



Supplemental Guide

How to Use the Text Complexity Shift Kit

Illinois State Board of Education

2013



Supplementary Notes for How to Use

The Illinois State Board of Education Text Complexity Shift Kit

This supplementary guide is to be utilized in conjunction with the Text Complexity Shift Kit designed by ISBE. The PowerPoint presentation was created to facilitate the process of explaining the components and uses of the kit.

As the shift kit is opened, the sections include: **Critical Direction, PowerPoints, Research Articles, and Handouts.** Although it is encouraged to go through every item with a staff or individuals, the kits are designed for users to select sections that will best suit the needs of a school or district. This allows a professional developer, administrator, teacher leader, or teacher to differentiate their learning.

The **Text Complexity Shift Kit** is designed for each resource section to stand alone. However, using all the items in the resource sections provides a richer and deeper comprehension. Repetition of some ideas may appear.

A suggested starting point for all learners is to read the **Critical Direction** section which includes definitions and guidance from the International Reading Association.

Please send questions or comments on the kit to plscomments@gmail.com.



Supplemental Guide on How to Use The Text Complexity Shift Kit Table of Contents

This guide serves as a supplement that could assist a presenter or leader as they are sharing items and resources from the Text Complexity Shift Kit provided by the Illinois State Board of Education. All notes and questions contained in this guide are also listed on the How to Use the Text Complexity Shift Kit PowerPoint.

Where to Begin, pg. 5

Teacher Outcomes and Facilitator Goals, pg. 6

Critical Direction, pg. 7

- International Reading Association Statement
- Common Core State Standards, Appendix A, pgs. 2-16

PowerPoints, pg. 10

- *Professional Development: Illinois State Board of Education*
- *Professional Development: Chief Council of State School Officers*
- *Professional Development: Oregon Department of Education*
 - *K-5*
 - *6-12 English Language Arts*
 - *6-12 Content Area*

Research, pg. 11

1. Common Core Standards Supplemental Information for Appendix A
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf
2. Measures of Text Difficulty: Testing their Predictive Value for Grade Levels and Student Performance--
by David Liben
http://www.achievethecore.org/downloads/E0201_Measures_of_Text_Difficulty.pdf
3. A Not So Common: Comparing the Lexile Framework with the Standards' Other Measuring Tools
http://cdn.lexile.com/m/cms_page_media/135/Not%20So%20Common_3.pdf
4. ACT Reading Between the Lines http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/reading_report.pdf
5. Jager-Adams, M. (2010). Advancing our students language and literacy: The challenge of complex text.
American Educator, 34:4, 3-11.
6. What does text complexity mean for English learners and language minority students? By Lily Wong Fillmore and Charles J. Fillmore
http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf
7. A discussion of "Increasing Text Complexity" By Karin Hess and Sue Biggam, 2004
http://www.nciea.org/publications/TextComplexity_KH05.pdf

8. Blackburn, B. (2012) *5 Easy strategies for increasing text complexity*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
http://media.routledgeweb.com/eoe/whitepapers/blackburn_textcomp_0412_final.pdf

Handouts, pg. 14

- New York City Schools Rubrics
 - Gradients in Complexity: Literary Texts
 - Informational Text Complexity Rubrics
- CCSSO Rubrics
 - Qualitative Measurement Rubric: Informational Texts
 - Qualitative Measures Rubric: Literary Texts
- Student Achievement Partners
 - Quantitative Analysis Tools
 - Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges

Book Titles, pg.15

Next Steps, pg. 16

Classroom teachers

Administrators

Where to Begin

The range of familiarity and depth of understanding of each shift varies among educators. The kits have been designed to provide a facilitator leading individual teachers or an entire staff through the concepts of the actual shift in instructional practice. The content of the kit is not designed to give a list of strategies to employ or a checklist of practices that state what has been taught. Rather, it is the goal of the kit to define the shift in thinking and practice so that the true spirit and intentions of the CCSS and the College and Career Readiness Standards are reflected in classroom instruction.

The facilitator might begin by answering the following questions:

1. Are you responsible for facilitating a small grade level team or a large group?
2. What is the group's level of understanding or familiarity with CCSS?
3. Will you focus on one particular shift or discussion point within a shift and how will you determine what the critical information is to highlight?
4. What will be your approach to addressing or working through all the shifts?
5. How will you measure the understanding of participants' growth in knowledge?

The kits are designed for informational purposes only and not as an evaluation tool.

Suggested Outcomes for Classroom Teachers and Goals for Facilitators

Below are some key statements that participants should have as measured goals after working with a facilitator and the Text Complexity Kit. Participants should have the following critical understandings of the kit defined and clearly outlined for a strong knowledge base of text complexity and why it is important to mastery of the CCSS. It will be up to the facilitator to decide which portions of the kit will best express these for their particular group.

These outcomes for teachers are placed here to help guide the facilitator's use of the shift kit and understanding of the key ideas that need to be translated to participants.

The goal for the facilitator is to have all participants agree with the following:

1. I have increased my understanding of what the CCSS means by text complexity and why it is important.
2. I have been exposed to the three part model the writers of the CCSS have designed and recognize the indicators of each portion.
3. My knowledge and understanding of grade level text complexity bands has expanded.
4. My knowledge and understanding of how to ensure the texts that I use are appropriately complex and aligned to the correct grade level band has increased.
5. I have been able to explore measures for text complexity and how to use these measures to evaluate a text for its complexity during this workshop.
6. I feel comfortable implementing the knowledge gained about text complexity into my everyday planning.

Critical Direction

The International Reading Association provided documentation to address specific literacy issues related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. This document entitled “Literacy Implementation Guidance for English Language Arts” focuses on issues that have proven to be especially confusing or challenging to implement. These guidance statements represent a consensus of experts in the literacy field.

The intent is to support leaders and teachers as they implement the English Language Arts College and Career State Standards. The summary of recommendations from the article for each area is as follows:

Challenging Texts:

Do not increase levels of texts used in reading lessons in K and 1st grade.

Instruction across the school year needs to involve students in the reading of text written at a variety of levels.

Teachers need professional learning opportunities to be able to provide adequate scaffolding and support for student reading of complex texts in grades 2-12 and listening to complex texts in Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Foundational Skills:

Early systematic and explicit teaching of the foundations reading skills is required.

During the K-2 years, teaching of all aspects of English Language Arts should take place simultaneously and be coordinated.

Comprehension:

Engage students in reading high quality texts closely and critically.

Teach research proven reading comprehension strategies using gradual release of responsibility approaches.

Guide students to apply strategies when reading particularly challenging texts.

Vocabulary:

Study all strands of the standards for references to vocabulary development.

Plan for vocabulary development across the school day in all subjects.

Provide instruction in word solving strategies as well as teaching individual words.

Writing:

Provide opportunities for students to write in response to reading across the curriculum.

Provide research opportunities that involve reading both print and digital texts, and that require writing in response to reading.

Teachers will need professional development in teaching students how to write the types of texts required in the CCSS. This professional development should include teachers doing their own writing, as well as analyzing annotated student writing.

Disciplinary Literacy:

Involve content area teachers in teaching the disciplinary literacy standards.

Teach students the literacy strategies that are pertinent to each discipline.

Provide appropriate professional learning opportunities for teachers in the literacy practices appropriate for their disciplines.

Diverse Learners:

The CCSS require equal outcome for all students, but they do not require equal inputs. Vary the amounts and types of instruction provided to students to ensure high rates of success.

Monitor student learning and provide adjustments and supplements based on that information.

Critical Direction (Cont.)

Next in the Critical Direction tab is Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards, pgs. 2-16.

The following are excerpts taken directly from the Core Standards that identify the key ideas about text complexity.

This document provides teachers with a research-based case for why the complexity of what students read matters. Appendix A also includes how text complexity can be measured and made a regular part of instruction. In the final section of Appendix A, three annotated examples showing how the model can be used to assess the complexity are shared.

The PowerPoint in the Text Complexity Shift Kit presents much of this material and is accompanied by a facilitators guide. This referenced material below from Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards is just a short summary of some of the key points that drives the reasoning behind standard 10 of reading for literature and informational texts. It is highly encouraged to do a more thorough analysis of the material included in Appendix A for a full understanding of text complexity.

Why Text Complexity Matters:

“Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for high achievement in college and the workplace and important in numerous life tasks. Moreover, current trends suggest that if students cannot read challenging texts with understanding—if they have not developed the skill, concentration, and stamina to read such texts—they will read less in general. In particular, if students cannot read complex expository text to gain information, they will likely turn to text-free or text-light sources, such as video, podcasts, and tweets. These sources, while not without value, cannot capture the nuance, subtlety, depth, or breadth of ideas developed through complex text.”

The Standard’s Approach to Text Complexity

“The Standards presume that three elements will come into play when text complexity and appropriateness are determined. Both qualitative and quantitative, for measuring text complexity, and balanced with reader and task considerations, might be used with a number of different texts.

- 1) Using qualitative measures of text complexity involves making an informed decision about the difficulty of a text in terms of one or more factors such as levels of meaning or purpose; structure; language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands which are discernible to a human reader applying trained judgment to the task.
- 2) The terms quantitative dimensions and quantitative factors refer to those aspects of text complexity, such as word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion, that are difficult if not impossible for a human reader to evaluate efficiently, especially in long texts, and are thus today typically measured by computer software.
- 3) While the prior two elements of the model focus on the inherent complexity of text, variables specific to particular readers (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and to particular tasks (such as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed) must also be considered when determining whether a text is appropriate for a given student. Such assessments are best made by teachers employing their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject.”

Key Considerations in Implementing Text Complexity:

- The tools for measuring text complexity are at once useful and imperfect.
- Certain measures are less valid or inappropriate for certain kinds of texts.

- Many current quantitative measures underestimate the challenge posed by complex narrative fiction.
- Measures of text complexity must be aligned with college and career readiness expectations for all students.
- Students' ability to read complex text does not always develop in a linear fashion.
- Students reading well above and well below grade-band level need additional support.
- Even many students on course for college and career readiness are likely to need scaffolding as they master higher levels of text complexity.

PowerPoints

We next arrive at the PowerPoint section of the kit.

First listed is the Illinois State Board of Education PowerPoint.

The Illinois State Board of Education has developed a web page called the Professional Learning Series that houses several tools designed to assist with supporting professional development for the CCSS. Some of the presentations used in the shift kits are housed at the www.isbe.net website and are listed in the kit's table of contents. Included on the web page are facilitator's guides and other supporting materials to accompany the PowerPoint presentations. To access these materials, click on the following link: http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pls/default.htm

Next listed is the Oregon Department of Education PowerPoint: K-5.

The Oregon PowerPoint can be accessed at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=3454> by scrolling to Text Complexity, K-5 Text Complexity Presentation. It consists of the Common Core Instruction for Text Complexity and is accompanied by a facilitator's guide. The facilitator's guide has suggested handouts which may be printed prior to sharing the PowerPoint with participants.

Next listed are the Oregon Department of Education PowerPoints: 6-12 ELA or Content Area Text Complexity Presentations

The Oregon PowerPoints can be accessed at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=3454> by scrolling to Text Complexity, 6-12 ELA or Content Area Text Complexity Presentations. They consist of the Common Core Instruction for Text Complexity and are accompanied by facilitators' guides. The guides have suggested handouts which may be printed prior to sharing the PowerPoint with participants.

After viewing the Oregon Department of Education PowerPoint, participants may look at the suggested activities and reflection handouts.

Research

Articles contained in this section are available for download or for purchase by contacting the journal cited and following copyright protocol set forth by the journal publication. In the case that a link is provided, a onetime personal educational use copy may be made as long as the use aligns with the journal publication's copyright laws or the creator's copyright requests. In no way are any of the articles listed here to be used for profit, sold, or copied in quantities.

Listed next are the titles of articles in the Research section of the kit. Most articles are listed with a culminating question underneath. This question should be answered at length after reading each article. What follows are other questions that might be utilized in small group discussions or as reflective independent study questions.

1st Article: *Common Core State Standards Supplemental Information*

http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf

This information was released as a result of field testing tools that had been utilized to measure both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of text complexity. The new research supports the findings that the CCSS had previously stated and gives credibility to the three part model outlined in Appendix A.

Below are some questions a facilitator might consider discussing with a group of educators to follow the reading of the research:

1. What are the new findings regarding the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of text complexity?
2. Will this alter any previous methods used to find the complexity of a text?

2nd Article: *Measures of Text Difficulty: Testing their Predictive Value for Grade Levels and Student Performance* by David Liben

Key Question: What is the best use of these metrics in your school or classroom? Have participants consider the gap that might result from using only one metric. How can the gap be narrowed if at least three of the metrics are used?

This 58 page document goes into great depth about how the following measures of text complexity meet the guidelines for quantitative measures.

These six metrics are as follows: Lexile (MetaMetrics), ATOS (Renaissance Learning), Degrees of Reading Power: DRP Analyzer (Questar Assessment, Inc.), REAP (Carnegie Mellon University), SourceRater (Educational Testing Service), and the Pearson Reading Maturity Metric (Pearson Knowledge Technologies). Additionally, the study included a seventh metric (Coh-Metrix, University of Memphis) that provides multiple indices of text difficulty.

3rd Article: *Not So Common: Comparing the Lexile Measures with the Standards' Other Text Complexity Tools* by Malbert Smith III, President of MetaMetrics

Key Question: Using some of the resources learned so far and the findings in this article, can you begin to design your “toolbox” of text complexity tools for measuring texts?

The report states that “there is no agreed upon gold standard” for evaluating text complexity. Its comparisons of the text complexity tools demonstrate that while they share some commonalities, there are also distinct differences (Nelson, Perfetti, Liben, & Liben, 2011). Building upon the report’s findings, this document provides a contextual framework for how these similarities and differences could be interpreted and used by the educational and publishing communities when selecting a text complexity tool.

4th Article: *Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading* by ACT retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/reading_report.pdf

ACT data suggest that the nation’s high school students are not ready for college-level reading. But ACT data also shows that, while it is important for students to be able to comprehend both explicit and implicit material in texts, as well as to understand how various textual elements (such as main ideas, relationships, or generalizations) function in a text, the clearest differentiator in reading between students who are college ready and students who are not is the ability to comprehend complex texts.

To hasten the implementation of this report’s findings, a facilitator may just wish to bring up the recommended action steps and focus a discussion on this area of the research.

5th Article: *Advancing Our Students Language and Literacy: The Challenge of Complex Text* by Marilyn Jager-Adams

Key Question: How are textbooks different than they were over 50 years ago? Why is that important to the CCSS?

This article will allow teachers to identify how the difficulty of schoolbooks has been significantly reduced in the last 50 years and how this contributed to a decline in SAT scores. The article presents details of the research as well as a strategy for developing advanced reading in schools.

After reading the article participants will be able to discuss the answers to these questions:

1. How have SAT scores declined in the last 50 years?
2. What is the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension?
3. What are ways to develop students’ vocabulary?
4. What are some ways teachers can help develop advanced readers?

6th Article: *Understanding Language: What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students?* By Lily Wong Fillmore & Charles J. Fillmore

Key Question: What other areas of foci in texts must be given to ELL learners other than vocabulary?

This article discusses what demanding reading of more complex texts means for English learners and language minority students and provides English learner educators insight as to the characteristics of text complexity and a strategic approach to looking at text one sentence at a time. This article uses the text exemplar Martin Luther King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* as a sample when explaining the approach.

Other questions a facilitator may use to guide participants with this article are as follows:

1. Contemplate what the authors mean from the statement: “Children are supposed to have completed the process of “learning to read,” and are ready to begin “reading to learn.” What issues does that raise for the ELL learner and the need for scaffolded instruction?
2. What texts at your grade level would be appropriate to use that support the strategic approach the authors suggest?
3. Discuss some of the follow up questions at the end of the article and consider the answers to them.

7th Article: *A Discussion of “Increasing Text Complexity”* by Karen Hess and Sue Biggam

Key Question: What are the suggestions the authors propose to increase text complexity?

This article is a discussion of increasing text complexity produced in partnership with the New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont Departments of Education. It describes the factors that interact to influence text complexity and how the descriptors of text complexity for each grade level differ.

Other questions a facilitator may use to guide participants with this article are as follows:

1. According to the article, what are the factors that influence the complexity of a text?
2. How does text level difficulty increase across grade levels?
3. How might teachers be more cognizant of this increase so that students follow a pattern of increasing difficulty throughout the year?

8th Article: *5 Easy Strategies for Increasing Text Complexity* by Barbara R. Blackburn

Key Question: What should be considered when matching a student with a text?

After reading this article, the facilitator can offer these questions to participants for further discussion:

1. When is appropriate to use Lexiles measures?
2. How can we provide instruction so students can see different perspectives through a variety of sources?
3. How can we allow students to look beyond the surface for more in-depth information?
4. How can we use the strategy of “layering meaning” to support students with complex texts?

Handouts

The next section is Handouts.

Handout #1: Qualitative Rubric for Informational Text and Qualitative Rubric for Literary Text

The first two documents provided in the Text Complexity Shift Kit are the informational and literary text rubrics. They can be used to determine the qualitative measure of text complexity. These rubrics can be found at the www.ccsso.org website as well as other state departments' websites.

It is suggested that participants practice using the rubrics with the facilitator in case there are questions about how to use them.

Handout #2: New York City School's Informational and Literary Text Complexity Rubrics

This handout shows the rubrics that New York City Schools use to determine the qualitative measures of text complexity. They do not differ greatly from the ones on the www.ccsso.org site. As suggested with the other rubrics, a facilitator or teacher leader should identify the core procedure for utilizing the rubric at various grade levels. Discussion with groups should occur so that proper identification and agreement of each school's plan for implementation is clear.

Handout #3 and #4: Both of the following handouts can be found at

<http://www.achievethecore.org/dashboard/7/search/6/1/0/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/page/642/text-complexity-collection> which is a website sponsored by Student Achievement Partners. The developers of this website had a foundational role in writing the CCSS. The website created houses many free resources.

3rd Handout: Text Complexity Quantitative Analysis Tools

This handout provides educators with a variety of different tools to determine the quantitative measure of text complexity.

4th Handout: Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures

This handout shows how the complexity band levels have been expanded slightly from the original CCSS scale that appears in Appendix A at both the top and bottom of each band. It provides for a more modulated climb toward college and career readiness and offers slightly more overlap between bands. The wider band width allows more flexibility in the younger grades where students enter school with widely varied preparation levels. This change was provided in response to feedback received since publication of the original scale (published in terms of the Lexile® metric) in Appendix A.

Book Titles

Recommended reading to support the kit is the following:

- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2012). *Text complexity: Raising rigor in reading*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Suggested uses for the selected books are:

- Begin a book study with a group.
- Start an independent study and become a teacher leader on a topic.
- Some books have study guides or podcasts from the authors available from the publishers—check out their websites!
- Share your knowledge—start a wiki, a newsletter or blog in your district.

Next Steps

Classroom Teacher Next Steps:

How will an educator know they are effectively implementing the shift of text complexity to ensure teaching is reflective of the CCSS? What are some ideas that would assist an educator with the strategies presented in text complexity?

As teachers begin to transition to practices of text complexity leveling and using complex texts in the classroom, resources, collaborative conversations and unit planning will naturally evolve. Some of the statements below will help guide classroom practitioners' thinking for the beginning stages of text complexity implementation.

The statements below may also serve as a guide for administrators to assist teachers with implementation or with further professional development.

- As a district/school/grade level we have evaluated our current curriculum and are in the process of aligning the instructional resources to the ELA CCSS with respect to text complexity.
- I/We as a grade level team are consistently setting time aside to have collaborative discussions regarding ELA CCSS implementation of using complex texts.
- I/We as a grade level team have determined the skills necessary for students to read complex texts in a variety of contexts per CCSS guidelines.
- I/We as a grade level team have begun collecting a toolbox of resources of instructional strategies to assist students with reading complex texts.
- I/We as a grade level team have begun collecting a toolbox of formative assessments to monitor students' understanding and growth as they navigate complex texts.
- I understand text complexity and can write engaging lessons using the standard and building on students' readiness level.
- Students understand what makes a text complex.
- Students understand what it means to read complex text closely.
- Students are engaged in reading complex with teacher support.

Administrator Next Steps:

At the beginning stages of implementation, it is highly recommended to provide ample professional development opportunities for teachers to become effectively trained and knowledgeable in the use of each of the shifts prior to evaluating their skill level.

Although the kits are for informational purpose only, the actual instructional shifts and teaching strategies learned will affect the practices seen on a day to day basis in the classroom. Logically, evaluation tools can begin to align with the practices and strategies as well. Since Illinois has adopted the Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument by Charlotte Danielson, Illinois practitioners should notice that certain framework statements *begin* to make connections to some of the shifts in practice.

When working with the beginning implementation stages of using complex text, the statements above can be connected with some of the Danielson Framework statements. These are only given as suggested connections to the shift itself and not as guidelines for evaluative statements for teachers.

As administrators and teachers continue with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the Illinois State Board of Education is committed to continue supporting efforts through professional development tools and resources that can be found on the Professional Learning Series located at www.isbe.net . For comments or questions, please contact plscomments@gmail.com .

Danielson Connection to this Shift Kit

	<p>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy 1b Demonstrating Knowledge of Students 1c Setting Instructional Outcomes 1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources 1e Designing Coherent Instruction 1f Designing Student Assessments 	<p>Domain 2: Classroom Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport 2b Establishing a Culture for Learning 2c Managing Classroom Procedures 2d Managing Student Behavior 2e Organizing Physical Space
	<p>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4a Reflecting on Teaching 4b Maintaining Accurate Records 4c Communicating with Families 4d Participating in a Professional Community 4e Growing and Developing Professionally 4f Showing Professionalism 	<p>Domain 3: Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3a Communicating with Students 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques 3c Engaging Students in Learning 3d Using Assessment in Instruction 3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Source: The Danielson Group at www.danielsongroup.org