

## Meta-Text: Reading for Change in Writing, Reading for Change in the Classroom

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### Teaching Texts at Multiple Analytical Levels

1. **Content:** What the text is “about” -- art, race, conversation, food, etc.
2. **Model of writing:** How the text is composed -- organization, sources, style, reader-writer relationship, etc.
3. **Model of practice:** How the text shows ethical doing and being -- personal inquiry, professional reflective practice, community dialogue, etc.

### Example Text: Celeste Headlee’s *We Need To Talk: How to Have Conversations That Matter*

1. *Content:*
  - a. I chose this book because I’ve noticed an increasing struggle to get students to talk -- with me, with each other, in class-wide discussion. I wondered, what are some of the things that might be contributing to this reticence and is there a book out there that addresses this topic?
  - b. Headlee’s text considers the ways in which our current cultural conditions, for example our interactions with technology as primary modes of communication, impact our understandings of and abilities in face-to-face conversations with each other, and why this might be harming the social fabric more than we’d like to admit.
2. *Model of writing:*
  - a. Headlee’s text is an approachable model for understanding researched writing, since it is written for a popular audience but relies on academic and journalistic sources for argument development and explication.
  - b. In addition to Headlee, we read Kate L. Turabian’s *Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers* in which she discusses key parts of the academic writing process like formulating research topics/questions, gathering and processes sources, forming and designing arguments, connecting with readers, citational practices, utilizing rhetorical appeals, etc.
  - c. In class, we can use whatever chapter we happen to be reading in Headlee’s text that week to investigate how she is making these kinds of decisions as a writer and how she puts them to practice on the page.
3. *Model of practice:*
  - a. At MSU, our FYW curriculum is based on a model of inquiry as an exigence for the types of writing we might chose to do -- personal reflection, researched writing, multimodal remixes, etc.
  - b. Our FYW curriculum also considers professional and disciplinary knowledge and reflection as an important part of embodied, embedded professional and intellectual identity.
  - c. Headlee’s text smoothly combines a process of self-inquiry and reflection to researched writing for a popular audience. As such, as combines aspects of story with the more “formal” modes of academic research.

### Other Texts to Consider -- the possibilities are vast!

*RACE: So You Want to Talk About Race* -- Ijeoma Oluo

*CLASS: The Tumbleweed Society: Working and Caring in an Age of Uncertainty* -- Allison J. Pugh

*TECHNOLOGY: The Glass Cage: How Our Computers Are Changing Us* -- Nicholas Carr