

INTRODUCTION

If you've picked up this book, you are likely an educator who wants to guide students toward more effective reading and writing practices. You are probably thinking to yourself, What's new in this book? Or perhaps, What's different from what I am doing now? You might even be asking yourself if the information contained in this book is relevant to your teaching and to the needs of your students.

Before we go any further, let us say that we hope this book both validates and extends your instructional practices. We hope that there are some new things in this text that you may not have considered before. We also hope that there are some ideas and recommendations in this book that serve to reinforce your current practices. After all, teachers have been teaching students to read for a very long time. As a profession, we're pretty good at it and the vast majority of students learn to read. Does that mean that we reach all of the students or that we help them excel to their highest potential? Maybe not. But it does mean that there are some good practices that should not be thrown out as expectations for students are increased.

One of the wise practices that we hope is maintained as reading rigor is raised relates to purpose. Think of purpose as two sides of the same coin. On one side is the reader's purpose: *Why am I reading this? What do I want to get out of this text?* Before you read this text, you should know the answer to these questions. Similarly, your students should know the answer to these questions each time they participate in a reading-related lesson.

On the opposite side is the author's purpose: *What does the author want me to know? Why has this been written, and for whom?* A reader who can ascertain the author's purpose is able to begin to analyze the text. An author's purpose typically addresses one or more of the following:

- To entertain
- To persuade or argue
- To inform

You should also know the answer to these questions. It's probably fairly obvious that we hope to inform you about close reading and writing

from sources; you could gather that from the title of the book. As you will see, we hope to persuade you to try some new instructional approaches, for example, annotations. Along the way, we might offer a bit of entertainment, especially as we relate stories from our own experiences. In addition to understanding their purposes for reading, your students should also develop an understanding of the author's purpose(s).

The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) identified determining the author's purpose as a key element of reading comprehension. The report notes that understanding the author's message is essential for determining the discourse structure, including

text genre, the distinction between given (old) and new information in the discourse context, the points (main messages) that the author intends to convey, the topic structure, the pragmatic goals or plans of the communicative exchange, and the function of the speech acts (e.g., assertion, question, directive, evaluation). (p. 98)

With a clear understanding of the purpose in hand, students need to understand their task. Sometimes, their task is simply to read for pleasure. Other times, students need to read because they will be asked to synthesize information or produce ideas based on evidence. We limit our conversation in this book to tasks that require students to use evidence from the texts they read. This includes both discussions and written responses. Having said that, we recognize that there are other reasons to read and that the task demands can help students determine how carefully they should read. We hope that our attention to close reading and writing from sources does not crowd out aesthetic pleasure reading. Others have contributed excellent books about building students' reading habits through wide reading (e.g., Frey & Fisher, 2013; Pilgreen, 2000).

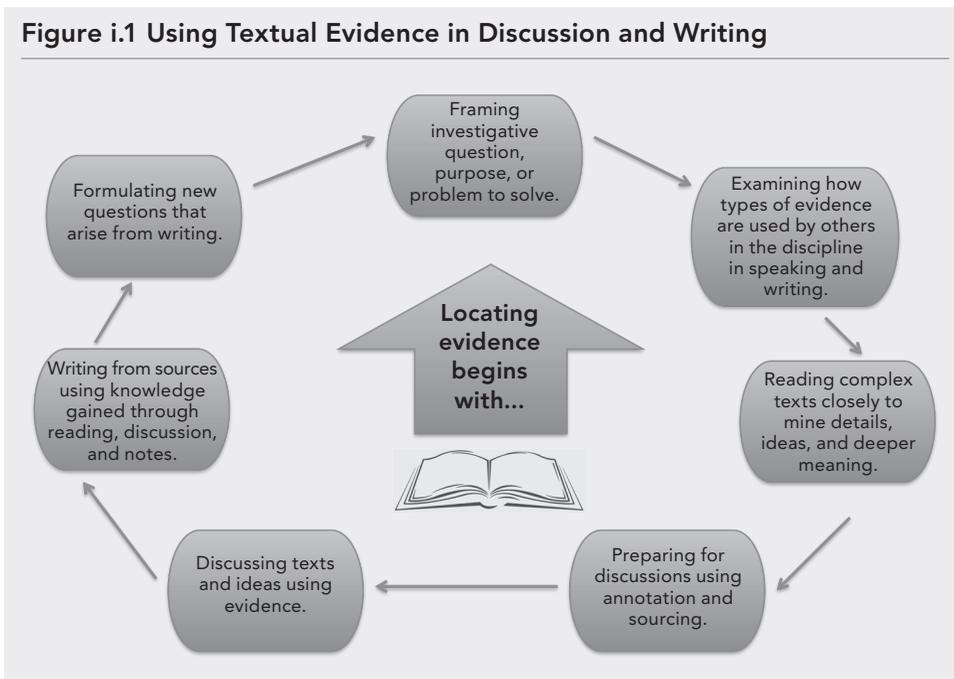
In this book, we hope to contribute to students' skills in reading closely to find out what the text says and means, and then to write convincingly from those sources. As part of this book, we have included video clips that can be accessed through QR codes or online via hyperlinks. These clips highlight a wide range of teachers' and students' perspectives on the information contained in the text. These middle and high school teachers represent math, science, social studies, English, and technical subjects. In addition to providing access to teachers' and students' thinking about the text, we introduce the big ideas in each chapter with a video. All of the videos in this book can be found on the International

Reading Association’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/InternationalReading. Additional classroom instructional videos can be found on our own YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/FisherandFrey. Access the video playlist at www.reading.org/CRWFS or by scanning the QR code.



Returning to the content of this book, we are focused on helping students read texts closely so that they can use that information in their discussions and writing. We have developed, implemented, and refined a process for teachers and students to use such that evidence becomes a signature piece of their work. As noted in Figure i.1, locating evidence in a text begins with framing an investigation, asking a question, or identifying a problem to solve. Sometimes, this investigation or question is presented as a prompt from the teacher. Other times, it is based on something the reader—student—wants to know, prove, or find out. One great place to find support for creating writing prompts that demand evidence is the Literacy Design Collaborative (www.literacydesigncollaborative.org). They have compiled a number of sample

Figure i.1 Using Textual Evidence in Discussion and Writing



tasks, templates that teachers can use to construct tasks. All of their tasks ensure that students understand that evidence will be required. For example, after reading and discussing Chief Joseph's 1877 speech "I Will Fight No More Forever," students were asked to respond to the following prompt:

What is the role of courage in surrender? After reading and discussing Chief Joseph's speech "I Will Fight No More Forever," write an essay that defines courage and explains the courageousness of Chief Joseph's decision. Support your discussion with evidence from the text. What conclusions can you draw?

Of course, students should have a lot of experience analyzing the various ways in which others use evidence. These others should include professional writers, teachers, and peers. For example, teachers can pause as they read a text aloud and note for their students how a particular author supplied evidence. Students can go on treasure hunts looking for evidence in the texts that they read. For example, students in David Crawford's biology class were asked to highlight evidence provided by authors of the texts that they read over the first month of school. One of the texts, a *New York Times* article about global climate change, provided students with an opportunity to examine how the author included statistics, references, and quotes. In addition, students can learn to analyze the arguments of their peers to determine when they include evidence. For example, when Yusuf was talking with Omar, he noticed that Omar was trying to convince him to try out for basketball. Yusuf said, "You're persuasive, but you haven't given me any evidence. You just keep telling me it will be tight. How do you know I would like it?"

Although learning from others is important, students have to develop habits that allow them to mine texts for details, ideas, and deeper meanings. In other words, they need to learn to read closely. Of course, that doesn't mean that they read everything with this level of attention, but that they learn when to read closely. When teaching students to read closely, the teacher has to create a series of questions that push students' thinking. For example, while reading Chief Joseph's speech, students were initially asked, "What concerns does Chief Joseph have about the health and welfare of his people? How do you know?" Of course, this question required that students look for evidence in the text. Importantly, this was not an end in and of itself. Instead, students were learning to

find evidence; evidence that they could use later in their discussions and written responses. After reading and discussing the text several times, students were asked, “What is the tone of this speech? What words and phrases support your claim?” Again, they returned to the text to find out.

As part of the close reading students do, they hone their annotation and sourcing skills. For the most part, annotation has been left for college faculty to teach. It’s rare for students to have sophisticated annotation systems in place during middle and high school. Unfortunately, this means that they often neglect to include evidence from the texts in their discussions or written compositions. Of course, students could return to the text again to find evidence, but often they simply do not. When they annotate as part of their close reading, they already have evidence identified and their job is to determine which pieces of evidence to use. Similarly, if they fail to identify sources, students run the risk of quoting or paraphrasing the work of others and then forgetting where it came from.

Understanding the purpose of and how others use evidence, reading closely looking for evidence, and annotating and sourcing texts are important aspects students must learn if they are going to be proficient composers who integrate evidence and respond to complex tasks. Unfortunately, it’s not as simple as teaching these habits and skills. Students need time to interact with others to develop and deepen their understanding. Of course, there are summative tasks and assessments that students must complete individually, but learning how to do these things requires interactions with others. After all, learning is a social endeavor, not a solitary one. That’s not to say that humans learn only in the presence of others. There is an important role that reflection and individual thinking time play in development. It’s just that interaction opportunities—discussions—allow students an opportunity to adjust their thinking in real time. When they are pressed for evidence, offered counterclaims, or challenged by peers, their thinking becomes clearer. Over time, and with practice, they will begin to understand how others might respond to their ideas and evidence and begin to build a stronger case for their claims from the outset. In our experiences, setting aside time each day for students to discuss texts, using evidence from the texts they are reading, builds their thinking skills as well as their argumentation skills. That’s why we include this aspect in our model—discussions are an effective link between reading and writing.

This brings us to the writing task itself. Students must be taught how to write from single sources and from multiple sources. They must learn to use the information they gathered during close reading and peer discussions in respond to the task at hand. They need to develop strong introductions, logical theses, and powerful voices. And importantly, these compositions will result in new questions that students want to investigate. These are often questions posed not by the teacher, but rather questions that students want to explore. For example, after reading and writing about Chief Joseph’s speech, students wanted time to find out the answers to their questions:

- DeMarcus wanted to know what happened to the tribe after it surrendered.
- Myca wanted to know why there were reservations in the first place.
- Ernesto wanted to know if Chief Joseph committed suicide, having given up the sacred land where his father was buried.
- Alexis wanted to know if Chief Joseph found his people and if they were still alive.
- Gilbert wanted to know if the policies toward Native Americans were any more progressive now.

Isn’t this what we want from our students? For them to become inquisitive learners who use their prowess to find out things that matter to them? The model that we have developed allows students to improve, both in terms of the habits they develop as well as in the products they create. Of course, this model is useless unless it is placed in the hands of good teachers.

Now it’s up to you. You have to decide what’s new and which aspects of our model will extend your practices and benefit your students. You have to decide which habits your students need. And you have to decide to create a classroom in which evidence is expected and ideas are valued.