

Engaging in Text and Task Analysis

So this is like chess. You think ten moves ahead of your students. Then when you are teaching, you are ready with the next move.

—Abdiel Salazar, Fremont Elementary School team member

Previous inquiries in this chapter have focused on reading processes. Text and Task Analysis focuses in addition on the knowledge-based challenges a text is likely to pose. Teachers are often so familiar with their course texts that they become inured to the challenges they present. Deliberate focus on these challenges through a process of Text and Task Analysis provides teachers with new insights into sources of potential reading difficulties and strategies students might use in overcoming them. The Text and Task Analysis is an inquiry teachers can use over and over when selecting text and planning how to use it.

With the increasing focus on the importance of text complexity and of matching texts to students, Text and Task Analysis is a particularly valuable tool for preparing teachers to read with students in mind.

Before teachers take on Text and Task Analysis with student materials, however, teams may want to undertake a Text and Task Analysis with a complex text written for an adult audience, to raise their awareness of what makes a text hard and what kind of supports a reader may need. Team Tool 5.12, Text and Task Analysis Inquiry, is written for use with student materials but may easily be adapted for inquiry with adult materials.

TEAM TOOL 5.12

Text and Task Analysis Inquiry

PURPOSE

When teachers know how to identify the demands a text makes on the reader, and in relation to a particular task, they are able to select appropriate texts for classroom use, plan appropriate tasks, and anticipate necessary supports.

PROCEDURE

Note: Many teams use step 1 of this inquiry with texts at an adult level before using the inquiry with student texts.

1. **Read the text** you plan to have students read, paying close attention to your own reading process.
What strategies are you using to make sense of the text that students will need to learn or remember

to apply? What knowledge are you drawing on to make meaning of the text? Use the following Text and Task Analysis note taker to record your thinking.

- What schema challenges may this text present for readers?
 - Specific content knowledge that readers may not yet know?
 - Specific content knowledge that readers have studied previously but will need to review or need help to recall?
 - Vocabulary that is unfamiliar?
 - Familiar words used in subject-specific ways?
 - Unfamiliar forms of texts or new text structures and features?
 - Difficult or unfamiliar sentence structures?
- What learning opportunities may this text present for readers?
 - Opportunities to encounter key curriculum ideas or concepts?
 - Opportunities to explore discourse conventions of the discipline?

2. **Try the task** you plan to have students do with this text, paying close attention to the work you are doing to complete the task.

- What challenges does the task present?
- What kinds of discipline-specific thinking are required?
- What experiences have students had with tasks like this previously?
- What new skills and strategies are demanded?

TEXT AND TASK ANALYSIS NOTE TAKER

What's involved in reading this text? What reading strategies are helpful? What knowledge is necessary (including personal experience)? What teaching and learning opportunities does this text offer?

Knowledge of Content and the World A learned and lived knowledge base	Knowledge of Texts Text genres and text structures; visuals and formatting features	Knowledge of Language Words and morphology; syntax and text signals	Knowledge of Disciplinary Discourse and Practices The particular ways members of a subject area community communicate and think
Reading Strategies			
Teaching and Learning Opportunities (Tasks and Supports)			