**6-8 English Language Arts / Literacy Survey**

1. What English Language Arts/Literacy program(s) are you using with the majority of your students this school year? For each program used, indicate whether it is used as primary or support material. If you do not use a program, please leave that row blank.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Primary Material | Support Material | Neither |
| Accelerated Reader |  |  |  |
| Book It! |  |  |  |
| Reading Street/Scott Foresman-Pearson |  |  |  |
| Scholastic Direct Instruction |  |  |  |
| District adopted common basal series |  |  |  |
| Harcourt Reading/Harcourt |  |  |  |
| Great Source |  |  |  |
| Trophies/Harcourt |  |  |  |
| Journeys |  |  |  |
| Houghton Mifflin Reading/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt |  |  |  |
| MacMillan/McGraw-Hill |  |  |  |
|  | Primary Material | Support Material | Neither |
| Literacy by Design/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt |  |  |  |
| RAZ-Kids |  |  |  |
| Treasures/Macmillan-McGraw-Hill |  |  |  |
| Literature or Elements of Literature/Holt McDougal |  |  |  |
| SRA Reading or Open Court Reading |  |  |  |
| Trade Books |  |  |  |
| Reading Wonders/McGraw-Hill |  |  |  |
| Storytown/Harcourt |  |  |  |
| Prentice Hall Literature/Prentice Hall Pearson |  |  |  |
| Other *(please specify)* |  |  |  |

1. In the last 12 months, how much training, professional development, or professional learning about the Common Core State Standards have you participated in total?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | None | ½ day (1-4 hours) | 1 day (5-8 hours) | 2 days (9-16 hours) | 3 days | 4-5 days | >5 days |
| General training on the Common Core State Standards |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Content-specific training on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. How familiar are you with the Common Core State Standards for the grade(s)/subject(s) you teach?

🔿 Very unfamiliar

🔿 Somewhat unfamiliar

🔿 Somewhat familiar

🔿 Very familiar

The next section is designed to provide a collective snapshot of the current Common Core English/Language Arts knowledge and practice in your local setting. In order to gather the most accurate information, please do not guess on the items, and answer as candidly as possible. Remember that many items have no correct or incorrect answers.

1. In the following list, which tool(s), if any, do you use? *(Please check ALL that apply.)*

❒ ATOS

❒ Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)

❒ Flesch-Kincaid

❒ The Lexile Framework

❒ Reading Maturity Metric

❒ SourceRater

❒ Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor

❒ Other *(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

❒ I do not use any quantitative tool.

1. Give the title of a text you recently taught to your class:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Approximately how many students read the text you identified in question 5? *(Select one.)*

🔿 All

🔿 Most

🔿 Some

🔿 Few

1. Select the category that *best* describes the text you identified in question 5:

🔿 Poetry

🔿 Science fiction/Fantasy

🔿 Biography

🔿 Newspaper/Magazine

🔿 Other Fiction

🔿 Other Nonfiction

1. Please select the option that *best* applies to the text you identified in question 5:

🔿 I chose (or helped choose) this text.

🔿 It is part of the district curriculum.

🔿 It is part of the school curriculum.

🔿 It is part of the state adopted curriculum.

🔿 It has been traditionally taught for this class.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements as they apply to the text you identified in question 5:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
| (a) The text really engages my students. |  |  |  |  |
| (b) The reading level is at the grade level that I am teaching. |  |  |  |  |
| (c) The reading level is appropriate for the abilities of my students. |  |  |  |  |
| (d) This text has worked well for me in the past. |  |  |  |  |
| (e) The content of the text fits well within what we are studying. |  |  |  |  |

1. The next set of questions asks about your last English Language Arts/Literacy unit. Please indicate the level of emphasis during that unit for each of the following activities:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not an emphasis | Minor emphasis | Major emphasis |
| (a) Reading a text |  |  |  |
| (b) Discussing language author uses in text or themes or ideas found in the text |  |  |  |
| (c) Relating a text to other texts |  |  |  |
| (d) Making connections to student experiences |  |  |  |
| (e) Discussing vocabulary words |  |  |  |
| (f) Narrative/creative writing |  |  |  |
| (g) Informational/persuasive writing |  |  |  |
| (h) Foundational reading skills (K- 5) |  |  |  |
| (i) Speaking and listening skills |  |  |  |
| (j) Attending to grammar and writing conventions |  |  |  |
| (k) Other *(please specify)* |  |  |  |

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your English Language Arts/Literacy teaching this school year.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree | Not applicable |
| (a) I figure out additional structures and scaffolds for all of my students. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (b) I deemphasize sections of the text if I think they are too difficult for my students. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (c) I take challenging sections of the text and reword them so that my students can understand. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (d) I provide more advanced texts for students who are reading above grade level. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (e) In addition to the text, I provide easier texts for students who are reading below  grade level. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (f) The majority of texts I assign to my students are fiction. |  |  |  |  |  |
| (g) All of my students read the same text. |  |  |  |  |  |

The Common Core emphasizes giving all students access to complex text, which is characterized by the presence of academic vocabulary and varied sentence structures. The CCSS defines a model for determining how easy or difficult a particular text is to read based on qualitative and quantitative components. The following questions focus on the qualitative aspects of text complexity.

\*\*\*\*\*\*

The Common Core emphasizes regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary (also known as Tier 2 vocabulary), including words which are highly generalizable and represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things. Academic vocabulary helps students access and understand increasing levels of complex texts across all content areas.

You can refer to the following excerpt to answer questions 12-26.

1. In the bolded type area of the excerpt below, please circle the SIX different examples of academic vocabulary:

**The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat**

**Chapter 3: From Farm to Factory**

**TURNING BOMBS INTO FERTILIZER**

It may seem that I’ve given corn too much credit. After all, corn is just a plant. How could a plant take over our food chain and push out almost every other species? Well, it had some help from the U.S. government.

At the heart of the industrial food chain are huge businesses, agri-businesses. The same businesses that create new seeds provide farmers with the tools and fertilizer they need to grow lots of corn. Agri-businesses also need cheap corn from which they make processed food and hundreds of other products. To get the corn flowing and keep it flowing, agri-business depends on government regulations and taxpayer money.

The government started seriously helping corn back in 1947. That was when a huge weapons plant in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, switched over to making chemical fertilizer. How can a weapons plant make fertilizer? Because ammonium nitrate, the main ingredient in explosives, happens to be an excellent source of nitrogen. And nitrogen is one of the main ingredients in fertilizer.

**After World War II, the government found itself with a tremendous surplus of ammonium nitrate. There was a debate about what the government should do with the leftover bomb material. One idea was to spray it on forests to help out the timber industry. But the scientists in the Department of Agriculture had a better idea: Spread the ammonium nitrate on farmland as fertilizer. And so the government helped launch the chemical fertilizer industry. (It also helped start the pesticide industry, since insect killers are based on poison gases developed for the war.)**

**Chemical fertilizer was needed to grow hybrid corn because it is a very hungry crop.** The richest acre of Iowa soil could never feed thirty thousand hungry corn plants year after year without added fertilizer. Though hybrids were introduced in the thirties, it wasn’t until farmers started using chemical fertilizers in the 1950s that corn yields really exploded.

The Common Core emphasizes regular practice with informational text and its domain-specific vocabulary, generally words that have low frequency use and are limited to specific knowledge domains. Domain-specific vocabulary (also known as Tier 3 vocabulary) helps students access and understand informational texts specific to content areas taught in school.

1. Please circle the FOUR different examples of domain-specific vocabulary:

**The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat**

**Chapter 3: From Farm to Factory**

**TURNING BOMBS INTO FERTILIZER**

It may seem that I’ve given corn too much credit. After all, corn is just a plant. How could a plant take over our food chain and push out almost every other species? Well, it had some help from the U.S. government.

At the heart of the industrial food chain are huge businesses, agri-businesses. The same businesses that create new seeds provide farmers with the tools and fertilizer they need to grow lots of corn. Agri-businesses also need cheap corn from which they make processed food and hundreds of other products. To get the corn flowing and keep it flowing, agri-business depends on government regulations and taxpayer money.

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Chemical fertilizer was needed to grow hybrid corn because it is a very hungry crop. The richest acre of Iowa soil could never feed thirty thousand hungry corn plants year after year without added fertilizer. Though hybrids were introduced in the thirties, it wasn’t until farmers started using chemical fertilizers in the 1950s that corn yields really exploded.

1. Based on the academic vocabulary and figurative language in the excerpted text, please determine the level of complexity of its CONVENTIONALITY and VOCABULARY. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

Conventionality and vocabulary:

0 1 2 3 4

**Least complex** I--------------I--------------I---------------I----------------I **Most complex**

Definition of Conventionality and Vocabulary: Texts that include language that is explicit, literal, straightforward, and generally familiar tend to be easier to read than texts that include figurative, nuanced, archaic or otherwise unfamiliar language or an abundance of domain-specific vocabulary.

1. Please determine the complexity of the excerpt’s ORGANIZATION and STRUCTURE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

Organization and structure:

0 1 2 3 4

**Least complex** I--------------I--------------I---------------I----------------I **Most complex**

Definition of Organization and Structure:

Less Complex – Organization of text and connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear. Structure is chronological or easy to predict. Graphics, if used, directly support and assist in interpreting the written text. Text Features, if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential to understanding.

More Complex – Organization of text is intricate with possible changes in narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, and storylines or can be specialized for a particular discipline. Connections between an extensive range of ideas or events may be implicit or subtle. Graphics are varied and may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text. Text Features, if used, are essential in understanding content.

1. Please determine the complexity of the excerpt’s PURPOSE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

Purpose:

0 1 2 3 4

**Least complex** I--------------I--------------I---------------I----------------I **Most complex**

Definition of Purpose: Literary texts with a single level of meaning tend to be easier to comprehend than literary texts with multiple levels of meaning. Similarly, informational texts with an explicitly stated purpose are generally easier to comprehend than informational texts with an implicit, hidden, or obscure purpose.

1. Please determine the complexity of the excerpt’s INTERTEXTUALITY/CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE. Indicate your answer by placing an X in the corresponding area of the scale.

Intertextuality/cultural knowledge:

0 1 2 3 4

**Least complex** I--------------I--------------I---------------I----------------I **Most complex**

Definition Intertextuality/Cultural knowledge: Texts that make few assumptions about the extent of prior knowledge and the depth of their cultural/literary and content/discipline knowledge are generally less complex than are texts that make many assumptions in one or more of those areas.

1. In the space provided, please write a few sentences explaining your rationale.

One of the main shifts of the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy is to increase the emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational. Text-dependent questions are questions that can only be answered by referring to evidence provided in the text. Text-specific question are also text-dependent, but address the unique text and no other by attending to its particular structure, language, concepts, ideas, and details.

The next series of items focuses on text-dependent and text-specific questions that a teacher may use based on the reading.

1. Suppose the questions below are used by teachers in a lesson about the excerpt. Please indicate if the question is Text-Dependent, or not.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Text-dependent | Not text-dependent | I don’t know |
| (a) In paragraph 4, which phrase best helps the reader understand what the word  surplus means? |  |  |  |
| (b) In which paragraph does the author provide information that helps explain why farmers embraced the use of chemical fertilizer? |  |  |  |
| (c) Do you agree with the statement that corn has "taken over our food chain?" |  |  |  |
| (d) After reading the article, give some examples of where corn is found in everyday products. |  |  |  |

1. Please indicate which of the following Text-Dependent questions is Text-Specific, or not.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Text-specific | Not text-specific | I don’t know |
| (a) In paragraph 4, which phrase best helps the reader understand what the word  surplus means? |  |  |  |
| (b) In which paragraph does the author provide information that helps explain why  farmers embraced the use of chemical fertilizer? |  |  |  |
| (c) What is one thing the author could do to strengthen this argument? |  |  |  |
| (d) What is the author’s tone of this article? |  |  |  |

1. Based on the excerpt, please indicate the sequence of the following questions in the order that you would use to guide students to the central idea and development of the text.
2. What are some of the things that you use differently from their original purpose?
3. What are the dangers of using ammonium nitrate on crops?
4. Going through the article, what are words that you would need to define to understand the article better?
5. Reading the article, what was the original purpose of ammonium nitrate and what was the second?
6. When the author describes corn as a “very hungry crop,” what does he mean by that?
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Mr. Jones, with the intent to focus the students on the main idea of the excerpt, asks his students, “What is the author’s main argument in the excerpt?”

Tim answers, “Extra bombs means more fertilizer for corn.”

What question would you ask *next* to help refocus Tim’s response to the text? *(Select one.)*

🔿 “Where in the text is there support for your idea?”

🔿 “What part of the extra material for bombs can be used for fertilizer?”

🔿 “What else did the government want to use the ammonium nitrate for?”

🔿 “Read paragraphs 3-4. Do these paragraphs support or refute your claim?”

🔿 “Do you agree with the author’s tone of this article?”

🔿 “Do you think the author gives corn “too much credit?"

1. Please provide a rationale for your answer below.

Mr. Jones is developing a lesson plan to go with the excerpt from “The Omnivore’s Dilemma.” His objective is: *“Students will closely read a nonfiction text and use evidence to support understanding the central idea of the text.”*

The following questions focus on some aspects of his plan development.

1. How could Mr. Jones *best* meet the needs of students who read well above the grade level text band? *(Select one.)*

🔿 (a) Provide an additional text, *Salt: A History*

🔿 (b) Have students examine the text for content-specific vocabulary words.

🔿 (c) Have students write a short story about farming.

🔿 (d) Group students for discussion by aptitude.

🔿(e) I don’t know.

1. How could Mr. Jones *best* provide the appropriate scaffolds so that all students have opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson? *(Select one.)*

🔿 (a) He could rewrite the text and substitute more complex text and difficult vocabulary with easier words and phrases.

🔿 (b) He could create a podcast or audio recording of the passage for students to listen to while reading along.

🔿 (c) He could build background knowledge by providing a summary of the text.

🔿 (d) He could group students homogeneously and give the English Language Learners a simpler text on the same subject.

🔿 (e) I don’t know.

Mr. Jones is developing a series of lesson plans to go with the excerpt from “The Omnivore’s Dilemma.” His objective is: *“Students will study the food chains that sustain the way Americans eat.”*

1. How could Mr. Jones *best* prepare students to build knowledge about the concepts in the text? *(Select one.)*

🔿 (a) He could provide a series of additional texts and videos on the topic.

🔿 (b) He could have students write definitions for content-specific vocabulary words.

🔿 (c) He could have students write a short story.

🔿 (d) He could group students by aptitude for a discussion.

🔿 (e) I don’t know.

From the reading that he chose, Mr. Jones developed the following two-part ELA assignment for his students:

**Student Assignment**

**Part 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| COLUMN A | COLUMN B |
| Part A: The author develops several central ideas in the passage. Below, you will see several ideas that were presented in the text. From the list provided, draw a ring around the two ideas that are central rather than minor ideas in the text. | Part B: Write one sentence from the text that helps develop each of the two central ideas you chose from the list in Column A. |
| The government has become closely involved in the farming industry. |  |
| Corn yields are higher when the crop is given fertilizer. |  |
| Living things need nitrogen in order to make proteins and DNA. |  |
| Farmers have always found it necessary to add nitrogen to soil. |  |
| The use of chemical fertilizer has wiped out traditional farming practices. |  |

**Part 2**

From the excerpt, what kind of role did the government have in helping corn grow? Was this role positive or negative? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

There is a range of instructional practices teachers use every day; which ones are used is determined by the content and the students being taught.

Mr. Jones wants to know which instructional practices apply to his assignment.

1. Please indicate whether each of the following instructional practices applies or does not apply to Mr. Jones’ assignment.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Applies | Does not apply | Cannot tell from assignment | I don’t know |
| (a) Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards. |  |  |  |  |
| (b) Asks students to draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent  writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms  ( e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays). |  |  |  |  |
| (c) Provides for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed  inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection. |  |  |  |  |
| (d) Focuses on building students’ academic vocabulary in context. |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Applies | Does not apply | Cannot tell from assignment | I don’t Know |
| (e) Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. |  |  |  |  |
| (f)Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students  directly experience the complexity of the text. |  |  |  |  |
| (g) Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently  demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately  complex text(s). |  |  |  |  |

1. Over the past school year, how frequently have you done the following?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Almost never/Never | Less than once a month | Several times a month | About weekly | Several times a week |
| (a) Read nonfiction text in the classroom |  |  |  |  |  |
| (b) Connected literacy instruction to other content (e.g., science, social studies) |  |  |  |  |  |
| (c) Sought texts from other content area teachers |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Over the past school year, how frequently have you done the following?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Almost never/Never | Less than once a month | Several times a month | About weekly | Several times a week |
| (a) Discussed Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy  with teachers in other grades |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Almost never/Never | Less than once a month | Several times a month | About weekly | Several times a week |
| (b) Discussed Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy  with teachers in your own grade |  |  |  |  |  |
| (c) Looked at student ELA/Literacy work with other teachers for the  purposes of professional development |  |  |  |  |  |
| (d) Received suggestions for the Common Core Standards for ELA/Literacy-aligned curricular materials from colleagues |  |  |  |  |  |

1. In the last year, how frequently have you used the following websites for free resources and information about the Common Core State Standards?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Almost never/Never | About once a month | Several times a month | About weekly | Several times a week |
| Teaching Channel |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers Pay Teachers |  |  |  |  |  |
| LearnZillion |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share My Lesson |  |  |  |  |  |
| BetterLesson |  |  |  |  |  |
| Achieve the Core |  |  |  |  |  |
| Khan Academy |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pinterest |  |  |  |  |  |
| My district education agency website |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other state or district education agency website |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify) |  |  |  |  |  |

Thank you very much for the time and thought you have put into completing this survey.

For more information about the organization conducting this research,

Student Achievement Partners,

visit [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org).