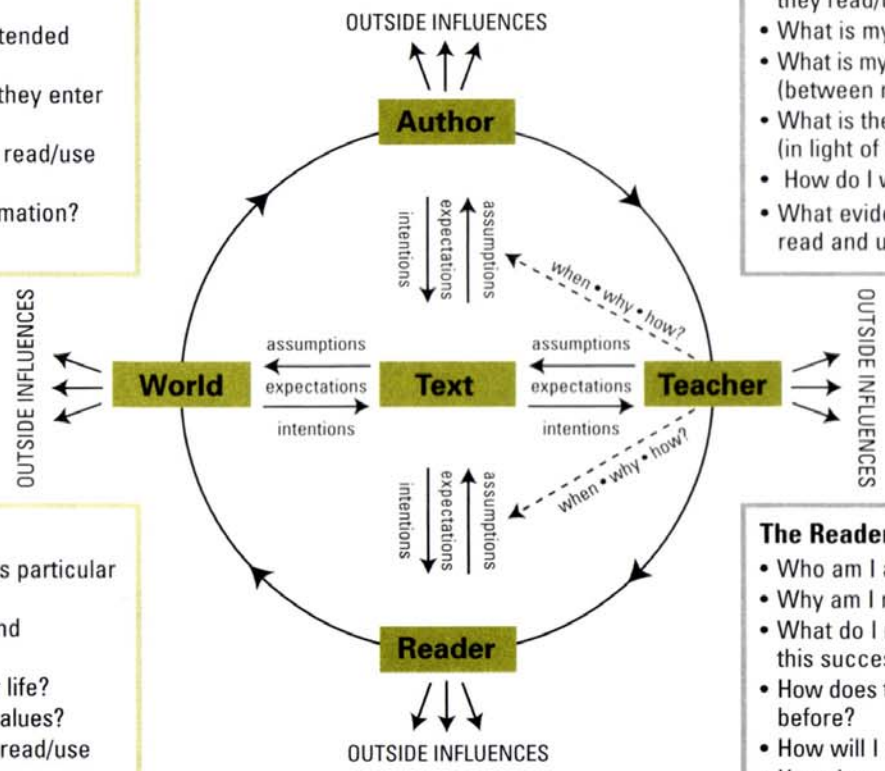
The Relationship Among Reader, Text, Teacher, and Author

The Author Asks:

- What is my subject?
- What is my objective?
- Which is the most appropriate form or genre for this text?
- Which is the most appropriate medium for the content?
- How does this text relate to my past work and the tradition within which I am working?
- Who is my audience?
- What assumptions can I make about my intended audience?
- Who (or what) do I want them to be when they enter this text?
- What will the reader/user need to know to read/use this text successfully?
- What is the best way to organize this information?

The Teacher Asks:

- Why did I choose this text?
- What is my objective in teaching it?
- How does it relate to what they read before and will read after?
- Who (or what) do I want them to be when they enter this text?
- What knowledge/skills must I develop in them BEFORE they read/use this?
- What is my attitude toward this text?
- What is my role/responsibility in this particular interaction (between reader and the text)?
- What is the best way to introduce this text to the reader (in light of my rationale for teaching it)?
- How do I want them to read/use this text in this context?
- What evidence am I willing to accept that they have read and understood it?



The World Asks

- Why are you asking our children to read this particular text?
- How does this text reflect our standards and expectations?
- How does this text help to prepare them for life?
- Is this text consistent with our community's values?
- What role can we play to help our children read/use this text successfully?

The Reader Asks:

- Who am I as I read this text?
- Why am I reading it?
- What do I need to know and be able to do to read/use this successfully?
- How does this text relate to what I have read and studied before?
- How will I read this text?
- How does the author (based on the format/design) expect me to read it?
- Why should I trust this author?
- How does this text work?
- What, if anything, should I do while I read this text?
- What strategies can I use to read this text successfully?
- What question do I need to be able to answer when I am finished?
- How does this relate to other works by this author?

(Reproduced, with permission, from *Illuminating Texts: How to Teach Students to Read the World* by Jim Burke [Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001], p. 88.)