Transition to PA Common Core Standards
Module 2: Text Complexity Script

The italicized script provides direction for the presenter while the plain text script is the narrative for the presenter.

All handout titles are included in the slide descriptions below and are numbered by slide on the moodle.

Slide 1:   *Have Slide 1 on the screen as participants enter the room. Begin by introducing yourself and a bit of background on your job, role, and engagement with PA Common Core.*

Slide 2:   This is one of four modules designed to assist educators in understanding and transitioning to PA Common Core.

Slide 3:   *Remind participants to sign on to SAS and complete and display their name tents.*

Slide 4:   Today we are focusing on three essential questions related to a key piece of PA Common Core transition. *Read each question aloud.*

Slide 5:   Take a look at the two questions on the screen. Choose one of them. On an index card, write a response to it.
What makes a text appropriate for your particular grade level?
How do you select the texts you use with your grade level (s) of students?

Allow a 1 – 2 minute wait time.

After participants have responded, divide the room in half. Have Question 1 respondees move to the left side of the room and Question 2 respondees to the right side. Have each group list (or some of their) ideas on chart paper.   Have one member from each group summarize the responses.

Wrap up the activity with this question: What have we discovered?

Slide 6:   *Introduce the graphic organizer "What –So What."* (Handout)
The "What/So What" graphic organizer will be used through the entire text complexity module. Although we will be pausing at certain points throughout this module, if something resonates with you, please quickly jot it down at any point through this presentation. The first column is for new understandings that are

important. The second column is to connect that new understanding with why it is important. The last column is for what you can do with that new information and how you can change practice as a result.

We will return to this graphic organizer at the end of the day to share knowledge gained.

Slide 7:   Comprehending complex texts is everywhere in the CCSS. This is why text complexity matters and we are spending time talking about it.

Slide 8:   As stated in the Standards: **Note on Range and Content of Student Reading:** To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. Students also acquire the habits of reading independently and closely, which are essential to their future success.

We are building readers with the end result: college and career in mind.

Slide 9 :   *Making Meaning Slide- emphasizes the reader as central to understanding text.*

The reader is at the heart of how a text is comprehended. A reader's background, vocabulary understanding, and other variables will all affect how a text is understood and how meaning is made.

Slide 10:   *Post Slide 10 questions (see below) a chart paper and post in front of room.*

The NAEP Reading assessment shows how the national assessment focus on higher Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Interpreting, recalling, critiquing and evaluating text are much more difficult than recall.

Please look at the above chart illustrating the distribution of questions by cognitive skill for reading for the NAEP Reading Assessment. It shows what students are expected to be able to do during the test. Think about how you teach students to interpret, critique, and evaluate.

At your table, take 2-3 minutes to reflect on these questions:
- In your classroom, what percentage falls in each of these categories on average? Where do we fall short?
- Would students be able to consistently engage in these tasks proficiently?
- Where do you think our students measured up to this assessment as a state?

Sample responses from a few tables to share thinking. Summarize the participant's responses: Here's what I heard…

Slide 11 : Here are the summary results for the NAEP Reading assessment showing where different states fall on the proficiency continuum for grade 8. Are any states showing consistent levels of proficiency? Look at where PA falls. What does this data suggest about how well we are all addressing rigor in our reading instruction?

Slide 12: Please take a look at the quote from ACT and what it says about students exemplifying what it means to be college and career ready. Notice that what makes a person who is ready for college or career a stand out is his or her ability to understand complex texts.

Slide 13: The CCSS really emphasize the need to read texts carefully and analyze those texts. Students are now required to cite specific text examples and provide specific evidence from the texts they are reading. The students need to draw out and discern the important information from the less relevant information.

Slide 14: This graphic represents the heart and soul of text complexity. The triangle illustrates the 3 components necessary to clearly understand and define text complexity: quantitative, qualitative, and reader and task. We are going to explore deeply all three of these components.

Slide 15:   Quantitative focuses on:

- Word length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Sentence length
- Text length
- Text cohesion (*One type of cohesion* refers to overlap in content words between sentences within paragraphs or sections of a text.)

This is where the various readability formulas fit. Be knowledgeable in which are best to use for the ages of your students. As part of Microsoft Office Word, you have the Flesch Reading Ease and the Flesch-Kincaid readability formulas.

- The <u>Flesch Reading Ease</u> gives a score from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the easier it is to read. A score between 90-100 is considered easily understandable by an average 5<u>th</u> grader. Scores between 60.0 and 70.0 are considered easily understood by <u>8th and 9th</u> graders. Scores between 0.0 and 30.0 are considered easily understood by <u>college graduates</u>.
- The <u>Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level</u> outputs a U.S. school grade level; this indicates that the average student in that grade level can read the text.
- The <u>SPACHE Readability Formula</u> is best used to calculate the difficulty of text that falls at the 3rd grade or below. Unfortunately, this is one you have to purchase to use.

Take 1-2 minutes to turn and talk to your elbow partner about quantitative measures and what your district uses to assess text complexity.

Do a quick debrief to gather feedback from participants.

Slide 16:   Fry's Readability formula is one common example of how text complexity was/is determined. If you look up the side of the graph, it requires a person to calculate the average number of sentences per 100 words. Along the bottom of the graph, you can see that the average number of syllables per 100 words is required. You just need to look at the x and y axes and find the appropriate grade level.

Slide 17:   *Hunger Games Activity – Distribute the Hunger Games/Fry Formula handout.*

Slide 18:   *Part 1: Ask participants to look at the screen and predict the reading age (grade*

level) for The Hunger Games excerpt and write it on the index card. Briefly share at tables.

Slide 19: *Part 2: Have participants determine actual quantitative levels by applying Fry's Readability formula to 100 words in the paragraph. (The readability of this passage falls around the third grade range.)*
- *Have participants share expectations verses their actual findings at their tables.*

Slide 20: Many districts also use Lexiles to determine appropriate text levels. Lexiles are also addressed in the CCSS as well. Basically lexiles use sentence length (similar to Fry) and word frequency (based on the Lexile databank) to determine a range between 0 and 2000.

Slide 21: What is a text complexity band? It's a grade band with corresponding text levels assigned to it. If you draw your eye to the first two columns, you'll see the correspondence.

Slide 22: What is a text complexity band? It is a grade level band that has assigned readability levels. In the grade 4-5 text complexity grade band, the lexile range of a given text should be in the 770 to 980 range. For example, in Accelerated Reader, the book level range is 3.0 – 5.7.

Slide 23: Because the Lexile score and the ATOS didn't seem to be on the same page and we had a book with the AD code, we also ran this title through Scholastic's Book Wizard leveling system to get more information. Scholastic put this book at a 5.3 grade level.

What is our conclusion? *(Solicit from audience!)*
- Text complexity ranges anywhere from grade 4 through grade 6.
- This is only one part of the text complexity triangle. We need more.
- Does the content of the book have any impact on the text complexity?

Slide 24: *This slide sums up the one triangle component to remind participants that it is only 1/3 and there are other components to consider.*

Remember, however, that the quantitative measure is only the first of three "legs" of the text complexity triangle. Our final recommendation may be validated,

influenced, or even over-ruled by our examination of **qualitative measures** and the **reader and task considerations**. Now the fun begins!

Slide 25:   *Display Slide 25: "What/So What" graphic organizer and ask participants to pause and ponder while taking a 10-minute break.*

Slide 26:   *Introduction to qualitative measures*

What Are the Qualitative Measures?
Only a human reader can analyze this. It is characterized by:
- Layers of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands
- Cultural demands
- Vocabulary

How about this metaphor?
- Is this an apple book where you can just bite into it?
                            OR
- Is it an onion book that you have to peel back the layers?

Table Talk: At your tables, share titles of apple and onion books with one another.

In 2-3 minutes, ask table to share out titles.

Slide 27:   There is a continuum for each of the qualitative measures. Just because a text may be exceeding complex in meaning, it may only require a small amount of knowledge demands. Text complexity requires teachers to be thinking about these elements as they select text and work with students. What is appropriate for the students and what will it require of them cognitively are important considerations.

Slide 28:   *Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric for Literary Text (Handout)*

As the kids we work with need basically a new book most days to read, the steps here are not feasible for us to do for every book we hand a child. However, if you assign a chapter book that several days will be spent reading and working with it, you may want to consider using some of the following resources to help you match a book to your readers.

The first are the rubrics; one for literary texts and one for informational texts. Since the demand for students to be able to read and critique informational text has increased with the adoption of the PA CCSS, it is imperative for teachers to be thinking about this genre of texts and how to increase time students spend with informational text and the time spent teaching using informational text.

Slide 29:   *Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric for Informational Text (Handout)*

TableTalk: Have tables look at both rubrics to determine design, categories, and content. Ask tables to compare and contrast the two rubrics. How are they alike? How are they different?

Slides 30:   <u>Literary Rubric Explained</u>
- The format is the same for both, but they have different factors that they evaluate.
- Because the factors are along a continuum, the points are High, Medium High, Medium Low and Low.
- Low does not mean K-2 nor does High mean high school.
- Low does not mean "bad."

Please look at both handouts provided and look across the qualitative measures and think about what makes a text high in each of the areas and low in those areas. What are the differences you notice between literacy texts and informational texts?

Slide 31:   *Have participants review the rubric and rate The Hunger Games.*

So…let's apply the literary rubric to *The Hunger Games*. (*Give participants 5 – 10 minutes to complete the rubric independently.*)

Slide 32:   This is just an example of how one person who read the text determines the qualitative measures for text complexity for this particular book. How did your analysis square with the one on the screen? (*Feel free to solicit responses from the audience to generate conversation.)*

Slide 33:   As Appendix A states, "Few, if any, authentic texts will be low or high on all of these measures." The goal is not for all of the checkmarks to be in a single column; the goal is to accurately reflect these factors of the text.

The marked rubric can then serve as a guide as educators re-evaluate the initial placement of the work into a text complexity band. Such reflection may validate the text's placement or may suggest that the placement needs to be changed.

Slide 34:   *Summary of the 2 "legs" together; one more to go*

Qualitative Results

Our initial placement of *The Hunger Games* into a text complexity band has shifted the appropriateness of the book. It would not seem realistic to imagine that the content of the book is appropriate for a fourth or fifth grade child.
Remember, however, that we have completed only the first two legs of the text complexity triangle. The reader and task considerations still remain.

Slide 35:   "What/So What" activity: Revisit and add new understanding as relating to the qualitative component.

Slide 36:   *Introduction to the Reader and the Task*

We must be careful to really look closely at the reader and task considerations when matching a book to the right reader.

This is really important. It is where you as a professional educator use your judgment in matching the right book to the right kid at the right time.

You also need to look at who your readers are. What background experiences do they bring or not bring to the book in question?

Slide 37:   Reader and Task Considerations (Handout)

At our grade levels, we will want to also look at what comprehension skills we are wanting to teach with this text. Please refer to the reader and task handout.

Think about what cognitive capabilities, reading skills, and how motivation would be affected or be needed to persist through the text or the task. Take a moment to think of a time when a text was not suitable for a student even though it may have been quantitatively and qualitatively appropriate. Please share out with the members at your table. (*Allow 3-5 minutes for discussion. Ask tables to shout out responses.*)

If you are introducing a more complex skill, you may want to use a book that will not overly challenge them with the actual reading of it so they have brain space to use applying the skill.

Slide 38:   Using this protocol, we progressed through each leg of the text complexity model: (1) quantitative measures, (2) qualitative measures, and (3) reader and task considerations. Now we are ready to review all three legs one last time and make a final recommendation for placement of this text into a text complexity grade band.

Slide 39:   Read the four step process on the screen. What is important to note is that we need to re-evaluate and validate what books we do use.

Slide 40:   What you see on the screen is a summary of the quantitative, qualitative, and reader to task considerations for *The Hunger Games*. Since we did not complete a reader to task (absent having a classroom), note the elements and issues detailed in the reader to task narrative. This is where the spotlight falls upon the student, and the teacher brings his/her teaching expertise to the table to make informed decisions.

Slide 41:   Since one of the major shifts of the PA CCSS is to include more informational text, it is necessary to also evaluate informational text in regard to text complexity to better understand how the three legs coincide when selecting appropriate informational texts. This slide includes an excerpt from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

We will briefly go through each of the measures of text complexity for this text.

Slide 42:   Since "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" was not categorized by a lexile level, we included a few other quantitative readability scale scores for this text. As you can see, according to the Flesch-Kincaid score, the readability level for this piece would be approximately in the middle of 9th grade. The Gunnings Fog index score indicates that the text is above a 12th grade level and the Automated Readability Index identifies the text appropriate for somewhere between 9th and 10th grade. The disparity in this quantitative analysis again illustrates that quantitative lens is not wide enough to capture the level for which this text is appropriate.

Slide 43:   Text Excerpt from "A Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (handout)

Have participants review the rubric and rate "A Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

We spent some time analyzing the qualitative components of the literary work, The Hunger Games. Since reading informational text draws on other reader demands so it important to think through the continua of some of the qualitative measures. For this activity you will need your informational text qualitative measures rubric and the handout with the excerpt from "A Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

(Give participants 5 – 10 minutes to complete the rubric independently.)

Slide 44:   *Review some of the questions for the reader and the task and ask the participants to respond to some ways and considerations that may be appropriate for this text.*

Slide 45:   *Remind participants that this particular text was included directly in the CCSS within the Informational Text grade 9-10 band. Consult the audience to survey their viewpoints on where this text resides within the standards and its appropriateness for grades 9-10.*

Slide 46:   Bookmark (Handout)

The form to the right is to be a bookmark. Print it on cardstock. As you read, you can make notes to help you place it.

Slide 47:   It becomes important for teachers to be knowledgeable about text complexity and particularly regarding qualitative measures and reader/task considerations. Teachers are our experts.

Slide 48:   Take the participants to the SAS web site and show them where to find both Appendix A and Appendix B. Discuss that Appendix A is where they would want to go to get more information about text complexity and where they could find appropriate research to support the importance of text complexity. Describe that Appendix B is a resource that provides lists of exemplar texts in different genres and for different purposes (i.e., read alouds). Please also mention that these are texts that are appropriate given the first 2 "legs" of the triangle but that they must also consider the reader and the task.

Slide 49: There is an expectation that all students in K-5 should have balanced exposure to literary texts and informational texts. That means students should have 50/50 exposure to both genres and be proficient at understanding the structures and reading them critically. At the secondary level the CCSS requires a 70/30 split with the emphasis on informational text. That is going to be addressed and the gap is going to need to be made up somehow.

Slide 50: Please take a look at this list of types of text. All three types are necessary for students to be able to become proficient at higher level reading skills. If I am a secondary English teacher asking my students to read *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Canterbury Tales*, I have to also be considering how I can provide my students with access to materials that are "easy" and allow them to practice. The same is true for a 3rd grade teacher who uses novels or anthologies to teach reading. When do students have a chance to read and practice their craft? Keep in mind the "Matthew Effect" that the rich keep getting richer, meaning that the students who read well are able to and want to read more where our less proficient readers read less and never get better.

Slide 51: *Please give the participants time to think about and reflect on the following two questions. Allow them time to talk amongst the groups and brainstorm some ideas. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers but that it is important to think about some of the major (realistic) challenges that face teachers. They can also be thinking about making connections to other subject areas.*

Ask participants at their tables to discuss both of these important questions. Allow 5-7 minutes for discussion. Select tables to report out their conclusions and ask questions.

Slide 52: Give everyone 5 – 10 minutes to complete their graphic organizers.

Ask each participant to share a Now What to which they can commit.

Slide 53: Here are the essential questions that we hoped to be able to address by the end of this module. Since text complexity is such a large part of the PA CCSS, it is important to understand what it is and why it is important. It is also important to think about and reflect on how that will change instruction.

With an elbow partner, respond to the questions with a new learning.

Slide 54:   Just a final thought

Slide 55:   Thank you! I'm here for questions, feedback, concerns...the floor is yours!