High Literacy in Odds-beating Middle Schools Implementing the Common Core

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Introduction

Race to the Top (RttT) innovations:

➢ The Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)

➢ new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and

➢ data-driven instruction (DDI)

These innovations were intended to change the "instructional core" (i.e. the way ELA is taught and learned). The CCLS for Literacy include standards for speaking and listening in English Language Arts (ELA) and across the disciplines of history, science, and mathematics. Importantly, these standards call for students to participate actively in the co-construction of knowledge by initiating discussion and building on others' ideas clearly and persuasively on a variety of topics, texts, and issues (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

The Study

- 9 middle schools: 6 odds-beaters; 3 typicals
- Focus in this analysis – 6 odds-beaters
- Data sources:
  - interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations (focus here – n=26)

Research question: In what ways do teachers' literacy instruction practices, in the context of attempting to align to the CCSS-L, show evidence of attention to developing high literacy?

Advancing a Theoretical Framework: Four Components of High Literacy

▶ Although basic reading and writing skills are included in this definition of high literacy, also included are the ability to use language, context, and reasoning in ways that are appropriate for particular situations and disciplines (Langer, 2001).

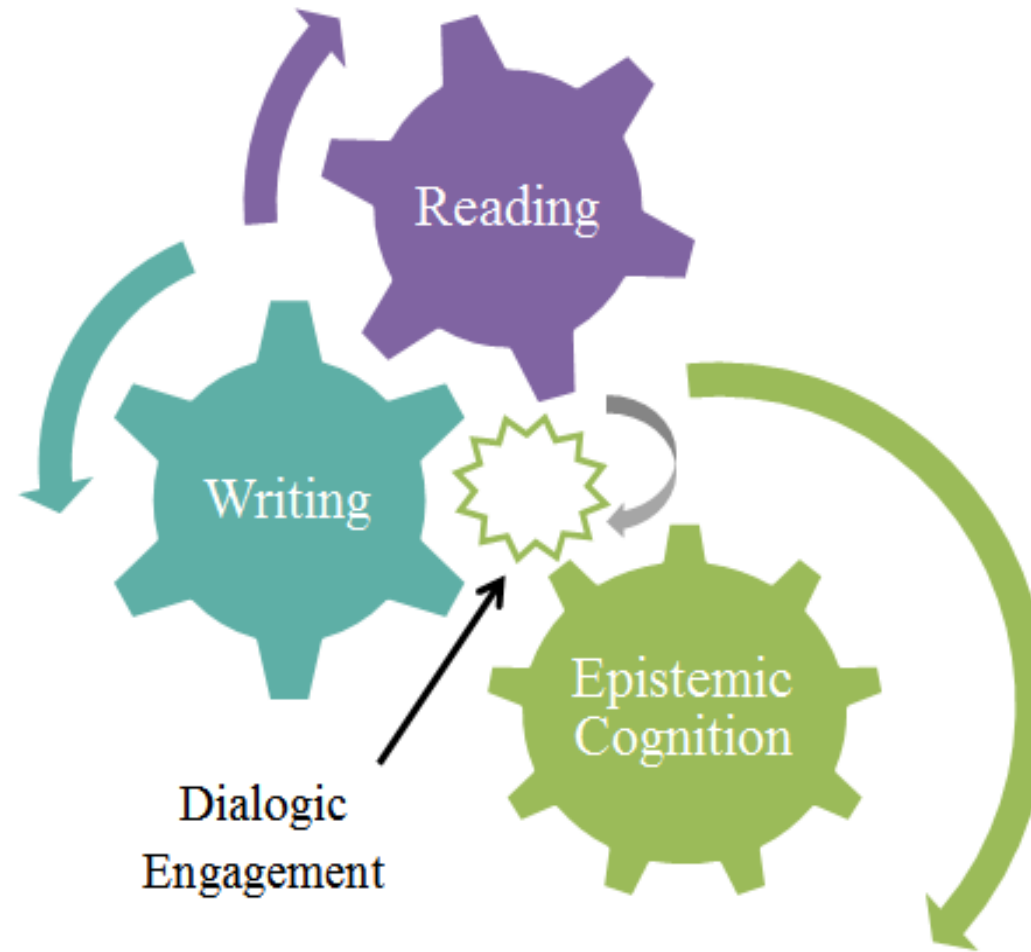| Reading	Writing
Language	Reasoning
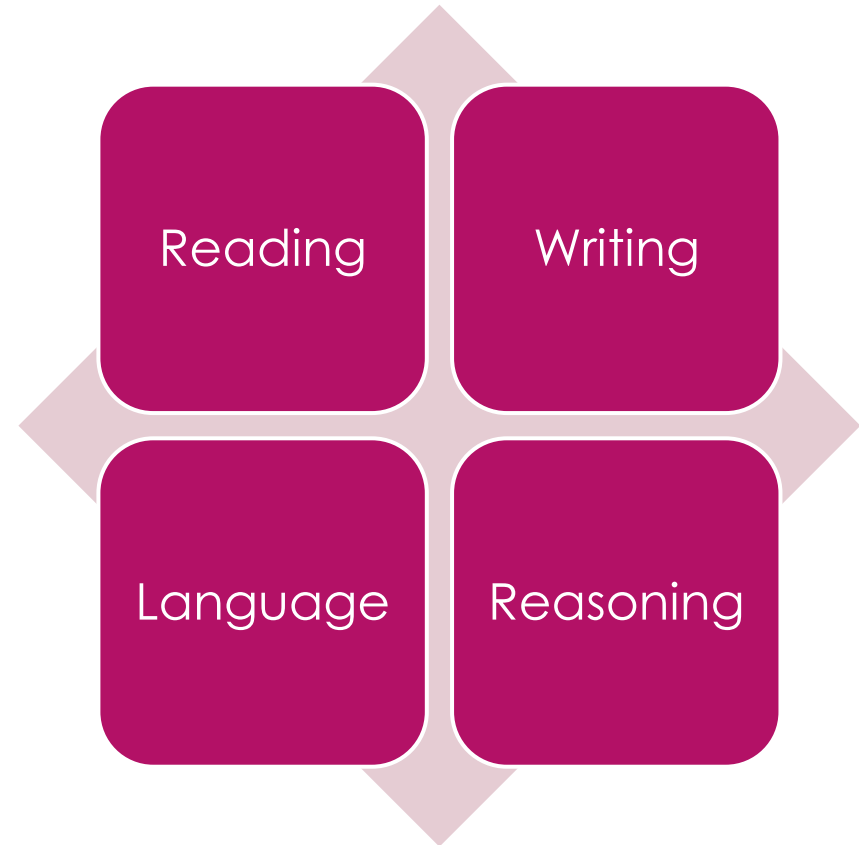
Epistemic Cognition for High Literacy

Lee, C., Goldman, S. R., Levine, S., & Magliano, J. (2016). *Epistemic Cognition in Literary Reasoning*.

Curricula provide instruction in:

- Epistemic aims and epistemic values

- Structure of knowledge
- Sources and justifications of knowledge
- Epistemic virtues and vices
- Reliable and unreliable processes for achieving epistemic aims
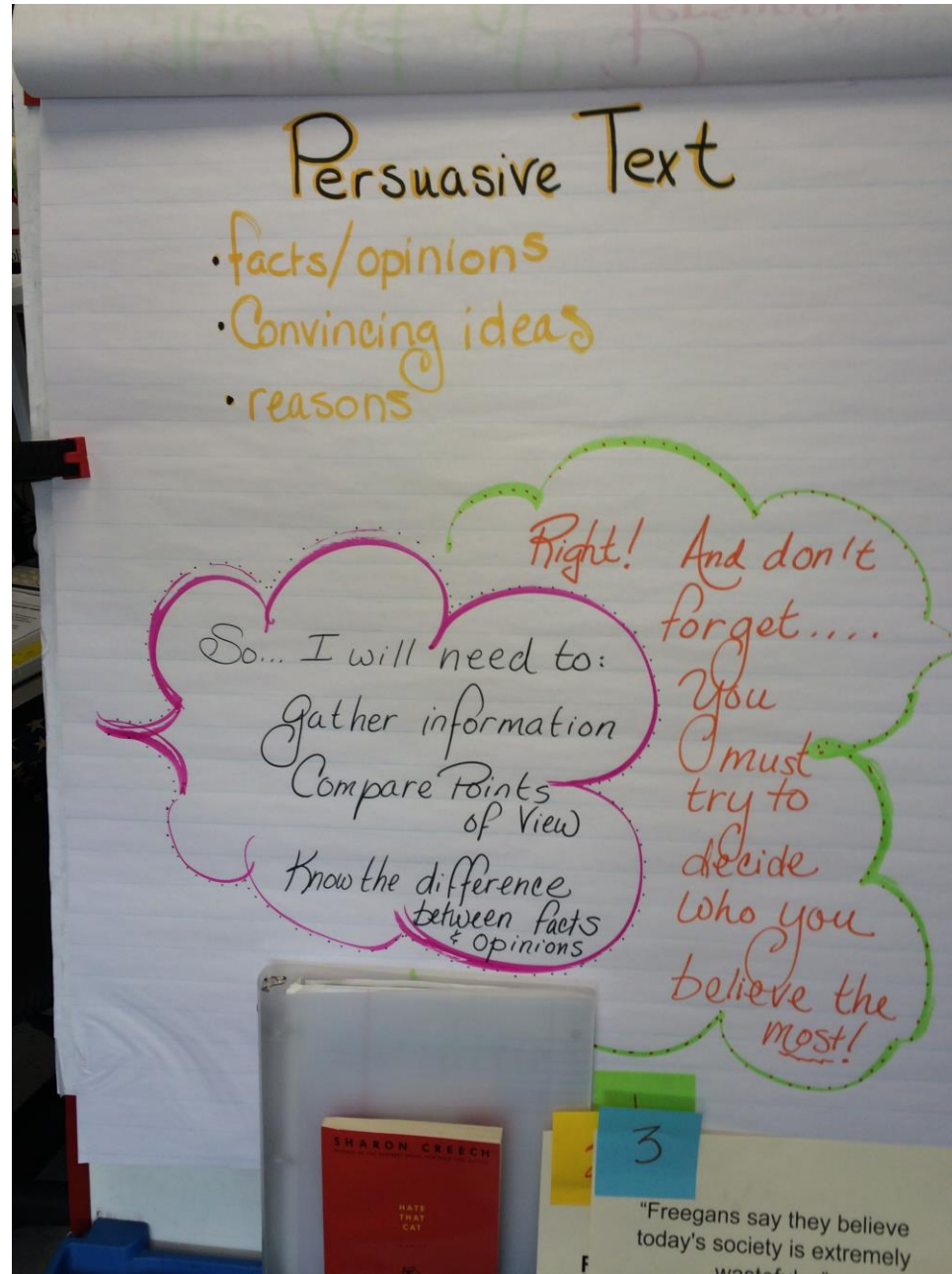
Framing

Findings

Evidence of High Literacy

Dialogue: Essential Question

Contextualized skill instruction in reading and writing.

Epistemic cognition: claim, evidence, and interpretation.

High Literacy

Evidence

Lesson on using Claim, Evidence, and Interpretation (CEI) in a written response to text. The objective of this lesson was to use information from an article to answer the prompt, "Should the words 'under God' be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance?"

Analysis

► Dialogue: share examples of fact and opinion with one another.

► Contextualized skill instruction: highlight fact in one color and opinion in another color as they were reading.

► Guided practice of writing a gist statement.

► Epistemic cognition: claim, evidence, and interpretation.

Conclusions

Reading

Dialogic Engagement

Epistemic Cognition

Writing

CCSS Speaking and Listening:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Implications

▶ Teacher educators might consider emphasizing the interplay between these components of high literacy in their methods courses and offer coursework that specifically addressed dialogic engagement and literary reasoning

▶ As standards continue to be revised, providing an explicit theory of high literacy development might assist educators in enacting practices that develop the literacy skills and dispositions to be college and career ready.
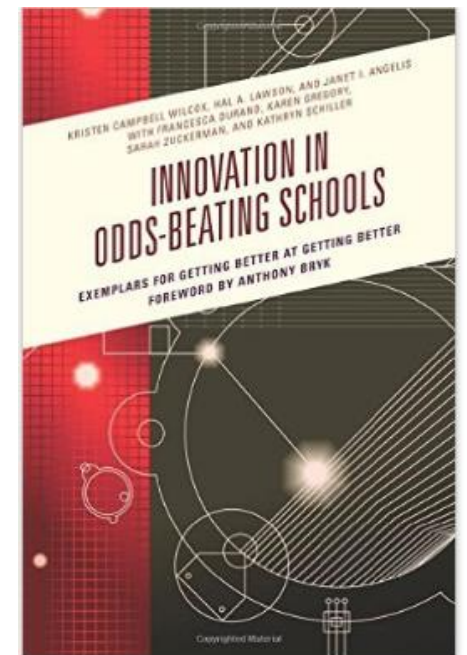
Thank you!

▶ This presentation and abstract can be downloaded at:

http://www.albany.edu/nykids/

Related work is also available in Wilcox, K.C., Lawson, H.A, &. Angelis, J.I. with Durand, F., Schiller, K, Gregory, K., & Zuckerman, S (2017). *Innovation in odds-beating schools: Exemplars of getting better at getting better.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

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