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Strand of Work: Theoretical and Integrative

Abstract

Citizens of the 21st century society need to be able to critically read and evaluate the burgeoning information resources relevant to personal, academic, and professional life. This requires that reading instruction and its assessment place greater emphasis on analysis and critical reading in the context of complex argumentation and problem solving tasks. The assessment challenges inherent in this definition of reading include adequate conceptualization of the knowledge and skills that underlie critical reading to accomplish authentic disciplinary tasks, developmental progressions in them, and unattended to aspects of text complexity (Goldman & Lee, 2014). In this essay we use an Evidence-Centered-Design (Mislevy, 2003) lens on assessment and focus specifically on the challenges of specifying Domain Models for critical reading, reasoning, and argumentation in the disciplines. We discuss history, science, and literary reading with literary reading developed as an illustrative case. Attention to these challenges is critical if we are to develop assessments that are authentic and reliable.

Implications

Efforts to improve instruction in reading critically and for task-specific purposes need to begin with analyses of what students need to know to make sense of texts in specific domains, content areas, or professional fields. Based on such analyses, designs for instruction and assessment can be developed systematically to support students in acquiring these competencies being able to demonstrate that competence.

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