



Cracking the Common Core: Choosing and Using Texts in Grades 6-12

By William E. Lewis, Sharon Walpole, Michael C. McKenna



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This book guides teachers in grades 6-12 to strategically combine a variety of texts--including literature, informational texts, and digital sources--to meet their content-area goals and the demands of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). It presents clear-cut ways to analyze text complexity, design challenging text sets, and help students get the most out of what they read. Provided are practical instructional ideas for building background knowledge, promoting engagement, incorporating discussion and text-based writing, and teaching research skills. Appendices offer sample unit plans for English language arts, history/social studies, and science classrooms. More than 20 reproducible coaching templates and other tools can be downloaded and printed in a convenient 8 1/2" x 11" size.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is the only professional development guide that 6-12 teachers need for interpreting how to meet the rigorous demands of the CCSS. The framework in this book enables me not only to design effective text sets (with both informational and literary texts), but also to implement reading strategies and writing activities that really work!"--John Strong, MEd, English language arts teacher, Dover (Delaware) High School

"Lewis, Walpole, and McKenna draw on their vast knowledge of literacy research and practice, extensive work in middle and high school classrooms, and deep understanding of the CCSS. The authors recognize that perhaps the most fundamental shift brought about by the CCSS is in regard to texts. They help teachers construct text sets and describe content-area strategies for implementation before, during, and after reading and writing assignments. The book not only explains the strategies and how they might support the kind of in-depth understanding of texts that is expected with the Common Core, but also offers extended examples of their use. This engaging read will provide a sense of relief to teachers who feel unsure about or overwhelmed by the CCSS."--Cynthia Shanahan, EdD, College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago

"As we assemble our libraries of CCSS resources, this book deserves a prominent spot. The authors skillfully explain the rigorous expectations of the CCSS in light of the rich scholarship on adolescent literacy. The book explores a range of highly effective instructional practices to support students as readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers as they engage with complex texts as disciplinary learners. The authors' approach is thoughtful, and their conversational tone is very reader friendly."--Doug Buehl, MS, adolescent literacy specialist, Madison, Wisconsin

"This book has the authors' expertise and experience written all over it. My assistant superintendent has been leading the charge to integrate CCSS into our curriculum and guide our teachers through the curriculum writing process. Many of the ideas in this book are very closely aligned with the work our curriculum-writing teams have been doing, and I know our teachers will find both value and validation in it."--Martin J. Hudacs, EdD, Superintendent, Solanco School District, Quarryville, Pennsylvania

About the Author

William E. Lewis, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in content-area literacy, English language arts methods, writing, and young adult literature. Before going to the University of Delaware, he taught secondary English language arts for 20 years in the Pennsylvania public schools. Dr. Lewis has served as a consultant to both the Delaware and Georgia education departments and presents a range of professional development seminars on content-area literacy at the local and state levels. His research interests focus on persuasive writing and argumentation and secondary content-area reading and writing.

Sharon Walpole, PhD, is Professor in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. She has extensive school-based experience designing and implementing tiered instructional programs. Dr. Walpole has also been involved in federally funded and other schoolwide reform projects. Her current work involves the design and effects of schoolwide reforms. She has coauthored or coedited several books, including *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction, Second Edition: Resources for Grades K–3*; *The Literacy*

Coach's Handbook, Second Edition; and *Organizing the Early Literacy Classroom*. Dr. Walpole is also Series Editor, with Michael C. McKenna, of *The Essential Library of PreK–2 Literacy*. She is a recipient of the Early Career Award for Significant Contributions to Literacy Research and Education from the Literacy Research Association and the Excellence in Teaching Award from the University of Delaware.

Michael C. McKenna, PhD, was Thomas G. Jewell Professor of Reading in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia until his death in 2016. He authored, coauthored, or edited more than 20 books, including *Assessment for Reading Instruction, Third Edition*; *How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction, Second Edition: Resources for Grades K–3*; and *Organizing the Early Literacy Classroom*; as well as over 100 articles, chapters, and technical reports on a range of literacy topics. Dr. McKenna also served as Series Editor, with Sharon Walpole, of *The Essential Library of PreK–2 Literacy*. His research was sponsored by the National Reading Research Center and the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. He was a corecipient of the Edward B. Fry Book Award from the Literacy Research Association and the Award for Outstanding Academic Books from the American Library Association, and a member of the Reading Hall of Fame.

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