

# **How to Honor the English Curriculum and the Study of U.S. History: A Response to Concerns Expressed by Teachers at a California Conference**

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## **Introduction**

For a language arts conference in October 2017 in California, sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission (affiliated with the California Association of Teachers of English), I was invited to give an informal talk on a chapter in my book *The Death and Resurrection of a Coherent Literature Curriculum* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012). Chapter 8 centered on how high school English teachers could create coherent sequences of informational and literary texts to address civic literacy. The chapter was made available to the English and other teachers or specialists who attended this hour-long “Around-the-Hearth” talk at Asilomar 66 (the name of the conference). The title of my talk, chosen by a conference organizer, was “How Common Core’s ELA Standards Place College Readiness at Risk: What English Teachers Can Do.” My talk was described in conference material as follows:

Join Julie Minnis, Curriculum Study Commission member, as she leads an Around-the-Hearth Skype conversation with Sandra Stotsky, a member of Common Core’s Validation Committee in 2009-2010. Dr. Stotsky is a nationally-known educational reformer dedicated to helping teachers of English and Reading negotiate Common Core’s Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies so that students experience an English curriculum that includes the study of literary traditions and gain literary-historical knowledge.

Common Core seems to require that much of the English Language Arts curriculum at both the elementary and secondary level must include informational texts, although no standard actually says that. It is implied by the division of its Reading standards into 10 for “informational texts” and 9 for “literature.”

Dr. Stotsky’s initial remarks will explain:

1. Why the *integration* of literary texts and informational texts is so crucial.
2. What informational texts or literary nonfiction might be assigned in grades 6 to 12.
3. What imaginative literary texts might be assigned in grades 6 to 12.

Dr. Stotsky will allow considerable time for questions from the audience.

I presented my initial remarks on Chapter 8 and then asked for questions. But, instead of questions about Chapter 8, the concerns were mostly about the requirement in California’s ELA standards for English teachers to teach Founding documents. In particular, one teacher expressed at length the problems she was facing in teaching “The Declaration of Independence,” asking why English teachers were compelled to teach historical documents. She was not the only one in the audience upset about this requirement; her academic background was not in history. But something had happened. The dialogue now taking place was not about the literature curriculum but about English teachers being required to teach historical documents—and without context, if they followed guidelines from the standards writers on “close reading.” The dialogue also touched on the “literacy” standards that content teachers were to address in order to teach reading and writing in their classes.

Why were “literacy” standards for other subjects in Common Core’s ELA document and what had research studies found about English teachers teaching “informational” texts (required by Common Core’s ELA standards) and content teachers teaching reading and writing (required by Common Core’s “literacy” standards). I sympathized with both English teachers who didn’t feel comfortable teaching foundational historical documents and history teachers who had presumably studied the context for documents now being taught by their English colleagues. Common Core’s ELA document makes it clear that the motivation for these standards and requirements was the standards writers’ concern about the low reading skills of many American students graduating from high school.

As a response to teachers’ concerns at Asilomar 66, this essay explains the issues embedded in Common Core’s ELA standards document.<sup>1</sup> I first clarify how the K-12 study of history ever got tangled up in Common Core’s ELA standards. I then explain why reading in a history class is not like reading in a literature class.

### **A. How Common Core Came to Include the Study of History**

The story begins with the rationale for the contents of a document titled Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the 66-page document is on ELA standards. But the last seven pages (pp. 59-66), titled Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, provide “literacy” standards for these subjects in grades 6-12. The introduction to the whole document explains why these standards are in this document.

The standards establish guidelines for English language arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Because students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards promote the literacy skills and concepts required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines.

The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards form the backbone of the ELA/literacy standards by articulating core knowledge and skills, while grade-specific standards provide additional specificity. Beginning in grade 6, the literacy standards allow teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields.

It is important to note that the grade 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are meant to supplement content standards in those areas, not replace them. States determine how to incorporate these standards into their existing standards for those subjects or adopt them as content area literacy standards.

As indicated, Common Core’s literacy standards are justified on the grounds that college readiness means being able to read, write, and speak in all subject areas. That is the basis for entangling the study of history in the final version of Common Core’s ELA document. The attempt to make English teachers responsible for teaching high school students how to read history, science, and mathematics textbooks relaxed during 2009-2010 after critics made it clear that English teachers could not possibly teach students how to read textbooks in other disciplines. This criticism was supported by the common sense argument that teachers can’t teach students to read texts in a subject they don’t understand themselves, as well as by the total lack of evidence that English teachers can effectively teach reading strategies appropriate to other disciplines and thereby improve students’ knowledge in that discipline.

Nevertheless, Common Core’s ELA standards still expect English teachers to teach “informational” texts about 50 percent of their reading instructional time at every grade level. At least, that is what K-12 curriculum specialists nationwide see as the curriculum implications of 10 standards for reading “informational” texts and only 9 for reading literary texts at every grade level in the ELA part of the ELA document, even if “informational” texts are called “nonfiction.”

### **B. Research on Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum (RAWAC)**

Although it is now agreed that English teachers can’t be expected to teach students how to read texts in other subjects in order to improve student learning in these subjects, is it possible that teachers of these other subjects can teach reading strategies that improve students’ ability to write about the subject or their knowledge of the subject? The lack of a reference to *even one study* with generalizable results in a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) 2011 research brief on RAWAC<sup>3</sup> and in a review of the research titled *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*, issued in August 2008 by the Institute of Education Sciences,<sup>4</sup> strongly implies there may be *no* high quality research to support the expectation that subject teachers can effectively teach reading skills in their own classes in ways that improve student writing or learning. Not only are subject teachers reluctant to teach reading in their own classes (as the research indicates), there’s no evidence that even if they do, student writing or learning will be enhanced. It is important to note that the criteria used in this essay to judge the usefulness (i.e., generalizability) of a study’s “findings” (or evidence) were set forth explicitly by the National Mathematics Advisory Panel in 2008 and have long been used by education researchers.<sup>5</sup>

So how do secondary students learn how to read their history books or their science and mathematics textbooks? We will return to this hugely important question at the end of this essay after we look at several literacy standards for history in Common Core—to better understand the problem the standards writers created for the entire secondary curriculum—and at the reasons for the seeming failure of the movement called RAWAC.

### **C. What Are Common Core’s Literacy Standards?**

Common Core’s literacy standards are clearly not academic, or content, standards, as the introduction to its ELA document promised. They are statements of different purposes for reading and writing in any subject. Here are three standards for History/Social Studies in grades 11/12 as examples:

#### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

##### [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7](#)

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

##### [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8](#)

Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

##### [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9](#)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

What is telling in the introduction to the whole document is the expectation that subject teachers are to use the content of their subject to teach students how to read, write, and talk in their

subjects, not the other way around. Subject teachers are not to draw on students' reading, writing, and speaking skills (i.e., their intellectual or thinking processes) to learn the content of their disciplines. Secondary school learning has been turned on its head without any public murmur in 2010, so far as we know, from history, science, or mathematics teachers or their professional organizations, probably because most subject teachers did not know they were being required to teach reading and writing in a document ostensibly designated for English and reading teachers. (The National Council for the Social Studies apparently knew what the ELA standards writers intended, according to this History News Network article,<sup>6</sup> but did not communicate any concerns to its members, so far as is known.)

This stealth requirement should have sparked broad public discussion when the final version of the Common Core standards was released (in June 2010) and before state boards of education voted to adopt them. But, so far as we know, there is no record of any attempt by a state board or commissioner of education to hear from a large number of secondary teachers in all subjects.

#### **D. Why Earlier Efforts at RAWAC Didn't Succeed**

A major attempt to get subject teachers to teach reading and writing skills called Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) or Reading and Writing across the Curriculum (RAWAC) took place in the 1960s and 1970s at the college level and in K-12, and it gradually fizzled out with little to show for it, so far as is known. There was no explanation in the Common Core document of how Common Core's effort was different, if in fact it was. Perhaps the standards writers simply didn't know about these movements and why they didn't succeed. As noted above, NCTE's 2011 policy research brief did not reference even one research study after boldly declaring that the "research is clear: discipline-based instruction in reading and writing enhances student achievement in all subjects."<sup>7</sup> Although some schools across the country did try to implement RAWAC,<sup>8</sup> RAWAC did not succeed for many reasons, and I suggest some of the most obvious ones first.

*No systematic information available.* On the surface, the effort to make secondary subject teachers responsible for assigning more reading to their students and/or teaching them how to read whatever they assigned sounded desirable and eminently justifiable. But there was no systematic information on what the average student read, how much they read, or why they were not doing much reading if that were the case. Why assign more reading and/or try to teach students how to read it if there were reasons for not assigning much reading to begin with (e.g., no textbooks available, students couldn't read whatever textbooks were available on the topic, students wouldn't do much homework)?

*Misunderstanding of what history teachers do.* Part of the demise of RAWAC in K-12 may be attributed to a misunderstanding by its advocates of what history teachers actually do in a classroom when teaching history. They might ask their students, for example, to describe and document Lincoln's evolving political position on how best to preserve the Union from the beginning to the end of the Civil War—after giving them a range of documents to read or look at. Such a directive requires application of [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7](#) (integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem) to a history lesson, which is how the general skill gets developed. But, in doing so, history teachers are not trying to teach a literacy skill; they are aiming to expand students' conscious knowledge base.

Take another possible example—a lesson on totalitarianism. History teachers might assign and discuss a reading on a totalitarian state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—how it controls resources and people's behavior. They might then ask directly: "According to this reading, what is a totalitarian

state like? What does it try to do? What were the weaknesses of the Soviet Union as an example of a totalitarian state? History teachers are unlikely to talk about (or think in terms of) “main idea” or “supporting details” in discussing what students have read about a totalitarian state, but they are clearly talking about a main idea and supporting details when they raise specific questions for discussion about a specific topic. They are asking students to apply these general skills in topic-related language for the classroom lesson and thereby develop the skills.

History teachers (like science teachers) use the specific content of their discipline in ways that require students to apply their intellectual processes and their prior knowledge to what they have been assigned to read or do. If students cannot answer the questions on the grounds that they couldn't read the assignment, other issues need to be explored.

*Less and less reading outside of school.* The demise of RAWAC in K-12 can also be traced to the diminishing amount of reading and writing done outside of school hours. How much reading have students been doing on the topic under discussion? In other words, do they have any prior knowledge? Are they familiar with the vocabulary related to the topic? The two are related. Students can absorb some of the discipline-related vocabulary of a discipline-based topic by reading and re-reading the material carefully (as in history) or by working carefully with material named by these words (as in a science lab) without constantly consulting a glossary. But how to get students to do more reading (or re-reading) is not the purpose of a standard. Getting students to address questions about particular topics in a discipline with adequate and sufficient information (i.e., to develop their conscious understanding of the topics) is one purpose of a standard.

Reading and writing as homework is the student's responsibility, not the teacher's. This responsibility is not shaped by the words in an academic standard. It is dependent on a student's self-discipline and motivation, elements of the student's character beyond the teacher's control. Teachers can set up incentives and disincentives, but these must be reinforced by policies set by a school board, parents, and school administrators. They are not governed by academic objectives.

*History teachers' self-image.* Needless to say, the demise of RAWAC in K-12 can in part be traced to content teachers' self-image, an issue highlighted in the research literature. The need for writing in subject-based classrooms makes sense to most teachers, but significantly more writing activities didn't take place in the secondary school in response to RAWAC efforts in large part because content teachers, with large numbers of students to teach on a daily or weekly basis, did not see themselves as writing teachers. They continue to see English teachers as teachers of writing (and literature), and themselves as teachers of specific subjects like math, science, or history. Students who read little or read mainly easy texts are unlikely to be able to do the kind of expository writing their subject areas require because the research is clear that good writing is dependent on good reading. This points to another possible reason for the demise of RAWAC.

*Stress on autobiographical, narrative, or informal writing:* The emphasis on non-text-based writing in the ELA class beginning in the 1970s. Advocates of a writing process tended to stress autobiographical narrative writing (often called experience-based writing), not informational or expository writing. Students were also encouraged to do free “journal” writing. Among its many features and uses, it was shapeless and needed no correction. Subject teachers may have decided that asking for reading-based writing or shaping what students submitted was not worth the effort. We simply don't know because there is no direct and systematic research on the issue.

*Professional development on different history content, not discipline-based reading.* There may be yet another reason that subject teachers avoided implementing RAWAC. There is little in-

depth research on this issue, and for good reason. We know little about the quality of the professional development they received. The focus of professional development for history teachers at the time RAWAC was being promoted was often the content or view of the content that was being introduced in the name of critical pedagogy or multiculturalism. The workshops described in “The Stealth Curriculum: Manipulating America’s History Teachers”<sup>9</sup> have a decided focus on teaching teachers and their students what to think about U.S. and world history rather than on how to read and write in a history class. Reading and writing activities were included in these workshops, but the development of “literacy” skills was not their goal.

Providing professional development is a huge industry because it is mostly mandated by local, state, or federal authorities even though it has almost no track record of effectiveness in significantly increasing students’ knowledge of the subject. This was the conclusion of a massive review of the research on professional development for mathematics teachers undertaken by the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (NMAP) in 2008.<sup>10</sup> There is no research to suggest that the situation is different for history or science teachers.

### **E. How Common Core Damages the K-12 History Curriculum**

The underlying issue is revealed by the titles offered in Appendix B of Common Core’s ELA Standards document as “exemplars” of the quality and complexity of the informational reading that history (and English, science, and mathematics) teachers could use to boost the amount of reading their students do and to teach disciplinary reading and writing skills. The standards writers do not understand the high school curriculum.

*Inappropriate exemplars for informational reading.* While English teachers in grades 9-10 may be puzzled about the listing for them of Patrick Henry’s “Speech to the Second Virginia Convention,” Margaret Chase Smith’s “Remarks to the Senate in Support of a Declaration of Conscience,” and George Washington’s “Farewell Address”—all non-literary, political speeches—history teachers in grades 9/10 may be even more puzzled by the exemplars for them. Among a few appropriate exemplars (on the history of indigenous and African Americans) we find E.H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition, Mark Kurlansky’s *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*, and Wendy Thompson’s *The Illustrated Book of Great Composers*. It’s hard to see any high school history teacher comfortably tackling excerpts from those books in the middle of a grade 9 or 10 world history or U.S. history course. Yes, these titles are only exemplars of the quality and complexity desired. But what would be appropriate for the courses history teachers are likely to teach in grade 9 or 10?

The informational exemplars in Appendix B for history teachers in grades 11/12 are even more bizarre. Along with a suitable text, Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, we find Julian Bell’s *Mirror of the World: A New History of Art* and *FedViews*, issued in 2009 by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. These two titles clearly don’t fit into a standard grade 11 U.S. history course or a standard grade 12 U.S. government course. These exemplars are out of place not just in a typical high school history class but in a typical high school curriculum.

The standards writers wanted to make teachers across the curriculum as responsible for teaching “literacy” as the English teacher, which at first sounds fair, almost noble. But to judge from the sample titles they offer for increasing and teaching informational reading in other subjects, informational literacy seems to be something teachers are to cultivate and students to acquire, independent of a coherent, sequential, and substantive curriculum in the topic of the informational text.<sup>11</sup> Strong readers can acquire informational literacy independent of a coherent and graduated curriculum. But weak readers end up deprived of class time better spent immersed in the content of their courses.

*Inappropriate literacy strategies—a nonhistorical approach to historical texts.* Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of Common Core’s approach to literary study is the advice given teachers by its chief writer David Coleman, now president of the College Board, on the supposed value of “cold” or “close” (non-contextualized) reading of historical documents like the “Gettysburg Address.” Doing so “levels the playing field,” according to Coleman. History teachers believe doing so contributes to historical illiteracy.

Aside from the fact that “close” reading was not developed or promoted by Yale English professors Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren as a reading technique for historical documents, no history or English teacher before the advent of Common Core would approach the study of a seminal historical document by withholding initial information about its historical context, why it was created at that particular time, by whom, for what purposes so far as the historical record tells us, and clear language archaisms. Nor would they keep such information from being considered in interpreting Lincoln’s speech. Yet, David Coleman has categorically declared: “This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge, and levels the playing field for all students.”

As high school teacher Craig Thurtell states: “This approach also permits the allocation of historical texts to English teachers, most of whom are untrained in the study of history, and leads to history standards [Common Core’s literacy standards for history] that neglect the distinctiveness of the discipline.”<sup>12</sup> Thurtell goes on to say that the “study of history requires the use of specific concepts and cognitive skills that characterize the discipline—concepts like evidence and causation and skills like contextualization, sourcing, and corroboration. These concepts and skills are largely distinct from those employed in literary analysis. Both disciplines engage in close readings of texts, for example, but with different purposes. The object of the literary critic is the text, or more broadly, the genre; for the historian it is, however limited or defined, a wider narrative of human history, which textual analysis serves.”

### **Causes of Poor Reading in High School**

Not only did the writers of the Common Core English language arts standards profoundly misunderstand how reading in a history class differs from reading in a literature class, they basically misunderstood the causes of the educational problem they sought to remedy through Common Core’s standards. The problem was the number of high school graduates who need remedial coursework in reading and writing as college freshmen and the equally large number of students who fail to graduate from high school and enroll in a post-secondary educational institution.

The architects of Common Core assumed that the major cause of this educational problem is that English teachers have given low-achieving students too heavy a diet of literary works and that teachers in other subjects have deliberately or unwittingly not taught them how to read complex texts in these other subjects. This assumption doesn’t hold up.

High school teachers will readily acknowledge that low-performing students have not been assigned complex textbooks because, generally speaking, they can’t read them and, in fact, don’t read much of anything with academic content. As a result, they have not acquired the content knowledge and the vocabulary needed for reading complex history textbooks. And this is despite (not because of) the steady decline in vocabulary difficulty in secondary school textbooks over the past half century and the efforts of science and history teachers from the elementary grades on

to make their subjects as text-free as possible. Educational publishers and teachers have made intensive and expensive efforts to develop curriculum materials that accommodate students who are not interested in reading much. These accommodations in K-8 have gotten low-performing students into high school, but they can't be made at the college level. College-level materials are written at an adult level, often by those who teach college courses.

Higher levels of writing are increasingly dependent on higher levels of reading. Students unwilling to read a lot do not advance very far as writers. The chief casualty of little reading is the general academic vocabulary needed for academic reading and writing.

The accumulation of a large and usable discipline-specific vocabulary depends on graduated reading in a coherent sequence of courses (known as a curriculum) in that discipline. Sequencing instruction over the course of a year or through the grades, in any subject including the reading/literature curriculum so that cumulative learning takes place in the subject and in the development of its vocabulary, requires the collaboration of all teachers of that subject in a school.

The accumulation of a general academic vocabulary, however, depends on assigning a lot of increasingly complex literary works with strong plots and characters that entice poor readers to make efforts to read them (like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*). The reduction in literary study implicitly mandated by Common Core's ELA standards will lead to fewer opportunities for students to acquire the general academic vocabulary needed for serious historical nonfiction, the texts that secondary history students should be reading.

### **Recommendations**

There are several possible approaches to the problem Common Core's architects sought to solve—how to help poor readers in high school.

1. Schools can establish secondary reading classes separate from the English and other subject classes. Students who read little and cannot or won't read high school level textbooks can be given further reading instruction in the secondary grades by teachers with strong academic backgrounds who have had training in how to teach reading skills appropriate to the academic subjects students are taking. It's not easy to do, but it is doable.
2. A second approach may be for schools to enable English and history teachers to provide professional development to each other *in the same high school*. The context and philosophical/moral antecedents for our seminal political documents (e.g., Declaration of Independence, Preamble to the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address) can be explained/taught to English teachers by their colleagues in the History department, while an analysis of their language and other stylistic features can be explained/taught to history teachers by their colleagues in the English department.

### **Concluding Remarks**

We are left with an overarching question. Why didn't education policy makers understand that the kinds of reading and writing a society expects in secondary schools reflect the *application* of the reading and writing skills taught in the elementary school? They are not new skills. They are the *real-life application* of the reading and writing skills that should be taught in the elementary



school grades. High school teachers draw upon the skills taught in earlier grades to teach content. It is not their responsibility to teach “literacy” skills in the middle of content instruction. Students incapable of high school-level reading and writing (in any subject) may need a “transition” year or two *before* they are in high school, never mind college.

Why weren’t any of these questions asked before adoption of the Common Core? Self-government cannot survive if citizens are unwilling to ask informed questions in public of educational policy makers and to demand answers.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the material in this article is drawn from Pioneer Institute’s 2015 publication *Drilling through the Core*, Chapter 2, and updated where it was possible.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> “[Reading and Writing across the Curriculum: A Policy Research Brief](http://www.ncte.org/library/nctefiles/resources/journals/cc/0203-mar2011/cc0203policy.pdf),” produced by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), March, 2011. NCTE log-in needed. <http://www.ncte.org/library/nctefiles/resources/journals/cc/0203-mar2011/cc0203policy.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A Practice Guide* (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502398.pdf>. See pp. 19 and 29. No studies are cited in discussions of what content teachers should do.

<sup>5</sup> Valerie F. Reyna, Chair, Chapter 2: Report of the Subcommittee on Standards of Evidence, National Mathematics Advisory Panel (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2008), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/standards-of-evidence.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://hnn.us/article/151479>,

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.theprocenter.info/uploads/2/2/5/5/22551316/reading\\_and\\_writing\\_across\\_the\\_curriculum.pdf](http://www.theprocenter.info/uploads/2/2/5/5/22551316/reading_and_writing_across_the_curriculum.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> A 220-page report of a 2009 conference at Harvard University on closing the “achievement gap” describes what 15 high schools in the country (9 in Massachusetts) did to earn the distinction of being called an “exemplary” high school in pre-Common Core days. <http://www.agi.harvard.edu/events/2009Conference/2009AGIConferenceReport6-30-2010web.pdf>. Several of these high schools talk about implementing “literacy across the curriculum,” although specific practices are not detailed.

Several in Massachusetts also mention the value of the four Open Response (OR) questions on the state’s mandated annual tests and how these questions served as a model for reading and writing across the curriculum. (See pp. 43, 92, 127, and 154.) The Bay State had asked for state-of-the-art tests for the new test-based accountability model that began in 1998, and four ORs were a distinguishing feature on each grade-level test in every subject. In addition, these ORs (which typically demanded no more than a few short paragraphs of student writing) were corrected for both writing conventions and content usually by the state’s own teachers. In contrast, there are no ORs on the national tests aligned to Common Core’s standards, probably because student writing is to be “corrected” by a computer program.

<sup>9</sup> <http://edexcellence.net/publications/stealth.html>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/teachers.pdf>.

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<sup>11</sup> Sandra Stotsky. (2013). “Literature or technical manuals: Who should be teaching what, where, and why?” *Nonpartisan Education Review/Essays*, 9 (1).  
<https://nonpartisaneducation.org/Review/Essays/v9n1.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://hnn.us/article/151479>.