

January 2018

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Recommended Citation

Scully, Geneva (2018) "Text Complexity: Stretching Readers with Texts and Tasks (2nd ed.)," *Michigan Reading Journal*: Vol. 50 : Iss. 2 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj/vol50/iss2/13>

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Text Complexity: Stretching Readers with Texts and Tasks (2nd ed.)

by Geneva Scully, Ph.D.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2016). *Text complexity: Stretching readers with texts and tasks (2nd ed.)*.

Thousand Oaks, CA:
Corwin Literacy.
ISBN 978-1-5063-3944-3



In their second edition, authors Fisher, Frey, and Lapp untangle the term “text complexity” and provide strategies classroom teachers may use to help students navigate complex texts across disciplines. New rhetoric in the field asks our students not only to comprehend various types of texts, but also to craft multiple types of texts. These authors delve beyond text features to examine how teacher-led, peer-led, and individual tasks which focus on understanding complex texts improve reading comprehension and analysis.

The first four chapters of the book provide a review of the research involving text complexity in classrooms and curricula. Chapter one of the book focuses on a review of the concept of text complexity. Chapters two through four examine and break down the quantitative features in narrative and informational texts that contribute to a text’s complexity. Since publishing their first edition, the authors contend that the amount of complex text our students must be able to comprehend has steadily increased. As a result, this edition addresses the features contributing to the measure of a text’s complexity more thoroughly.

Chapters five through nine focus on how to teach and guide students through complex texts. Each chapter focuses on different tasks and skills related to text complexity, such as close reading, collaborative learning,



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and independent reading. The authors include their rationale for each task, sample scenarios, and examples of how each might be taught in a third-grade and tenth-grade classroom. This edition thoughtfully builds upon the first, offering classroom teachers excellent strategies for guiding students through complex texts.

Author Biography

Geneva Scully teaches 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts at Pierce Middle School in Grosse Pointe Public Schools. She is in her 18th year of teaching. She can be reached at gscully26@gmail.com.

