Text-Dependent Questions

Part 3: Maintaining a Deep Connection to the Text

Facilitator Notes

Goal:

Participants will be able to identify text-dependent questions and recognize the importance of students staying deeply connected to the text.

Distribute to Participants:

- Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (included within Appendix B as a 9-10 grade band text exemplar: page 127)
- Video Reflection Questions (to be distributed after video)
- Common Texts:
    - Elementary:
        - Excerpt: *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles (included within Appendix B as a 2-3 grade band text exemplar: page 58)
        - Questions for *The Story of Ruby Bridges*
    - Middle:
        - "Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (included within Appendix B as a 6-8 grade band text exemplar: pages 83-85)
        - Questions for "Paul Revere's Ride"
    - High:
        - The Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson (included within Appendix B as a 11-CCR grade band text exemplar: page 164)
        - Questions for The Declaration of Independence
- Template for Questions
- Scissors and glue sticks

Time Required: approximately 70 minutes

Reminder: It is critical that participants go through the sequence of modules for Text-Dependent Questions in order to build understanding and maintain fidelity.

Facilitator Instructions:

- Introduce Video.
    - David Coleman, a lead writer for the Common Core State Standards, models a close reading of Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in order to demonstrate the type of careful reading called for in the Common Core State Standards. The intent is for participants to understand that the use of text-dependent

questioning will lead to deep and rigorous conversations that are centered on the text and support students as they gain a greater insight into the author's perspective.
(It is also important to share with participants that the material covered in this video would lead to 6-8 days of instruction.)

- Ask participants to read the first five paragraphs of King's letter as a way to provide context for the video.
- Participants view video (10 minutes)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ho_ntaYbL7o
- Distribute Video Reflection Questions.
  - o Participants will convene in groups of 4-6 to answer and discuss questions.
  - o Participants will report out responses with larger group.
- Provide transition statement for participants to move into the second half of today's session:
  The goal is for students to have deep connections to a common text, which occur in both conversations and writing in order for them to develop habits for citing textual evidence that support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Assemble participants into groups of 3-4 according to level.
- Explain instructions:
  Groups will:
  1. read common text and accompanying questions
  2. sort through a series of questions to identify those that are text-dependent
     - o use Template for Questions to cut and paste questions into two groups: Text-Dependent Questions / Non-Text-Dependent Questions
  3. discuss characteristics of text-dependent questions
  4. create 1-2 new text-dependent questions to add to the list.

- Each group should choose one of their newly created text-dependent questions to share with the larger group.
- Ask participants "How has this work helped you to understand the importance of asking text based questions?"

Optional Extension:

If time allows, and if participants seem eager to delve deeper into the progression of this work, facilitator may encourage participants to:

- Reread each text-dependent question
- Locate the part of text in which the answer is found
- Highlight or record the text beside each accompanying text-dependent question

NOTE: Included is an example using The Declaration of Independence text. The example template will be introduced in Part 4, therefore it is intended to be used as a facilitator reference only.

Insight for Facilitator:

Below is a list of common misconceptions that may need to be addressed:

1. **All text-dependent questions are analytical**
   Text-dependent questions require students to refer explicitly back to the text in order to gather evidence, knowledge, and insight. Depending on the complexity of the text and the group of students, teachers may need to begin by asking fairly simple questions that focus students' attention on key details of the text.

Therefore, it is important to refer to the Common Core State Standards when determining the appropriate grade level questions.

See additional references:
> From achievethecore.org : Guide to Creating Text Dependent Questions for Close Analytic Reading:
> - o *Step One: Identify the Core Understandings and Key Ideas of the Text*
>   As in any good reverse engineering or "backwards design" process, teachers should start by identifying the key insights they want students to understand from the text—keeping one eye on the major points being made is crucial for fashioning an overarching set of successful questions and critical for creating an appropriate culminating assignment.
> - o *Step Two: Start Small to Build Confidence*
>   The opening questions should be ones that help orientate students to the text and be sufficiently specific enough for them to answer so that they gain confidence to tackle more difficult questions later on.

> From the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards:
> "An effective set of questions might begin with relatively simple questions that encourage attention to the specific details and then move on to explore the impact of those details on the text as a whole."

2. Focusing on only one text won't allow for synthesis
It is critical that students acquire a deep understanding of a specific text before moving on to the synthesis of multiple texts.

See additional references:

> From The Leadership and Learning Center:
> "Questions that are text-dependent can only be answered correctly by close reading of the text. The evidence in the response comes directly from the text and does not depend on additional information from other sources. Although there is an important role for questions requiring a synthesis of information from a variety of sources, text-dependent questions assure knowledge from a specific text is clearly understood prior to leaping into synthesizing. This level of scrutiny of text increases expectations for accuracy for future thinking, which may include synthesizing, analyzing, and creating." (Piercy, 2011)

> From the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards:
> "This text dependent approach can and should be applied to building knowledge from multiple sources; it simply requires that each source be read and understood carefully before moving to additional sources."

3. Questions that address literary elements are text-dependent
Questions that address literary elements are commonly confused as text-dependent. Most of these questions are too broad and rely on a students' background knowledge of literary elements. One way to determine if a question is indeed text-dependent, is to consider the intended response/answer. If the answer requires the student to closely revisit the text, it is text-dependent.

For example:
> The questions that accompany *Paul Revere's Ride*, include the following example of a non-text-dependent question.
> - **How would you describe the style of this text?** (non-text-dependent)
>   This question is not text-dependent because it is not specifically bringing the students back into the text. Instead, the question is too broad and focuses on the reader, "How would you describe…"

> In order to create a text-dependent question that focuses on style, the question would need to specifically bring students back to the text. Below are some examples.
> - **How has Longfellow organized the chronology of events?** (text-dependent)
> - **How does Longfellow's style alternate between heavily descriptive, with an emphasis on setting and atmosphere, to dynamic and full of action?** (text-dependent)