classes students must look at text from the point of view of a historian. To do this, they may connect facts, understand cause and effect, and organize and categorize people and events while they write to help their readers understand why historical occurrences are significant. In *mathematics* classes, students must be problem solvers. They must take text and connect it to numbers and pictorial representations, such as graphs, charts, and geometric figures, to understand relationships, patterns, and numerical significance. In an *English* classroom, students must learn how to be effective readers and writers, understanding and demonstrating how readers move with fluidity from different genres and how their writing then mirrors the original intent of the author. In *science*, students must experiment. They must use very specific language and notation in which very small mistakes cause very different outcomes. They should be able to group, solve, and predict in a way that is different from any other content area.

The practices of disciplinary literacy teach students to think differently in each content area. As readers and writers we change the way we look at text according to the skills that are necessary in the daily lives of historians, mathematicians, scientists, and literary scholars. Disciplinary literacies provide not only a method for understanding text but also a means of expression that authentically replicates real-world practices.

Voices from the Field include interviews with teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists related to instructional practices and policies.


CHAPTER 1 Literacy Matters 9

BOX 1.1 Voices from the Field
Erin, Literacy Coach

Challenge

The Common Core standards will have a definite impact on how we teach and assess children in the very near future. The document itself is an all-encompassing and at times overwhelming framework of what best practices will look like in classrooms of the future. However, full implementation of the Common Core begins on the classroom level. This is where I come in.

Working for a large school district in a coach/administrator position can be challenging. You have to be concerned about not only following the district policy, understanding the curriculum, and implementing your administration's common goals but also working with a staff of people who all have their own educational philosophies that should be respected and considered. Keeping all those measures in check is what I do, and as the link between administration and the front lines, I feel my job is essential. As such, the implementation of the Common Core standards is a challenge, to say the least. Once implemented, the Common Core standards will affect the teachers' daily instruction in a substantial way. The teachers must be able to understand and use the standards in a very different way than they were used to working with our now-defunct state standards. Common Core requires a shift in thinking that takes teachers away from teaching bullet points to teaching conceptually. For some of my teachers, that is a pretty big shift.

To complement the district's vision of how Common Core should be implemented, I took a piecemeal approach to professional development and met my share of challenges along the way.

Strategy

The standards are written so that skills and concepts can be vertically aligned across grade levels. They emphasize text complexity and writing across the curriculum. I decided to begin my professional development by showing how argumentative writing can be used in such a way. I showed my staff how the standards "grow up" at each grade level. Then we wrote rubrics based on how each grade level would approach teaching and assessing its standards. Next, we tried to work writing into each subject taught so that the students could practice this argumentative writing task. We had follow-up meetings to discuss our successes and further opportunities with implementation. The process seemed to be effective: introduce the concepts, work actively with them, practice them in the classroom, and then provide follow-up.

After we worked with writing, we switched to text. Common Core advocates a curriculum that is based on authentic understanding of complex texts. Helping my teachers move away from their "safe" and at times "scripted" textbooks was the first step of this process. We worked one afternoon in the library to create text sets for the concepts we would be working with in the following semester. The text sets were housed in the library so any teacher working with those concepts could use them. As with writing, we worked toward a vertical alignment and had critical conversations about the leveling and composition of these sets. I was very pleased as I watched the teachers think outside the box by including items such as recipes, song lyrics, newspaper articles, and websites.

Reflection

Any new implementation has its issues. What I learned through this process was how important it was to listen to teachers. They had great ideas about how to use the Common Core, and rather than dictating what we should learn, I learned to wait for their input before designing my professional development. I tried to provide an authentic learning situation, just as I would in my own classroom, so they could walk away with more than just a "make and take." Rather, they walked away with well-planned projects, well-designed rubrics, and a platform on which they could talk and learn about the Common Core.

Effective Teachers Differentiate Instruction for a Wide Range of Students

Although texts come with the territory, using them to help students acquire content doesn't work well for many teachers. Teaching with texts is more complex than it appears on the surface. As we discuss in Chapter 3, today's classrooms are more diverse than ever before. The wide range of differences is evident in the skills, interests, languages, cultural

Disciplinary Literacy features show how teachers in a particular discipline adapt various aspects of content literacy instruction to meet the demands and peculiarities of their disciplines.


64 PART ONE Learners, Literacies, and Texts

Linguistic Differences in Today's Schools

Linguistic differences among today's student population are strikingly evident in many school districts throughout the United States. From the East Coast to the West Coast and from the Gulf to the northern Great Lakes, the increasingly large number of immigrants from non-European nations is influencing how content area teachers approach instruction. It is no exaggeration to suggest that in some large urban school districts more than 175 different languages are spoken (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2014).

When immigrant students maintain a strong identification with their culture and native language, they are more likely to succeed academically, and they have more positive self-concepts about their ability to learn (Banks, 2001; Diaz, 2001; Garcia, 2002). Schools, however, tend to view linguistically diverse students whose first language is one other than English from a deficit model, not a difference model. For these English learners, instructional practices currently are compensatory in nature: "That is, they are premised on the assumption that language diversity is an illness that needs to be cured" (Diaz, 2001, p. 159).

In addition, regional variations in language usage, commonly known as dialects, are a complicated issue for teachers. In truth as explained in Box 3.2, all English language users speak a dialect of English, which is rooted in such factors as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and the region of the country where one was born and grew up. Even presidents of the United States speak dialects! The difficulty with dialect differences in the classroom is the *value* assigned to dialects—the perceived goodness or badness of one particular language variation over another. Roberts (1985), however, suggests that language variations are neither good nor bad and that such judgments are often about the people who make them rather than about clarity or precision. Delpit (1988) argues quite convincingly that teachers need to respect and recognize the strengths of diverse learners who use dialects in the classroom.

Watch this video to hear one educator's advice on helping students learn English.

Evidence-Based Best Practices highlight the steps and procedures involved in using high-visibility strategies that are supported by theoretically sound rationales and/or evidence-based, scientific research.

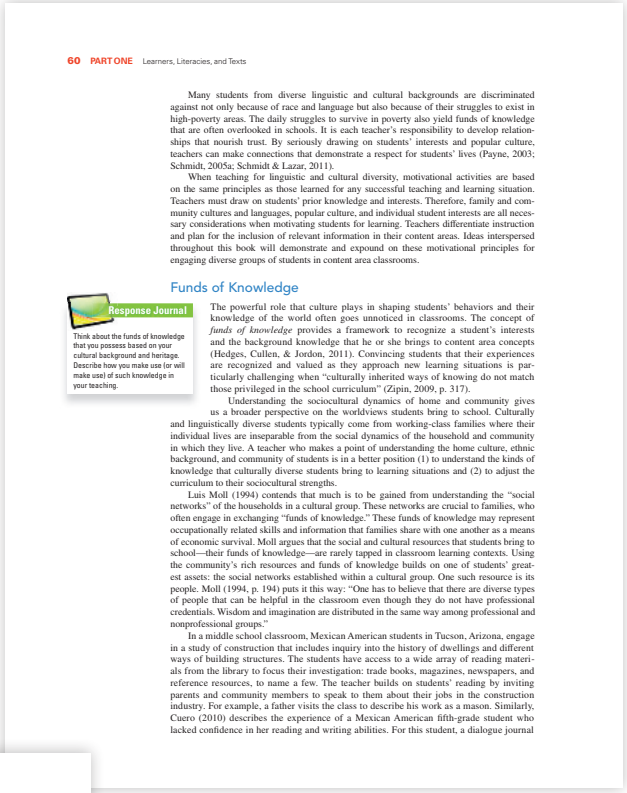
BOX 3.2 Evidence-Based Best Practices
Standard English Is Not the Only English

Scholars have long disagreed on the actual number of dialects in the United States, but one point they agree on is that everyone speaks a *dialect* of English. In the companion website for PBS's series "Do You Speak American?" Fought (2005) writes: "Do you think because I'm a professor, I don't speak a dialect? I do. I speak Valley Girl! My native dialect is 'Valley Girl' English, a variety of California English that shares many features with other Californian ways of speaking." Fought readily acknowledges her dialect; however, Redd and Webb (2005) explain that "much of the public wrongly assumes that the standard dialect *is* the English language because it is the dialect promoted by the people in power" (p. 8). In fact, to call it "standard" actually creates some of the bias. Dialects of English all contain their own phonological and morphological attributes. Linguists like to think of language as dynamic, meaning it constantly changes. The people who live in an area as well as those who enter an area influence dialects. African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Ebonics, or Black English Vernacular, as it is also known, may have evolved as a fusion of West African languages and English. What is most interesting about AAVE is that while other dialects are typically defined by the regions where they are spoken, AAVE spans the geography of the United States and can be found across age and socioeconomic groups (Redd & Webb, 2005).

During their careers, educators will come into contact with a variety of dialects, languages, and accents on a regular basis. Exploring languages and dialects and the similarities and differences among them can be an encouraging way to both legitimize and teach students about each other and the multiple dialects used in and out of the classroom.

SPECIAL MARGINAL NOTATIONS AND CALLOUTS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE BASIC INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE CHAPTERS:

Response Journal marginal icons signal readers to use a "response journal" while reading to make personal and professional connections as they react to ideas presented in each chapter. ▶



60 PART ONE Learners, Literacies, and Texts

Many students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are discriminated against not only because of race and language but also because of their struggles to exist in high-poverty areas. The daily struggles to survive in poverty also yield funds of knowledge that are often overlooked in schools. It is each teacher's responsibility to develop relationships that nourish trust. By seriously drawing on students' interests and popular culture, teachers can make connections that demonstrate a respect for students' lives (Payne, 2003; Schmidt, 2005a; Schmidt & Lazar, 2011).

When teaching for linguistic and cultural diversity, motivational activities are based on the same principles as those learned for any successful teaching and learning situation. Teachers must draw on students' prior knowledge and interests. Therefore, family and community cultures and languages, popular culture, and individual student interests are all necessary considerations when motivating students for learning. Teachers differentiate instruction and plan for the inclusion of relevant information in their content areas. Ideas interspersed throughout this book will demonstrate and expound on these motivational principles for engaging diverse groups of students in content area classrooms.

Funds of Knowledge

Response Journal

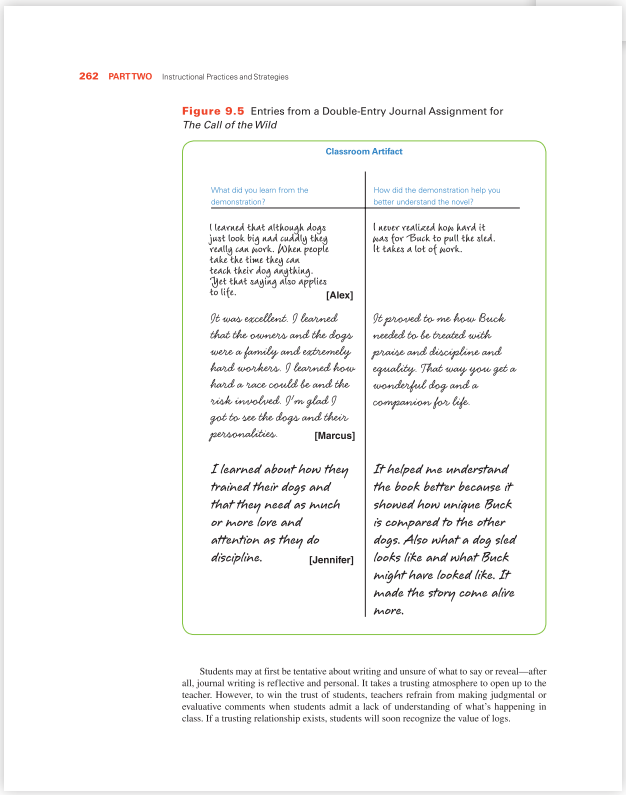
Think about the funds of knowledge that you possess based on your cultural background and heritage. Describe how you make use (or will make use) of such knowledge in your teaching.

The powerful role that culture plays in shaping students' behaviors and their knowledge of the world often goes unnoticed in classrooms. The concept of *funds of knowledge* provides a framework to recognize a student's interests and the background knowledge that he or she brings to content area concepts (Hedges, Cullen, & Jordon, 2011). Convincing students that their experiences are recognized and valued as they approach new learning situations is particularly challenging when "culturally inherited ways of knowing do not match those privileged in the school curriculum" (Zipin, 2009, p. 317).

Understanding the sociocultural dynamics of home and community gives us a broader perspective on the worldviews students bring to school. Culturally and linguistically diverse students typically come from working-class families where their individual lives are inseparable from the social dynamics of the household and community in which they live. A teacher who makes a point of understanding the home culture, ethnic background, and community of students is in a better position (1) to understand the kinds of knowledge that culturally diverse students bring to learning situations and (2) to adjust the curriculum to their sociocultural strengths.

Luis Moll (1994) contends that much is to be gained from understanding the "social networks" of the households in a cultural group. These networks are crucial to families, who often engage in exchanging "funds of knowledge." These funds of knowledge may represent occupationally related skills and information that families share with one another as a means of economic survival. Moll argues that the social and cultural resources that students bring to school—their funds of knowledge—are rarely tapped in classroom learning contexts. Using the community's rich resources and funds of knowledge builds on one of students' greatest assets: the social networks established within a cultural group. One such resource is its people. Moll (1994, p. 194) puts it this way: "One has to believe that there are diverse types of people that can be helpful in the classroom even though they do not have professional credentials. Wisdom and imagination are distributed in the same way among professional and nonprofessional groups."

In a middle school classroom, Mexican American students in Tucson, Arizona, engage in a study of construction that includes inquiry into the history of dwellings and different ways of building structures. The students have access to a wide array of reading materials from the library to focus their investigation: trade books, magazines, newspapers, and reference resources, to name a few. The teacher builds on students' reading by inviting parents and community members to speak to them about their jobs in the construction industry. For example, a father visits the class to describe his work as a mason. Similarly, Cuero (2010) describes the experience of a Mexican American fifth-grade student who lacked confidence in her reading and writing abilities. For this student, a dialogue journal



262 PART TWO Instructional Practices and Strategies

Figure 9.5 Entries from a Double-Entry Journal Assignment for *The Call of the Wild*

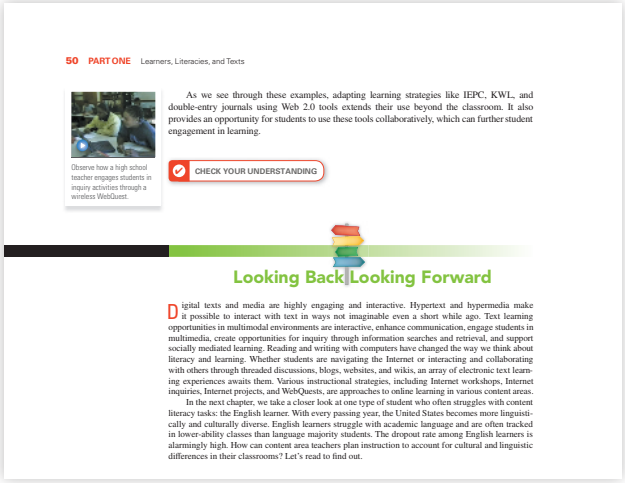
Classroom Artifact

What did you learn from the demonstration?	How did the demonstration help you better understand the novel?
I learned that although dogs just look big and cuddly they really can work. Often people take the time they can teach their dog anything. Yet that saying also applies to life. [Alex]	I never realized how hard it was for Buck to pull the sled. It takes a lot of work.
It was excellent. I learned that the owners and the dogs were a family and extremely hard workers. I learned how hard a race could be and the risk involved. I'm glad I got to see the dogs and their personalities. [Marcus]	It proved to me how Buck needed to be treated with praise and discipline and equality. That way you get a wonderful dog and a companion for life.
I learned about how they trained their dogs and that they need as much or more love and attention as they do discipline. [Jennifer]	It helped me understand the book better because it showed how unique Buck is compared to the other dogs. Also what a dog sled looks like and what Buck might have looked like. It made the story come alive more.

Students may at first be tentative about writing and unsure of what to say or reveal—after all, journal writing is reflective and personal. It takes a trusting atmosphere to open up to the teacher. However, to win the trust of students, teachers refrain from making judgmental or evaluative comments when students admit a lack of understanding of what's happening in class. If a trusting relationship exists, students will soon recognize the value of logs.

◀ **Classroom Artifact** figures throughout the book illustrate instructional procedures and materials developed by teachers for authentic teaching situations.

CHAPTERS CONCLUDE WITH ADDITIONAL FEATURES THAT HELP READERS REVIEW AND PRACTICE THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN THE CHAPTER:



50 PART ONE Learners, Literacies, and Texts

As we see through these examples, adapting learning strategies like IEPC, KWL, and double-entry journals using Web 2.0 tools extends their use beyond the classroom. It also provides an opportunity for students to use these tools collaboratively, which can further student engagement in learning.

Observe how a high school teacher engages students in inquiry activities through a wireless WebQuest.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Looking Back|Looking Forward

Digital texts and media are highly engaging and interactive. Hypertext and hypermedia make it possible to interact with text in ways not imaginable even a short while ago. Text learning opportunities in multimodal environments are interactive, enhance communication, engage students in multimedia, create opportunities for inquiry through information searches and retrieval, and support socially mediated learning. Reading and writing with computers have changed the way we think about literacy and learning. Whether students are navigating the Internet or interacting and collaborating with others through threaded discussions, blogs, websites, and wikis, an array of electronic text learning experiences awaits them. Various instructional strategies, including Internet workshops, Internet inquiries, Internet projects, and WebQuests, are approaches to online learning in various content areas.

In the next chapter, we take a closer look at one type of student who often struggles with content literacy tasks: the English learner. With every passing year, the United States becomes more linguistically and culturally diverse. English learners struggle with academic language and are often tracked in lower-ability classes than language majority students. The dropout rate among English learners is alarmingly high. How can content area teachers plan instruction to account for cultural and linguistic differences in their classrooms? Let's read to find out.

◀ **Check Your Understanding* Quizzes** provide multiple-choice questions that reflect the major ideas presented in each chapter.

▲ **Looking Back, Looking Forward** sections at the end of each chapter offer a summative review of the concepts introduced and a perspective on where the discussion will lead to next.

CHAPTER 3 Culturally Responsive Teaching in Diverse Classrooms 81

involve them in the life of the classroom. Sheltered instruction makes a difference in the academic and language development of English learners.

The achievement gap for English learners remains prevalent and signifies the importance of teacher preparation, ongoing professional development, and community-wide support for the achievement of English learners. Funding cuts during the economic downturn of recent years have made meeting diverse learner needs increasingly challenging. Calderon, Slavin, and Sanchez (2011) point out that collaboration among school faculty and the cultivation of home–school connections can help to address students' language, literacy, and core content needs. Teachers reach diverse learners by scaffolding instruction in ways that support content literacy and learning.

In the next chapter, we explore another dimension of standards-based curriculum as we shift our attention to different forms of assessment in the content area classroom. Concern about assessment is one of the major issues in education in the United States today. What role do standardized "high-stakes" assessments play in the lives of classroom teachers? How will the implementation of the Common Core State Standards affect the way in which student learning is assessed? How do authentic forms of assessment inform instructional decisions? How can teachers use portfolios and make decisions about the texts they use? The key to assessment in content areas, as we contend in the next chapter, is to make it as useful as possible. Let's find out how and why this is the case.

eResources

The following Google searches can lead to sites that are filled with ideas for engaging English learners of all levels:

Color in Colorado: Provides bilingual information for educators, administrators, librarians, families, and English learners. Explore the starter kit on placement, instruction, special services, and assessment as well as suggestions for teaching and learning across the content areas.

Graphic Classroom Blogspot: Offers suggestions on using comics and graphic novels across the curriculum.

SIOP Central: Suggests lesson plans based on the SIOP model.

International Dialects of English Archive: Provides examples of dialect differences.

National Public Radio: Breaking Out the Broken English: Demonstrates examples of code-switching and discusses different perspectives on this subject.

eResources signal readers to investigate online resources to enrich and extend the topics presented. ▶

*Features with an asterisk are only available in the Pearson eText, available exclusively from www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks or by ordering the Pearson eText plus Loose-Leaf -Version (isbn 0134068823) or the Pearson eText Access Code Card (isbn 0134228324).

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the many colleagues and graduate students at the University of North Carolina Charlotte (UNCC) who helped to make this edition possible. A well-deserved "shout out" is due Erin Donovan, Ph.D.; Elena King, Ph.D.; Melissa Sykes; Bruce Taylor, Ph.D.; and Jean Vintinner, Ph.D.; for their research-related contributions to this edition. We are grateful for new *Voices from the Field* contributions from Alonda Clayborn; Joyce Farrow; Rebecca Kavel; Charles Robinson; Derrick Robinson; Tracy Rock, Ph.D.; Lakia Scott, Ph.D.; and Brian Williams, Ph.D.; and for assistance with the development of new strategies from Crystal Brewington, Kurt Brown, Gerald Cappello, Jessica Darnell, Dan Gallagher, Mary Frances Ledford, Serina Pierce, and Jessica Zingher. We would like to thank the reviewers of this edition for their helpful suggestions: John D. Beach, Ph.D., St. John's University; Leonard Johnson, Ph.D., Ferris State University; Dr. Leslie Ann Prosak-Beres, Xavier University; and Lisa Turissini, Ed. D., Marymount University. We would be remiss if we did not recognize the outstanding editorial team of Meredith Fossel and Bryce Bell who guided us every step of the way.

1 Literacy Matters

Chapter 1 Overview

Key Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

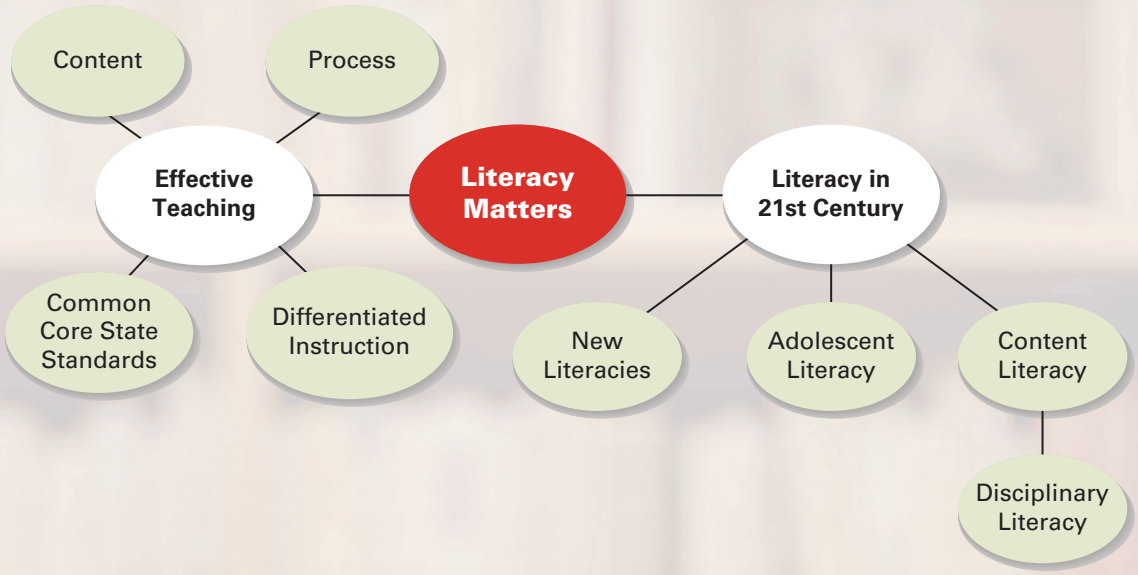
1. Describe teacher effectiveness as it relates to the implementation of rigorous content standards and the differentiation of instruction for a wide range of students.
2. Explain what it means to be literate in a twenty-first century world.
3. Clarify how reading to learn relates to meaning-making and text comprehension.

Organizing Principle

Effective teachers show students how to think, learn, and communicate with all kinds of texts.

In many ways, the universe serves as a metaphor for the human mind. It is never ending, ever expanding, and unfathomable. So is the human mind. Literacy has a powerful impact on the meaning-making and learning that take place in the universe of our minds. Through literacy, we begin to see, to imagine, to comprehend, and to think more deeply about images and ideas encountered in all kinds of texts. When it comes to learning in content areas, literacy matters. All teachers have a critical role to play in making a difference in the literate lives of their students. In this chapter, we explore what that role requires for effective teaching in the content areas. And in the process of doing so, we clarify several core concepts related to literacy, teaching, and learning: *teacher effectiveness, Common Core State Standards, differentiated instruction, new literacies, adolescent literacy, content literacy/disciplinary literacy,* and *reading to learn*.

If you're a content area teacher or studying to be one, you may be wondering why you're even taking a course that has the terms *reading* and/or *literacy* in its title. No doubt you view your primary role as teaching the core ideas and concepts of your discipline. Content counts! Yet, as a teacher, you also have an important role to play in showing students how to use literacy skills and strategies in your discipline. Literacy is an evolving concept that changes with society over time. Perhaps it's best to think



of literacy in terms of the *multiple literacies* that we use to make and communicate meaning. In this book, we explore how to support students' literacies by helping them make and communicate meaning with the various kinds of texts—both print and digital—they use in content areas.

Our primary emphasis throughout this book is on reading and writing to learn in middle and high school. Unfortunately, many adolescent learners struggle with academic texts. One of the realities facing teachers across all content areas is that many students make little use of reading and writing as tools for thinking and learning. They either read or write on a superficial level or find ways to circumvent literacy tasks altogether. All too often, adolescent learners give up on reading with the expectation that teachers will impart information through lecture, demonstration, and class discussion. When students become too dependent on teachers as their primary source of information, they are rarely in a position to engage actively in literacy to learn.

This need not be the case. The organizing principle of this chapter underscores the dynamic relationship between literacy and learning: Effective teachers show students how to think, learn, and communicate with all kinds of texts.

Study the Chapter Overview. It's your map to the major ideas that you will encounter in the chapter. The graphic display shows the relationships that exist among the concepts you will study. Use it as an organizer. What is the chapter about? What do you know already about the content to be presented in the chapter? What do you need to learn more about?

Response Journal

Write a "five-minute essay" in your response journal on your initial reaction to the organizing principle.

In conjunction with the Chapter Overview, take a moment or two to study the Frame of Mind questions. This feature uses key questions to help you think about the ideas that you will read about. When you finish reading, you should be able to respond fully to the Frame of Mind questions.

Frame of Mind

1. What is the difference between content and process knowledge?
2. What are the characteristics of effective teaching?
3. How do the Common Core State Standards affect literacy and learning in content areas?
4. Why is differentiated instruction an important aspect of content literacy and learning?
5. What are new literacies, and how are they changing the way we think about learning and literacy in the twenty-first century?
6. What is adolescent literacy, and why is it important to twenty-first century society?
7. How are content literacy and disciplinary literacy alike? How are they different?
8. What comprehension strategies are critical to reading? What role does prior knowledge play in comprehension?

There are no pat formulas for teachers who want students to develop core concepts and good habits of thinking within a discipline. Nor are there magic potions in the form of instructional strategies that will make a difference with all students, all the time. Teaching is a problem-solving activity: There's just you, the academic texts and instructional strategies that you use, and the students whose lives you touch in the relatively brief time that they are under your wing. Teaching is a daunting but immensely rewarding enterprise for those who are up to the challenge.

Highly effective content area teachers plan lessons that are engaging. These teachers recognize that "engaging the disengaged" is not an easy task. Yet they continually strive to make learning intellectually challenging for the students they are teaching. A top instructional priority, therefore, is to involve students actively in learning the important ideas and concepts of the *content* they are studying. But the effective teacher also knows that an intellectually challenging instructional environment engages students not only in the acquisition of content but also in the *thinking processes* by which they learn that content.

No wonder the classroom is like a crucible, a place where the special mix of teacher, student, and text come together to create wonderfully complex human interactions that stir the minds of learners. Some days, of course, are better than others. The things that you thought about doing and the classroom surprises that you didn't expect fall into place. A creative energy imbues teaching and learning.

Sometimes, however, lessons limp along. Others simply bomb—so you cut them short. The four or so remaining minutes before the class ends are a kind of self-inflicted wound. Nothing is more unnerving than waiting for class to end when students don't have anything meaningful to do.

Consider a high school science teacher's reflection on the way things went in one of her chemistry classes. "Something was missing," she explains. "The students aren't usually as quiet and passive as they were today. Excuse the pun, but the chemistry wasn't there. Maybe the text assignment was too hard. Maybe I could have done something differently. Any suggestions?"

This teacher's spirit of inquiry is admirable. She wants to know how to improve her teaching—how to engage students in learning the important concepts of her chemistry course and how to involve them in thinking like scientists.

▼ Effective Teaching in Content Areas

Like all good teachers, the chemistry teacher in the preceding example cares about *what* she does and *how* she does it. ***Content* and *process***, after all, are two sides of the same instructional coin. She knows a lot about the *what* of instruction—the content of chemistry—and how to teach that content in ways that develop important ideas and concepts in an intellectually challenging instructional environment. A strong attraction to academic content is one of the reasons teachers are wedded to a particular discipline. Yet it is often much more difficult to teach something than to know that something: "The teacher of the American Revolution has to know both a great deal about the American Revolution and a variety of ways of communicating the essence of the American Revolution to a wide variety of students, in a pedagogically interesting way" (Shulman, 1987, p. 5).

Teaching is complicated. There are no shortcuts to effective teaching in content areas. Often, what to teach (content) and how to teach it (process) represent nagging problems for today's teachers. On one hand, researchers have shown that subject matter mastery is essential for effective teaching (Allen, 2003; Sanders, 2004; Walsh & Snyder, 2004). Indeed, a strong connection exists between teachers' content knowledge preparation and higher student achievement.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) study *How Teaching Matters* (Wenglinski, 2000) concluded, not surprisingly, that teachers' content knowledge is an important factor in student achievement. Content counts! Student achievement, for example, increases by 40 percent of a grade level in both mathematics and science when teachers have a major or minor in the subject. However, the study also concluded that content knowledge alone is not the only factor necessary to help increase student achievement. Indeed, the classroom instructional practices and strategies of teachers significantly influence student achievement. The study found that students who engage in active, hands-on learning activities and respond to higher-order thinking questions outperform their peers by more than 70 percent of a grade level in mathematics and 40 percent in science. In addition, the study showed that students whose teachers have received professional development training in working with special populations outperform their peers by more than a full grade level. The findings of the ETS study indicate that greater attention, not less, needs to be paid to improving the pedagogical knowledge of teachers and the classroom aspects of teacher effectiveness.

What Makes a Teacher Effective?

The U.S. Department of Education (2010), as well as the National Council on Teacher Quality (2011), readily acknowledges that the "most important factor" in student success is the teacher. When students have access to effective teachers in the classroom, not only can achievement gaps narrow, but students will approach literacy and learning tasks with purpose and enthusiasm. Realistically, however, even in classrooms where teachers are practicing their craft effectively, some students will zone out from time to time or become sidetracked with other matters. Ball and Forzani (2010) put it this way in describing the difference between a tutor working one on one with a learner and a teacher working with an entire class of learners:

> Not only do teachers have more learners to understand and interact with, but they also must design and manage a productive environment in which all are able to learn. One student requires a firm hand and a great deal of direction whereas another works best when left to puzzle further on his own. One student is active—tapping her pen, doodling, and rocking on her chair—even while deeply engaged whereas a second is easily distracted. (p. 42)

Yet in the presence of an effective teacher most learners will tune in to what they are studying in the classroom—and stay tuned in.

With today's focus on educational reform, teacher effectiveness is closely tied to student achievement. An effective teacher has been defined as one whose students' growth

is equivalent to at least one grade level in an academic year (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). An alternative measure suggested by school reformers for determining teacher effectiveness includes classroom observations of teachers working with learners (Reform Support Network, 2011). Linda Darling-Hammond (2009) expands the notion of teacher effectiveness beyond how well students perform on achievement measures. She suggests that it is important to keep in mind the distinction between *teacher quality* and *teaching quality*. She defines teacher quality as the traits, understandings, and characteristics an effective teacher brings to instruction, including the following:

- Strong general intelligence and verbal ability that help teachers organize and explain ideas as well as observe and think diagnostically
- Strong content knowledge
- Knowledge of how to teach others…in particular, how to use hands-on learning techniques and how to develop higher-order thinking skills
- An understanding of learners and their learning and development—including how to assess and scaffold learning, how to support students who have learning differences or difficulties, and how to support the learning of language and content for those who are not already proficient in the language of instruction
- Adaptive expertise that allows teachers to make judgments about what it is like to work in a given context in response to student needs (Darling-Hammond, 2009, p. 2)

Teaching quality, on the other hand, has more to do with the context of instruction. Quality teaching enables a teacher to meet the demands of a discipline and to provide "strong instruction" that allows a wide range of students to learn.

Pearson and Hoffman (2011) also discuss teaching quality and strong instruction from the perspective of what it means to be a practicing teacher. They describe practicing teachers as *thoughtful, effective, pragmatic,* and *reflective*. In the classroom, the actions of a practicing teacher are guided by ten general "principles of practice" associated with teaching quality. Effective teachers reflect and are guided by these principles in their daily work in the classroom. These principles of practice are summarized in Table 1.1.

Higher levels of student achievement, Pearson and Hoffman (2011) contend, will not result from mandated standards or high-stakes testing alone. While standards and high-stakes assessment are an integral part of today's educational landscape, practicing teachers, who know how to balance content and process in a standards-based curriculum, are the real game changers in the education of twenty-first century learners.

Effective Teachers and the Common Core State Standards

Literacy and learning are challenges in today's classrooms, where the demands inherent in the teaching of content standards can easily lead to "covering" information without much attention given to *how* students with a wide range of skills and abilities acquire core concepts. Schools continue to question the curriculum choices made in their classrooms. Curriculum refers to the content taught, which resources and strategies are used, and the learning activities in which students are engaged (Dunkle, 2012). Building or employing a curriculum that balances content and process in a standards-based curriculum means at the very least:

- Knowing the standards for your content area and grade level
- Making instructional decisions based on authentic assessments throughout the school year about students' abilities to use reading and writing to learn
- Integrating content literacy practices and strategies into instructional plans and units of study

Standards, in a nutshell, are expected academic consequences defining what students should learn and how they should learn it at designated grade levels and in content areas. Since the mid-1990s, a proliferation of state standards have provided

Response Journal

Did you have many teachers who were effective in the classroom? Why were they effective?

Table 1.1 Ten General Principles of Practice Associated with Quality Teaching

1. ***Principle of Praxis:*** Effective teachers act on the understanding that education has the power to transform the individual and society.
2. ***Principle of Purpose:*** Effective teachers operate in the moment guided by a clear understanding of *why* they are doing *what* they are doing. There is always a purpose behind their actions in the classroom.
3. ***Principle of Serendipity:*** Although effective teachers engage in a variety of instructional practices, they "expect the unexpected" and are open to learning opportunities that may occur within the context of instruction.
4. ***Principle of Exploration:*** Effective teachers are continually exploring new practices and making changes in their practices based on their exploration of instructional possibilities in the classroom.
5. ***Principle of Reflection:*** Effective teachers think about the *what, how,* and *why* of instruction during and after each teaching activity. They engage in the process of reflection to solve instructional problems and set goals.
6. ***Principle of Community:*** Effective teachers share their classroom knowledge and experiences within and across multiple professional communities as a means of growing professionally and giving back.
7. ***Principle of Service:*** Effective teachers serve the learners in their classrooms and their parents.
8. ***Principle of Flexibility:*** Effective teachers plan instruction but are flexible in the implementation of lessons. They adapt to unanticipated events or responses in ways that make learning possible.
9. ***Principle of Caring:*** Effective teachers care about the learners in their classroom, the disciplinary content that they teach, and the literacy processes they use to make a difference in the lives of students. Caring is necessary to build relationships essential to the teaching/learning transaction.
10. ***Principle of Reward:*** Effective teachers find satisfaction and reward in what they do for their students; they value the spontaneity of classroom life, the immediacy of the classroom, the learning they are a part of, and the autonomy of making instructional decisions.

a road map to what students *should know* and *be able to do* at each grade level and for each content area.

The underlying rationale for the creation of standards is that high learning expectations—clearly stated and specific in nature—will lead to dramatic changes in student achievement. With high learning expectations comes an accountability system based on "high-stakes" testing to determine how well students meet the standards formulated in each content area. Some states tie high-stakes assessment to the threat of grade-level retention for students who perform below predetermined levels of proficiency in critical areas such as reading. We explore in more detail the nature of high-stakes assessment, and the types of authentic assessments to improve learning, in Chapter 4.

The United States, unlike most countries, does not have a set of national education standards. Individual states have sole responsibility for determining what teachers should teach and students learn. However, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers recently released the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** for literacy and mathematics. According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010):

> The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. (p. 11)

The proponents of the Common Core State Standards argue that a standardized curriculum would facilitate the following:

- Collaboration increases between teachers in a subject area, a grade level, and a district and even across state lines.
- Teachers are prepared to teach their content regardless of their assignment.

- Texts and resources can be standardized and focused on the most relevant concepts that relate most directly to student learning.
- Overall, teachers can focus on developing concepts substantially rather than working to cover many disparate topics that may be inadequately developed (Dunkle, 2012).

The Common Core, adopted by 45 of the 50 states at the time of this writing, is the closest the United States has come as a country to adopting a national curriculum. (It should be noted that because of the political nature of the standards, that number is in constant flux.) Because states will be working from the same core standards, the possibility for broad-based sharing of what works in the classroom has never been greater. Because the Common Core does not come with rigid guidelines concerning implementation, it provides local school flexibility to decide how to best implement the standards at various grade levels (Phillips & Wong, 2011).

There are several important shifts that are inherent in the implementation of the Common Core standards. The first is a more prominent role of nonfiction reading sources through text triangulation as well as an increase in nonfiction writing in all content areas. Through an increased exposure to nonfiction resources, students may build their background knowledge, or schema (to be discussed more fully later in this chapter); cultivate their cognitive learning and critical thinking skills; learn to read and write in a real-world, authentic manner; and read writing that more clearly links to the content area (Dunkle, 2012).

The second shift describes a greater emphasis on helping students build thinking habits rather than memorize content facts and figures. The intention of the Common Core is to help students develop an inquiry mind-set that can be utilized across the curriculum. Learning the skill of perseverance, for example, would help a student stick with a difficult math problem as well as complete a difficult text. Accordingly, these mind-sets are meant not to help a student pass a test but to prepare that student to enter university or succeed in his or her chosen career.

The third major shift is the emphasis placed on texts and text-based answers (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). Nonfiction, content-heavy texts are employed to help students learn how to use the text to answer questions while backing up their thoughts through understanding the author's arguments and logic. These thinking skills can then be transferred to any text the students are given, the ultimate goal being the understanding not of the text but of how to use the text as a means to answer questions.

One of the important dimensions of CCSS is the emphasis on literacy in all content areas. Phillips and Wong (2011) put it this way: "As the Common Core of Standards makes clear, literacy skills cross subject-area boundaries but are not formally taught once students enter the middle grades … Think of literacy as the spine; it holds everything together. The branches of learning connect to it, meaning that all core content teachers have a responsibility to teach literacy (pp. 40–41)." The real potential of the Common Core from a literacy perspective is that it positions students to become more active in their use of literacy skills by discovering concepts and processes that lead to independent learning. To become literate in a content area, students must learn how to learn with texts. Integrating these thinking/learning processes into content instruction helps learners to better understand what they are reading about, writing about, talking about in classroom discussion, or viewing on a computer screen or video monitor. Weaving literacy into the fabric of disciplinary study does not diminish the teacher's role as a subject matter specialist. Instead, reading, writing, talking, and viewing are tools that students use to learn with texts in content areas. Who's in a better, more strategic position to show students how to learn with texts in a particular content area and grade level than the teacher who guides *what* students are expected to learn and *how* they are to learn it?

A social studies middle school teacher working to integrate the literacy goals of the Common Core State Standards in his or her practice might consider teaching content as follows:

- The teacher's goal is to teach the divisive societal conflicts that led to the French Revolution.

- The teacher would first collect a variety of nonfiction, content-rich texts that would describe those conflicts. Students would have their choice of text that best fits their learning needs and reading style.
- The students would be given a writing task, such as those described in Chapter 9. Basing their writing on the provided text, they would complete their nonfiction writing task.

The intention of this instruction would be the creation of a student-centered, independent learning environment that allows students the space to develop their own understanding of the conflicts through an in-depth understanding of the information presented in the texts. It is indeed a departure from the teacher/lecturer model or the fact-based instruction often seen in the social studies classroom.

The CCSS Initiative creates high expectations for students to develop their ability to use literacy and language skills to learn in content areas. One of the ultimate goals of Common Core is that students will develop independent learning habits to more adequately develop a college-ready mind-set:

> Students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. Students also acquire the habits of reading independently and closely, which are essential to their future success. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 35)

Another major goal of Common Core is that all learners will develop a strong knowledge base across the curriculum:

> Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise.
>
> They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking. They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 35).

The CCSS Initiative is not without its critics. Tienken (2011), for example, fears that standardization of the curriculum may not meet the needs of a diverse population of U.S. students. Loveless (2011) contends that there is a disconnect between existing national "grade level" tests and CCSS expectations. Some critics argue that top-down mandates for curriculum change are often only vaguely related to day-to-day instruction. Such mandates ignore the professional expertise and thinking of teachers to determine the most effective instructional strategies and methods to teach their students (Lee, 2011). Successful implementation of CCSS will require ongoing professional development to support teachers as they learn how to integrate literacy strategies into their regular instructional routines. This will require a long-term time commitment in school districts where funding for professional development may be limited.

Despite some of the criticism leveled toward CCSS, many educators are hopeful that the Common Core will make a difference in the content knowledge and skills that learners will develop to be successful in college or in careers. Box 1.1, Voices from the Field, captures one teacher's challenge as her school district engages in the implementation of Common Core standards.

Given the wide range of students that teachers encounter daily, *differentiating instruction* will be one of the keys to ensuring the successful implementation of the Common Core.

BOX 1.1 | Voices from the Field
Erin, Literacy Coach

Challenge

The Common Core standards will have a definite impact on how we teach and assess children in the very near future. The document itself is an all-encompassing and at times overwhelming framework of what best practices will look like in classrooms of the future. However, full implementation of the Common Core begins on the classroom level. This is where I come in.

Working for a large school district in a coach/administrator position can be challenging. You have to be concerned about not only following the district policy, understanding the curriculum, and implementing your administration's common goals but also working with a staff of people who all have their own educational philosophies that should be respected and considered. Keeping all those measures in check is what I do, and as the link between administration and the front lines, I feel my job is essential. As such, the implementation of the Common Core standards is a challenge, to say the least. Once implemented, the Common Core standards will affect the teachers' daily instruction in a substantial way. The teachers must be able to understand and use the standards in a very different way than they were used to working with our now-defunct state standards. Common Core requires a shift in thinking that takes teachers away from teaching bullet points to teaching conceptually. For some of my teachers, that is a pretty big shift.

To complement the district's vision of how Common Core should be implemented, I took a piecemeal approach to professional development and met my share of challenges along the way.

Strategy

The standards are written so that skills and concepts can be vertically aligned across grade levels. They emphasize text complexity and writing across the curriculum. I decided to begin my professional development by showing how argumentative writing can be used in such a way. I showed my staff how the standards "grow up" at each grade level. Then we wrote rubrics based on how each grade level would approach teaching and assessing its standards. Next, we tried to work writing into each subject taught so that the students could practice this argumentative writing task. We had follow-up meetings to discuss our successes and further opportunities with implementation. The process seemed to be effective: introduce the concepts, work actively with them, practice them in the classroom, and then provide follow-up.

After we worked with writing, we switched to text. Common Core advocates a curriculum that is based on authentic understanding of complex texts. Helping my teachers move away from their "safe" and at times "scripted" textbooks was the first step of this process. We worked one afternoon in the library to create text sets for the concepts we would be working with in the following semester. The text sets were housed in the library so any teacher working with those concepts could use them. As with writing, we worked toward a vertical alignment and had critical conversations about the leveling and composition of these sets. I was very pleased as I watched the teachers think outside the box by including items such as recipes, song lyrics, newspaper articles, and websites.

Reflection

Any new implementation has its issues. What I learned through this process was how important it was to listen to teachers. They had great ideas about how to use the Common Core, and rather than dictating what we should learn, I learned to wait for their input before designing my professional development. I tried to provide an authentic learning situation, just as I would in my own classroom, so they could walk away with more than just a "make and take." Rather, they walked away with well-planned projects, well-designed rubrics, and a platform on which they could talk and learn about the Common Core.

Effective Teachers Differentiate Instruction for a Wide Range of Students

Although texts come with the territory, using them to help students acquire content doesn't work well for many teachers. Teaching with texts is more complex than it appears on the surface. As we discuss in Chapter 3, today's classrooms are more diverse than ever before. The wide range of differences is evident in the skills, interests, languages, cultural