

Research Supporting the Common Core ELA/Literacy Shifts and Standards

Research Series: Implementation

The Role of Close Reading in Common Core Implementation

Close reading is an instructional approach strongly associated with the CCSS Shifts. It is designed to 1) help make students better readers, and 2) give all students access to the content in grade-level complex text, through intentional, built-in scaffolds. Because close reading was not a widely practiced method prior to the adoption of the Standards, it has not been studied directly through rigorous academic research. At the same time the close reading method is based on several key components, each of which has a strong research base.

Components

- **Vocabulary:** Close reading focuses careful attention on vocabulary and helping students to determine vocabulary from context. This feature of close reading is supported by the research in the vocabulary section of this document.
- **Syntax:** Close reading helps student decipher the structure of sentences and paragraphs i.e. syntax, through reflection on and discussion of complex portions of the text.
 - Goff, D. A., Pratt, C., & Ong, B. (2005). **The relations between children's reading comprehension, working memory, language skills and components of reading decoding in a normal sample.** *Reading and Writing, 18*(7-9), 583-616.

Relevant finding:

- Shows the correlation between the ability to process syntax and reading comprehension.

- **Fluency:** Close reading involves multiple readings of the text, including read-aloud, which not only helps weaker readers access the text, but also develops their fluency through multiple readings.
 - Paige, D. D. (2011). **Engaging struggling readers through situational interest: A model proposing the relationships among extrinsic motivation, oral reading fluency, comprehension, and academic achievement.** *Reading Psychology, 32*(5), 395-425.

Relevant finding:

- Found that 50% of the variance in reading comprehension was accounted for by fluency measures. (pg. 412)
- National Reading Panel (2000). **Teaching children to read: An evidence based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.**

Relevant finding:

- A meta-analysis of multiple studies concluding that guided oral reading and repeated reading procedures (such as those used in close reading) increase both fluency and comprehension. (pg. 15)
- **Deliberate Practice with Complex Text:** Close reading involves deliberately practicing analyzing and engaging with complex text and is repeated over multiple years and grades.

- Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). **The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance.** *Psychological Review, 100*(3), 363.

Relevant finding:

- This seminal work shows that deliberate, focused work with feedback over long periods of time produces “expert performance” in many areas.
- **Standard of Coherence:** Close reading of complex text illustrates how much texts have to offer and helps students develop a high “standard of coherence” i.e. a high expectation of meaning and comprehension when reading text.
- Pearson, D., Liben, D. (n.d.). **The progression of reading comprehension.** Retrieved from <http://achievethecore.org/page/64/the-progression-of-reading-comprehension-detail-pg>

Relevant finding:

- Finds that proficient readers demonstrate a high standard of coherence; regularly expecting to understand text deeply and working to achieve that understanding. (pg. 2)

For additional research, see also:

Syntax:

- Nation, K., & Snowling, M. J. (2000). Factors influencing syntactic awareness skills in normal readers and poor comprehenders. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 21*(02), 229-241.

Fluency:

- Klauda, S. L., & Guthrie, J. T. (2008). Relationships of three components of reading fluency to reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(2), 310.
- Kuhn, M. R., & Stahl, S. A. (2003). Fluency: A review of developmental and remedial practices. *Journal of educational psychology, 95*(1), 3.