

Textbooks and Supplemental Texts:

Instructional Materials Evaluation Assignment

Objectives

Evaluate texts in regard to student reading abilities and needs.

- Define key terms (e.g., text, literacy).
- Calculate readability using 2+ measures.
- Determine textbook appropriateness.
- Locate relevant supplemental texts.
- Plan activities to support content and disciplinary literacy.
- Describe appropriate B-D-A structures.
- Plan literacy activities for students from diverse backgrounds.



Assignment Overview

Prospective secondary teachers (PSTs) selected both a secondary textbook and a supplemental text (e.g., video, article). Using these texts, PSTs completed a three-part assignment in which they: (1) evaluated textbook readability based on results from two tools/measures, (2) evaluated textbook quality based on a 19-item survey, and (3) developed a literacy activity appropriate for the supplemental text. Below, I describe each of these parts in detail.

Part I: Textbook Readability

Steps & Resources. PSTs were reminded to refer to the descriptions and instructions included in the reading for Module 4. Additional resources, which included descriptions and instructions for measures not covered in the reading, were added to the instructions for this assignment. To complete this part of the assignment, PSTs selected two readability tools/measures (e.g., [Fry Graph](#), [Raygor Readability Estimate](#), [Flesch Reading Ease](#)) and calculated the readability of the textbook. Then, they compared the results from the two tools/measures and wrote a paragraph in which they answered the following questions: (1) Which tools/measures did you use to calculate the readability? (2) What results did you obtain from the first one? (3) What results did you obtain from the second one? (4) How do the results compare/contrast?

Sample Instructions. To use the Raygor Readability Estimate: (1) Select three 100-word passages (not counting numbers), including one passage at the beginning, one passage in the

middle, and one passage at the end of the textbook. (2) In each 100-word passage, count the number of sentences (rounding to the nearest tenth) and then calculate the average number of sentences across all three passages. (3) In each 100-word passage, count the number of words with six or more letters and then calculate the average number of 6+-letter words across all three passages. (4) Plot both averages on the Raygor Readability Graph (see link on left) to find the estimated level of difficulty.

Part II: Textbook Quality

Description & Resources. PSTs used a survey form consisting of 19 items to evaluate aspects of the textbook. They marked each item with "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No) and justified their Y/N response with textual evidence such as quotes and examples. Then, they counted the number of affirmative responses and rated the textbook as follows:

- 17-19 Appropriate
- 14-16 Marginally Appropriate
- Below 14 Inappropriate

Sample Items. Here are just a few items from the evaluation form:

- The book is recently copyrighted and its contents are current.
- The book is suitable for achieving the stated course objectives
- Difficult new vocabulary words are highlighted, italicized, or underlined.
- The text has practical, real-life situations students can relate to and are interested in

Part III: Supplemental Text Activity

Description & Resources. For the last part of the assignment, PSTs developed an activity to implement in conjunction with their supplemental text. They were expected to describe each step of the activity in detail, including the supports they would provide before, during, and after having learners engage with the text. They were also asked to identify and explain the expressive and receptive processes incorporated into the activity and to explain how the activity helps to meet the needs of students from diverse and/or marginalized backgrounds. In addition, PSTs were reminded to use the information and resources from Modules 1-3 to help them complete this portion of the assignment.

Description of PST Work. For Part III of the assignment, one PST chose a side-by-side bilingual graphic memoir entitled [*Voces Sin Fronteras: Our Stories, Our Truth*](#). She used ideas from two teaching websites to develop a lesson that could be used with one or more stories from the book. Prior to reading, students would discuss the experience of moving from one place to another, share what they already know about immigration, and use the title of the book to predict what the story(ies) are about. Then, they would read while also viewing the corresponding images. After reading, they would reflect on and discuss big ideas about the book (e.g., why it was written). As a follow-up activity, they would work in pairs to complete a "read and respond" graphic organizer.