**Compacting Language Arts Curriculum in Div 3**

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In Language Arts, it is a bit more difficult to use compacting. Many of the criteria in the LA Program of Studies are skills that students need and can practice. There are few areas that compacting would work successfully, and that is when there are areas where explicit background knowledge of certain concepts is needed before they can use their higher thinking skills.

In Grade 7, students would be pre-tested to see what they already know and to check their levels of understanding and complex thinking skills. Specifically, I am testing their reading level by how well they can identify different vocabulary, grammar, and syntax rules. Obviously, students are are reading below grade level would need some extra help in order for them to succeed in these literature circles.

This testing could be done through a written test or having a one-on-one conference where the student reads and discusses and a sample piece of writing with the teacher. For example, from that, the teacher could identify how well the student could identify textual clues (outcome 2.1) such as "phonics, sight vocabulary, structural analysis, language and context clues" (Alberta Curriculum, 2000, p. 29) and how well they understand forms, elements, and techniques (outcome 2.3).

In this example, we can assume that a few students are reading above grade level, and have demonstrated their understanding of many of the criteria for 2.1 (use textual clues) and 2.3 ( understand forms, elements, and techniques) such as explaining elements of plot, how the character's motives are explained, genres, etc.

Taking into consideration the interests of the students in the class, we can offer different choices for different literature circles. Some students who need that extra instruction to teach them how to read and interpret text would be grouped together in their own literature circle and given a small choice of novels to pick from that are appropriate to their reading and understanding level. This way, this still gives them some freedom and choice in choosing what they want to learn.

The students who are a bit above grade level may not find these novels as engaging or challenging. These students would be grouped together and given a different selection of novels, ones that are a bit more challenging and pushes their thinking. Their curriculum would be compacted in that they wouldn't be explicitly learning about things such as narrative hooks (foreshadowing, starting in the middle of the action, etc.); these students have demonstrated from the pre-test that they already know about these. Instead, for these literature circles, the compacted group would be focusing on assignments that are higher on Bloom's taxonomy scale. They already have the knowledge and understanding, now they need to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create.

The students of the other literature circle may have to spend more time the knowledge and understanding parts before they can move on to higher thinking Bloom's levels. For example, perhaps one group is struggling with vocabulary, and so, this circle would have a greater emphasis on developing that.

The teacher would have to move between each of these circles regularly to ensure that all the students are on track and are able to work independently from him/her if he/she is working with specifically with another group that day.

**Division 3 Curriculum Compacting**

**Literature Circles: Pre-Test**

**Grade 7**

[Students would read the short story “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allen Poe, and answer the following questions. This could be in a written test format or through a one-on-one interview with the teacher.

Depending on level of analysis and interpretation, students who already show knowledge of the (bolded) literary concepts and terms will be placed in a compacted literature group where they focus and develop their analytical skills. The other students will be explicitly taught these terms and concepts.]

1. Who is the **narrator**?
2. What is the narrator’s **goal** in the story? What is his **motive** for this?
3. How do you know if this story is told in **first-person perspective**?
4. How does the author use **narrative hooks** in the story?
5. What is an example of **foreshadowing** in the story?
6. How does **repetition** change the **tone** of the story?
7. What is **suspense** and how is it used in the story?
8. **Why** do you think the narrator revealed himself in the end? Was the heart really beating?
9. **Why** is the story called “The Tell-Tale Heart”?
10. Draw and caption the **climax** of the story.

**Vocabulary: Put the list of words into the following categories:**

Cautious

Foresight

Stealthy

Corpse

Furious

Fluent

Stimulate

Triumph

Anxiety

Labour

Shriek

Vex

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| **I know what this word means. I could use it correctly in a sentence.** | **I have heard of this word before, but I need some help with the meaning.** | **I might have heard of this word before, but I do not know what it means.** |
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