

HARVARD



GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF EDUCATION

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH GROUP  
increasing opportunities-to-learn for all // dedicated to the science of learning // informing research, practice, and policy

# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: LEADING ADVANCED LITERACY INSTRUCTION TO FOSTER ELLS' ACHIEVEMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

---

Nonie K. Lesaux, PhD  
Sky Marietta, EdD  
Emily Phillips Galloway, M.S.Ed

December 11, 2013

# Today's Agenda

- 9.00 a.m. Introductions & Institute Overview
- 9.15 a.m. Where We've Been
- 9.35 a.m. Where We're Headed: Instructional Improvement
- 9.45 a.m. Getting to Work: Moving Towards Instructional Improvement
- 11.00 a.m. Team Time
- 11.45 am. Lunch
- 12.30 p.m. Moving Towards Instructional Improvement at Your Site
- 1.45 p.m. A Primer for Meeting 4: Content-based literacy for students and teachers
- 2.30 p.m. Next Steps

# THE INSTITUTE

---

# Institute Objectives and Goals

1

- to revisit current knowledge about ELLs' literacy development and literacy needs during the middle school years

2

- to revisit the separable skills that comprise advanced literacy, with emphasis on the language of schooling and print and how these manifest across content areas

3

- to learn high-impact instructional strategies that promote and integrate formal and informal instruction to build oral and written language

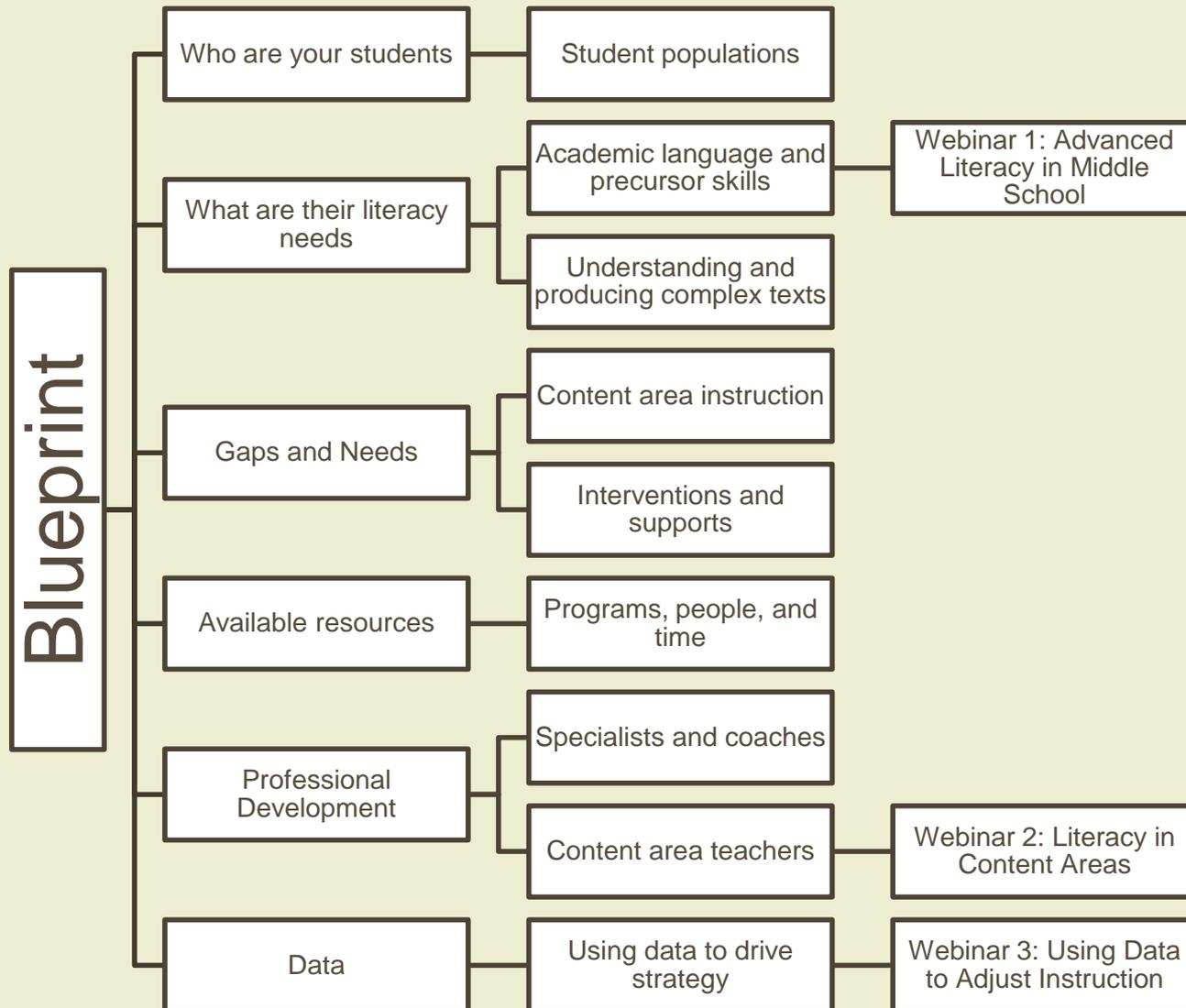
4

- to analyze key literacy data at the classroom- and school-level to surface patterns and trends in order to strengthen the instructional core

5

- to focus on leading effective literacy instruction (objectives 1-4) at the school-level, supporting teachers to improve their instruction

# Institute Overview



# Institute Design & Format

- Facilitated, PLC format to promote best practices for adult learning
  - Including discussion protocols to support school-based PLC work
- Supporting Materials:
  - The slides from each session
  - A module from each session (provides further content information)
  - Webinars on key topics
    - with embedded turnkey presentation
  - Key articles and resources
- Product: Blueprint as a School Resource for Improvement

# Guiding Principles

1. Struggling readers are not struggling thinkers
2. The aim of literacy instruction is to give students access to high-level ideas and content
3. There are multiple potential sources of students' literacy breakdowns, related to the learner, text, and the learning context

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

---

# Institute Objectives and Goals

1

- to revisit current knowledge about ELLs' literacy development and literacy needs during the middle school years

2

- to revisit the separable skills that comprise advanced literacy, with emphasis on the language of schooling and print and how these manifest across content areas



•What might be challenging about this text?

•What background knowledge does the reader need to support comprehension?

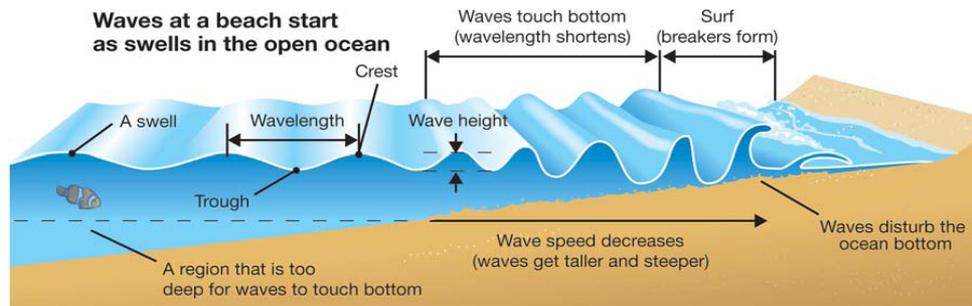
•Anything else you are struck by?

**VOCABULARY**

- crest** - the high point of a wave.
- trough** - the low point of a wave.
- wavelength** - the distance between two wave crests, or the distance between two wave troughs.

**Wavelength** The distance between two wave crests is called the **wavelength** of a wave. The ability of a wave to disturb the ocean bottom as it approaches a beach depends on its wavelength. A passing wave can “reach” down about half its wavelength. That means that a wave with a wavelength of 10 meters can only disturb the ocean bottom if it is five meters deep or less.

**Waves stir up sediment on the ocean bottom** Most waves will reach deep enough to affect the part of the shoreface nearest the beach. The lower part of the shoreface is only affected by the strongest waves with the longest wavelengths.



**Swells**

In the open ocean, most waves look like moving humps of water called swells. Swells can travel great distances over open water without losing much energy because although the swell moves, the water stays close to the same place.

If you could watch a blob of water as a swell passed by, you would see it move in a circle. First the blob would drop and move toward the approaching swell. Then the swell would lift the blob and push it forward. Finally, the blob would drop back to its starting place. Because the blob would end up right where it started, little energy is lost. That's why swells can travel great distances without losing much energy.

By the time a swell reaches a beach, if it has a lot of energy, it can become a huge breaker! A breaker is a wave that becomes foamy as it hits the beach.

# Today's Instructional Context

## Literacy in the Content Areas



Reading a  
variety of  
sources

Writing for a  
variety of  
purposes

Adopting a  
disciplinary  
perspective

Citing  
evidence  
from text

Evaluating  
information  
and sources

# Advanced Literacy Skills & Breakdowns: Our Conceptual Framework

## Code-Based Skills

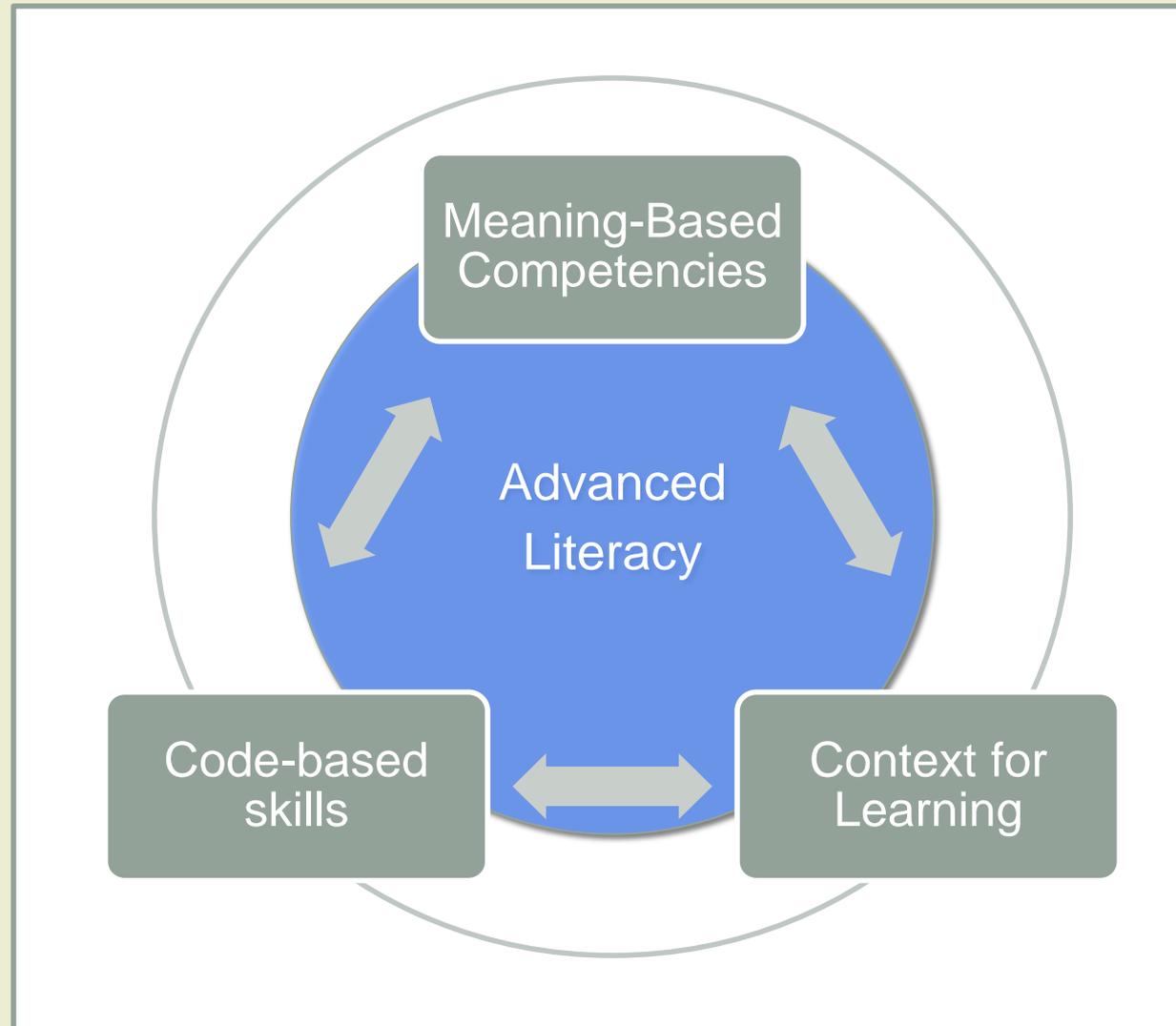
Skills involved in accurate and efficient word reading

## Meaning-Based Competencies

Skills involved in comprehending the language and meaning of complex texts and ideas when reading or listening

## Context for Learning

Contextual and affective factors that influence learning



# REVISITING THE CODE- MEANING DISTINCTION

---

# TWO DIFFERENT PROBLEM SPACES

4 sounds, 1 word:

/s/ /p/ /ee/ /d/

“-igh family”

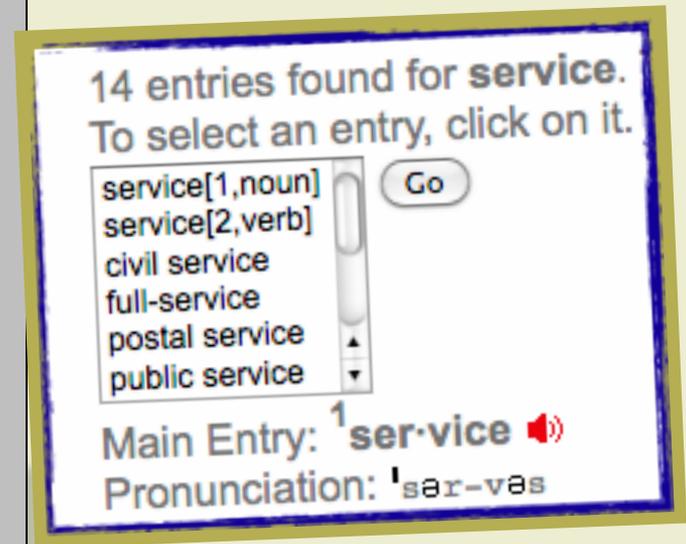
high  
sigh  
thigh

/H/

**Cognitive  
strategies**

**High-Speed Trains**  
A type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. These trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, they are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour. There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular.

115+ words correct  
per minute (grade 5)



**Vocabulary**

**Interest and  
motivation**

**Understanding of  
language**

**Relevant  
background  
knowledge**

# TWO DIFFERENT PROBLEM SPACES

## Code-based skills

/H/

“-igh family”

high

sigh

thigh

4 sounds, 1 word:

/s/ /p/ /ee/ /d/

115+ words correct  
per minute (grade 5)

## High-Speed Trains

A type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. These trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, they are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour. There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular.

## Meaning-based Competencies

Vocabulary

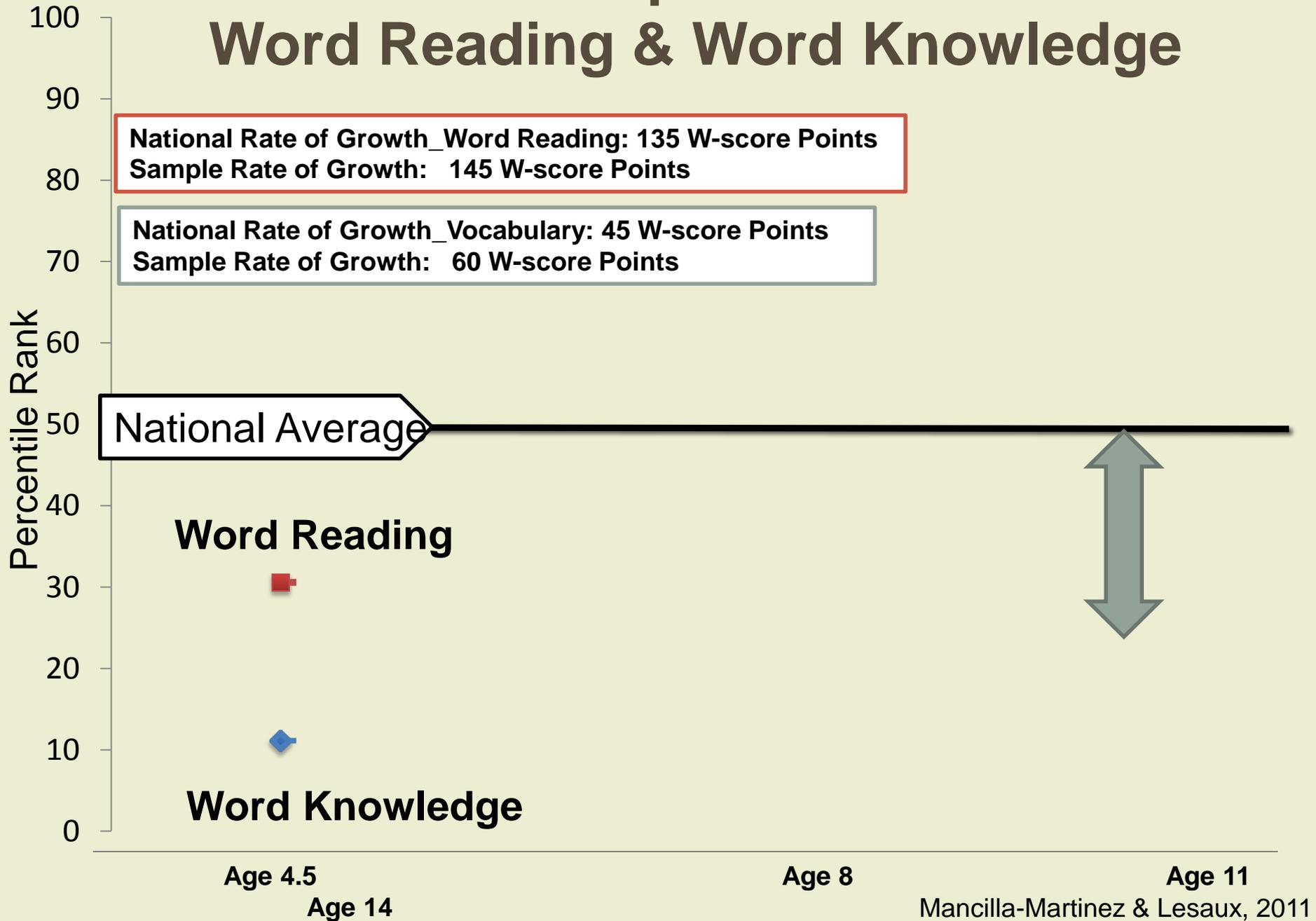
Cognitive  
strategies

Relevant  
background  
knowledge

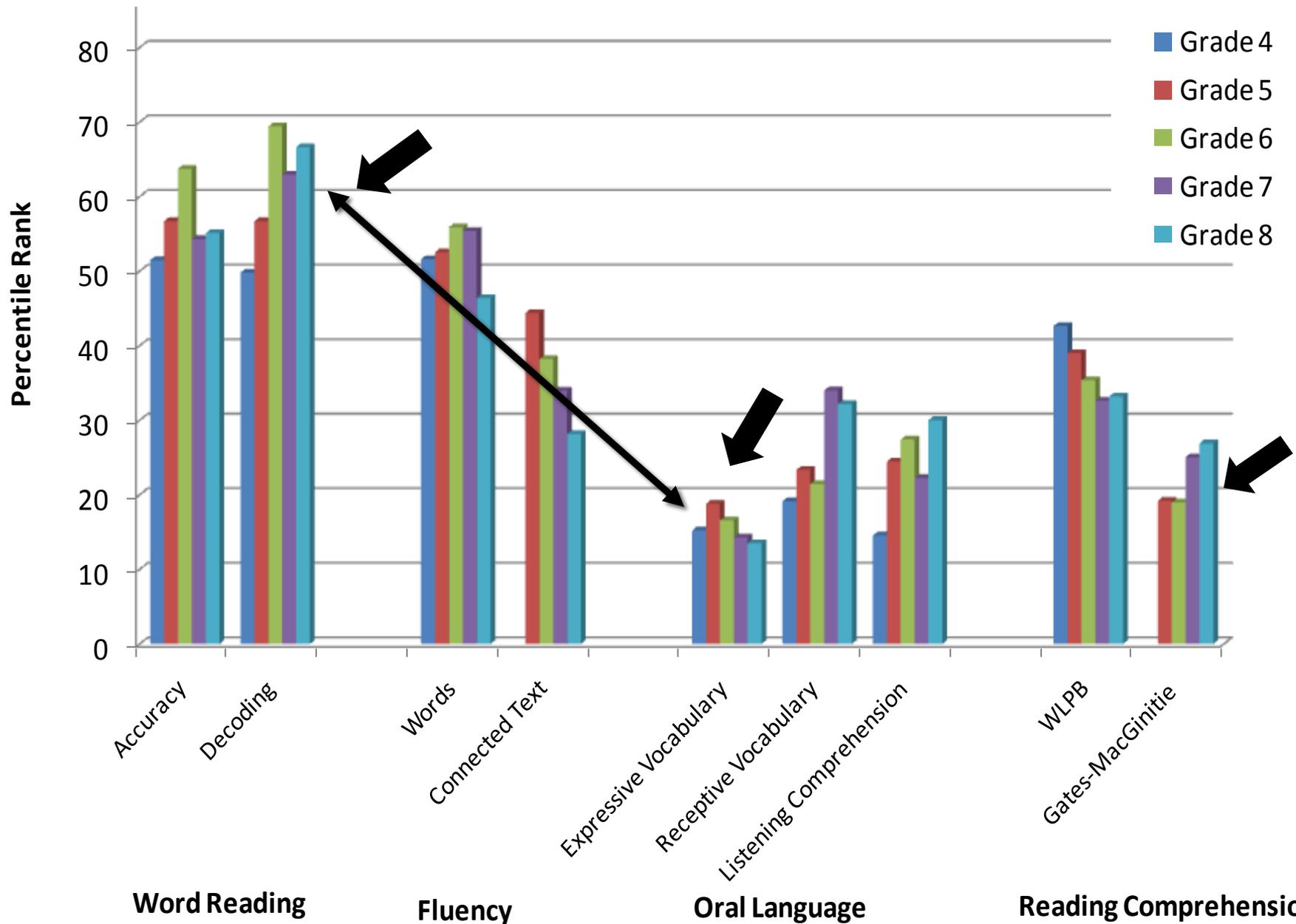
Understanding of  
language

Interest and  
motivation

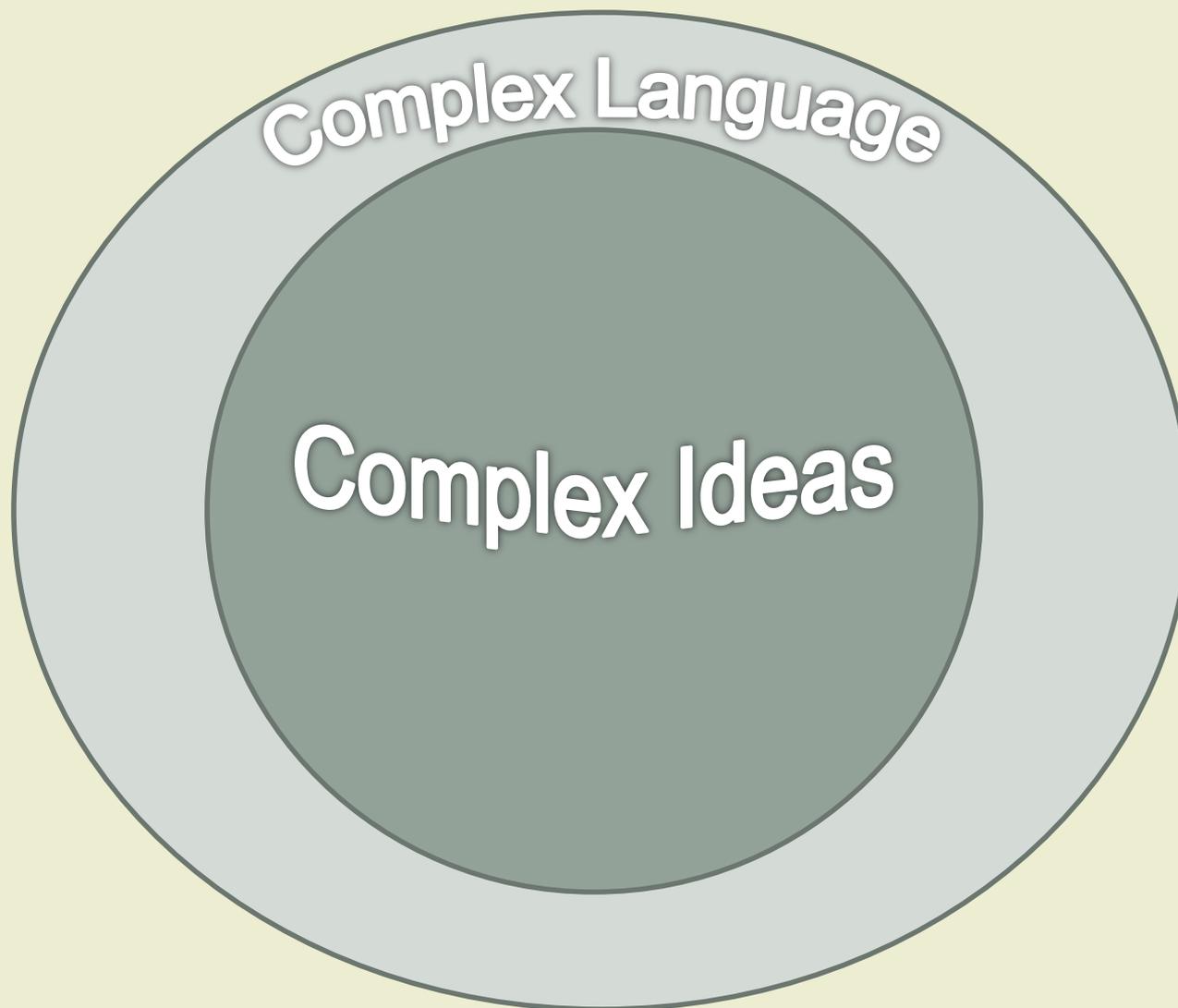
# The Gap Between Word Reading & Word Knowledge



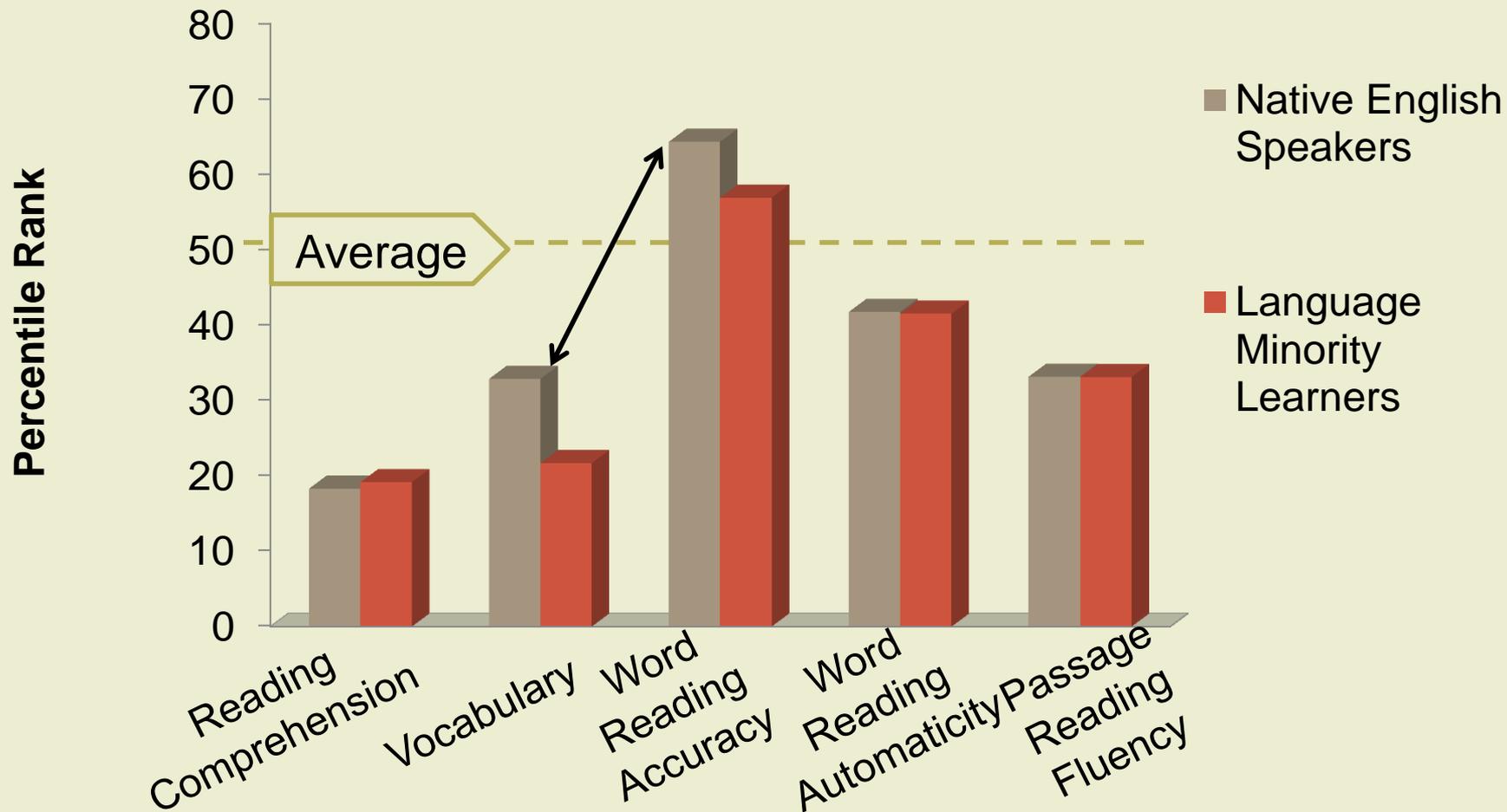
# THE GAP BETWEEN READING WORDS & COMPREHENDING TEXT



# What Makes Text Challenging for Many ELLs?



# Skills-Based vs. Knowledge-Based Literacy Competencies: A Pervasive Gap



(Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010)

# Instructional Implications

Increasing Language Opportunities



Classroom DISCUSSIONS that build knowledge



Conversations that analyze ideas



Building disciplinary language

Increasing Print Opportunities



Reading/listening to a wide variety of genres

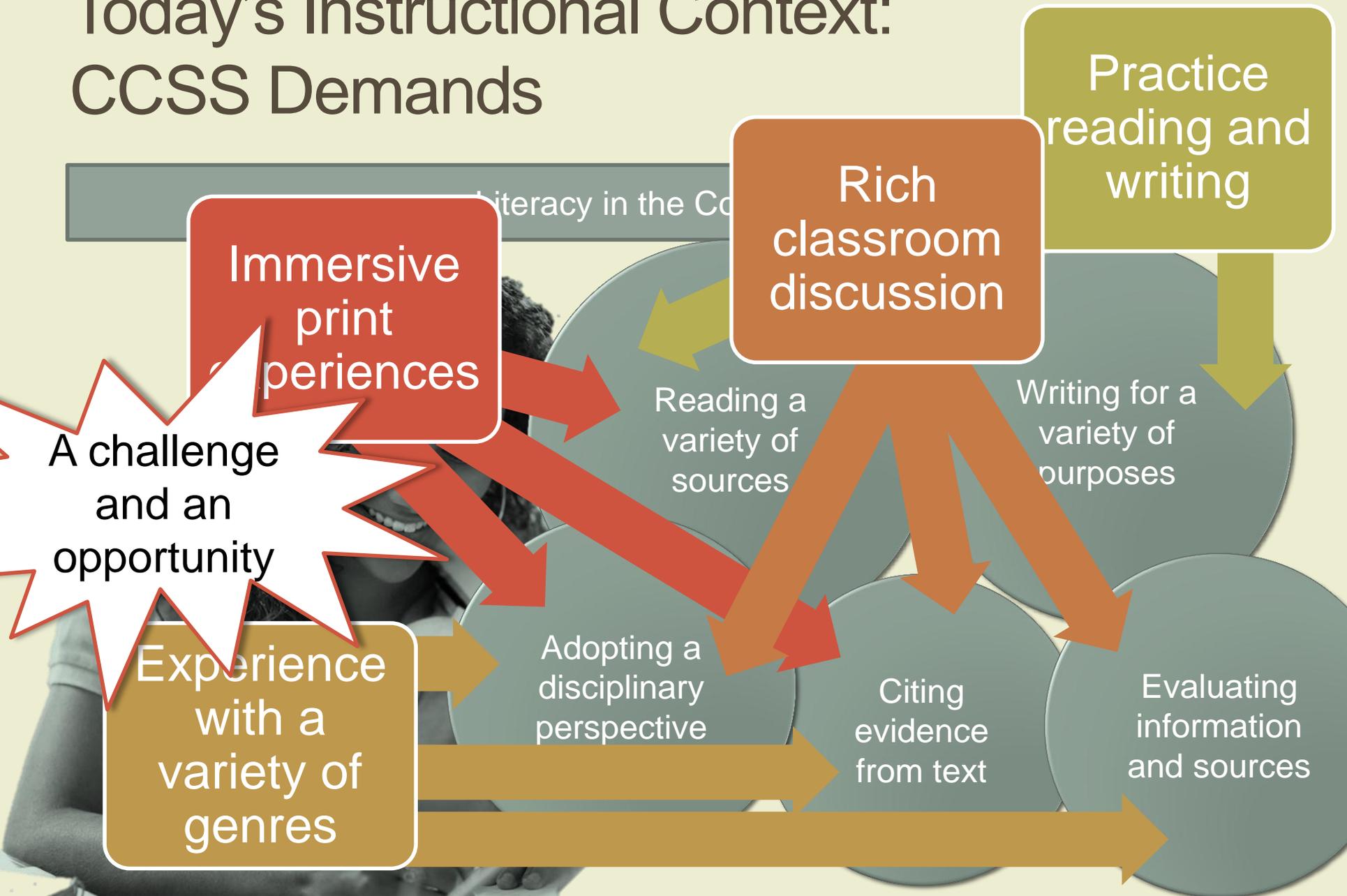


Reading/listening with a variety of goals/purposes



Responding with words and writing

# Today's Instructional Context: CCSS Demands



# WHERE WE'RE HEADED

---

Institute Meetings 3-7

# Common Barriers to Instructional Improvement

General sense that students have difficulty with reading, but little understanding of how to support them



Content is delivered around text, rather than through text



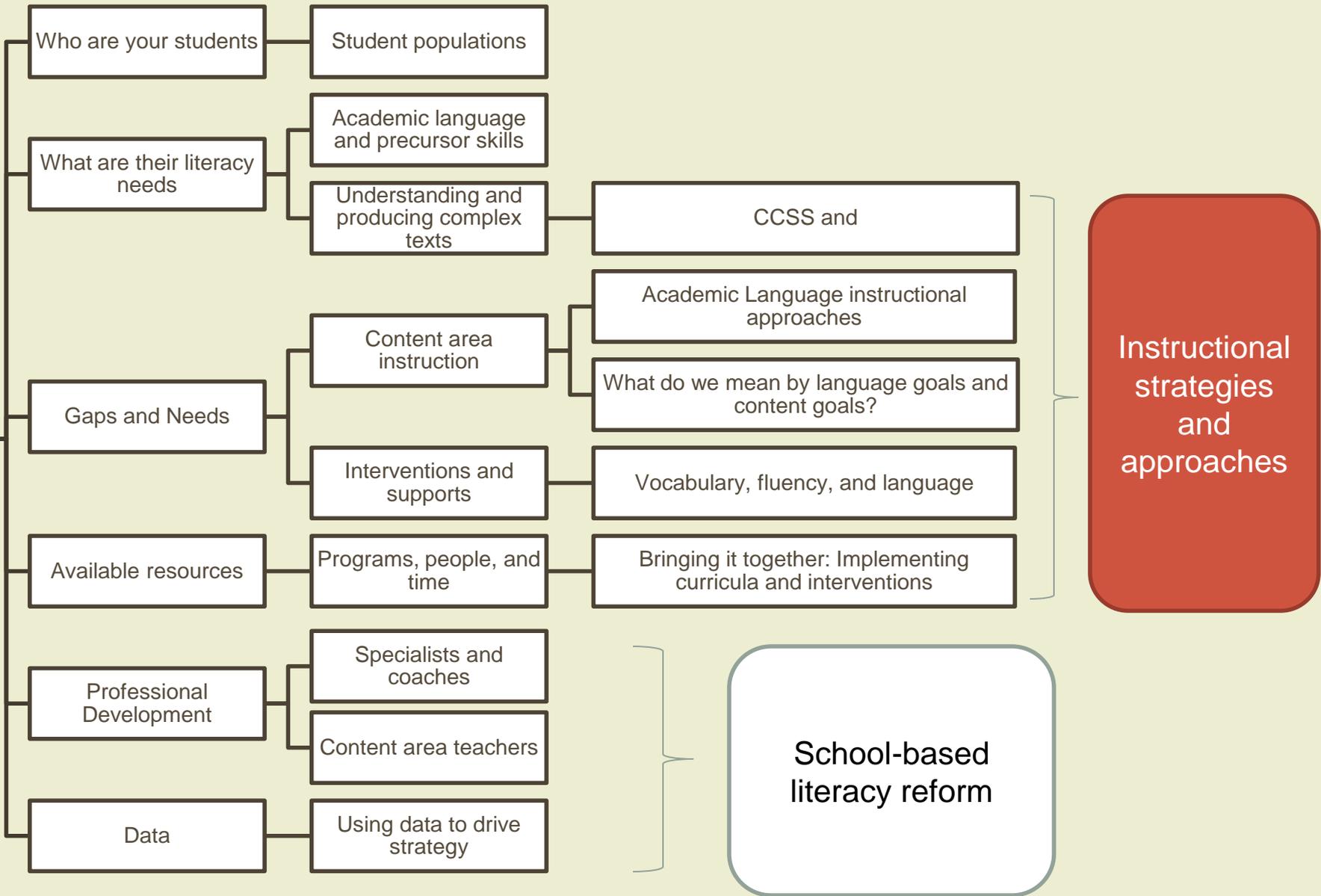
Many different topics are covered, rather than depth on a few topics



Single texts are used rather than a variety of sources

# Instructional Improvement: Meetings 3-7

## Blueprint



# 3 Key Take-aways from Today

Designing and selecting  
instructional approaches

## Pedagogical Frame

- A continuum of instructional strategies that can be applied to the approaches in place at your school towards improvements

## Instructional Levers

- 4 approaches that promote academic literacy skills for middle school ELLs

## Teacher Observation

- Focusing in on how teachers use text to inform observation

# GETTING TO WORK

---

Moving Towards Instructional Improvement

# Key Shifts for Today's Instructional Context

From...

To...

Focusing on the rare words and discipline-specific vocabulary

Focusing on the academic vocabulary, sentence and text-level (text structures) features

Reading passively to gain content knowledge

Reading complex texts as a 'critical consumer' to gain alternate perspectives and to enter into a conversation with the author and with peers about the content

Using a single text to teach a topic

Using multiple texts (text sets) of varying genres and complexity on a topic to build deep conceptual knowledge

Reading and writing mostly narrative, short texts for a limited audience (teacher)

Reading and writing a broader range of genres, to put forth more nuanced arguments, for a broader set of readers (peers, disciplinary colleagues)

Teaching reading and writing as separate subjects

Connecting reading and writing instruction throughout the day (both 'writing to learn' and 'learning to write')

# Returning to Waves: Shifts for Today's Instructional Context

From specific content knowledge & strategies...

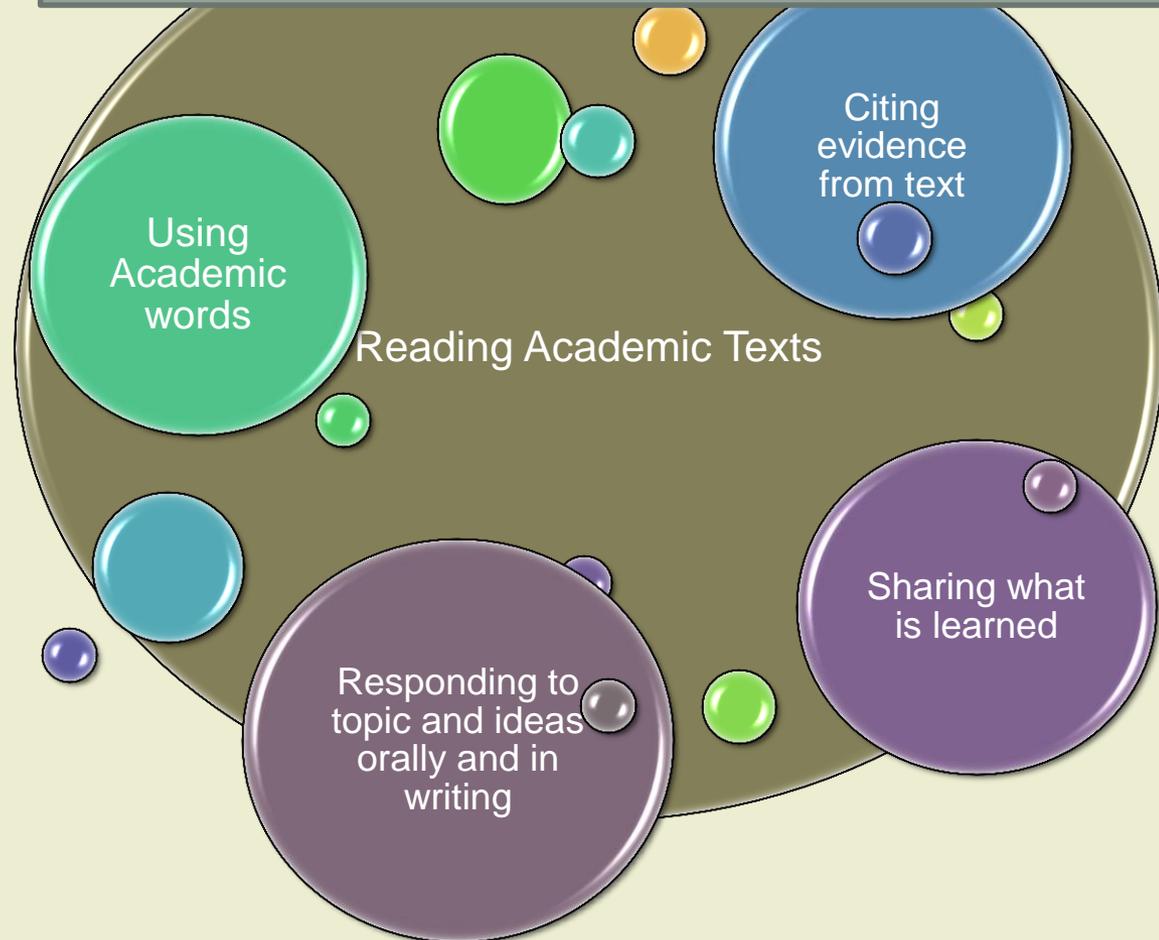
...To Universal Approaches & Habits of Mind

## Content

- What is a wavelength
- Ratio of wavelength to reach of a wave

## Strategies

- Defining words
- Text features
- Asking students to find answers in the text



# IMPROVING STUDENTS' LITERACY SKILLS

---

An Instructional continuum

# An Instructional Continuum

**Isolated**

**Integrated**



Conjugating verbs

Finding the main idea

Reading texts on grade-level topics

Taking a disciplinary stance

Integrating multiple sources of information

Talking about texts

Evaluating the quality of information

Summarizing

Writing on topics

Explaining information to a diverse audience

# What are students doing?

---

## Isolated Condition

**Looks Like:**

Worksheets

---

Workbooks

---

Answering low-level questions

---

**Sounds like:**

Minimal conferring with peers to find the right “answer”

---

Silent work

---

**Feels like:**

Teacher works hard to get students engaged/managing behavior

---

Repetitive / routine

---

# What are students doing?

## Real-World Conditions

**Looks**

Textbooks and primary sources

---

**Like:**

Students reading, writing, and talking

---

**Sounds**

Discussing many different ideas and approaches

---

**like:**

Questions

---

**Feels like:**

Students working hard to form new understandings, integrating skills and competencies

---

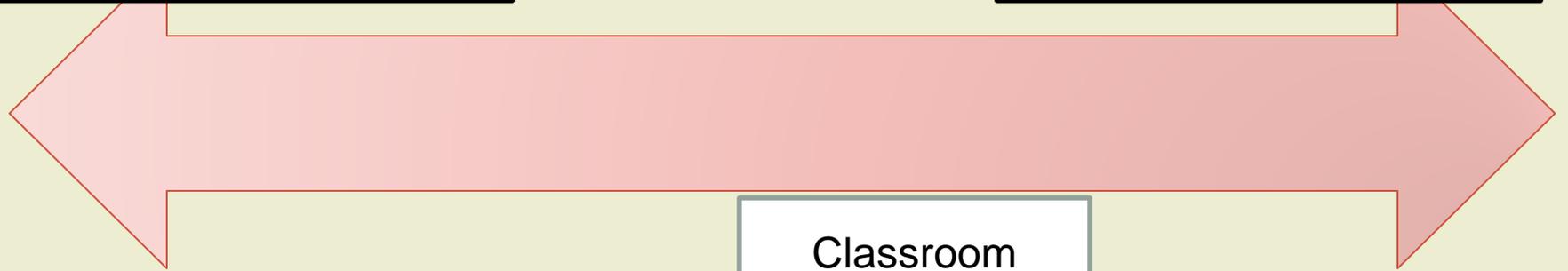
Process-oriented

---

# Example: Waves Lesson

**Isolated**

**Integrated**



Looking at the “Waves” passage to determine text features

Reading a textbook and answering questions that require literal recall

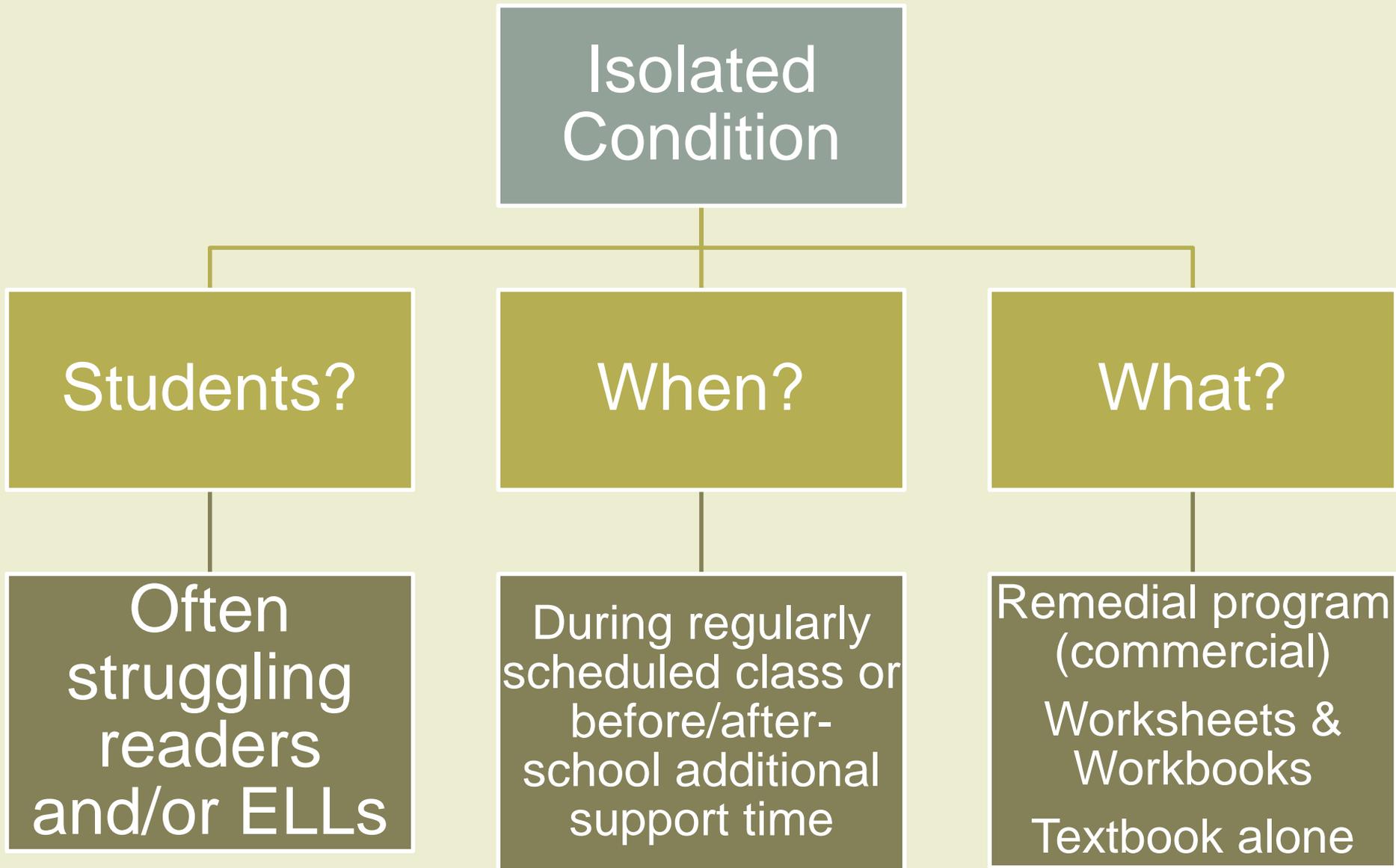
Defining vocabulary words on waves

Classroom discussion of waves

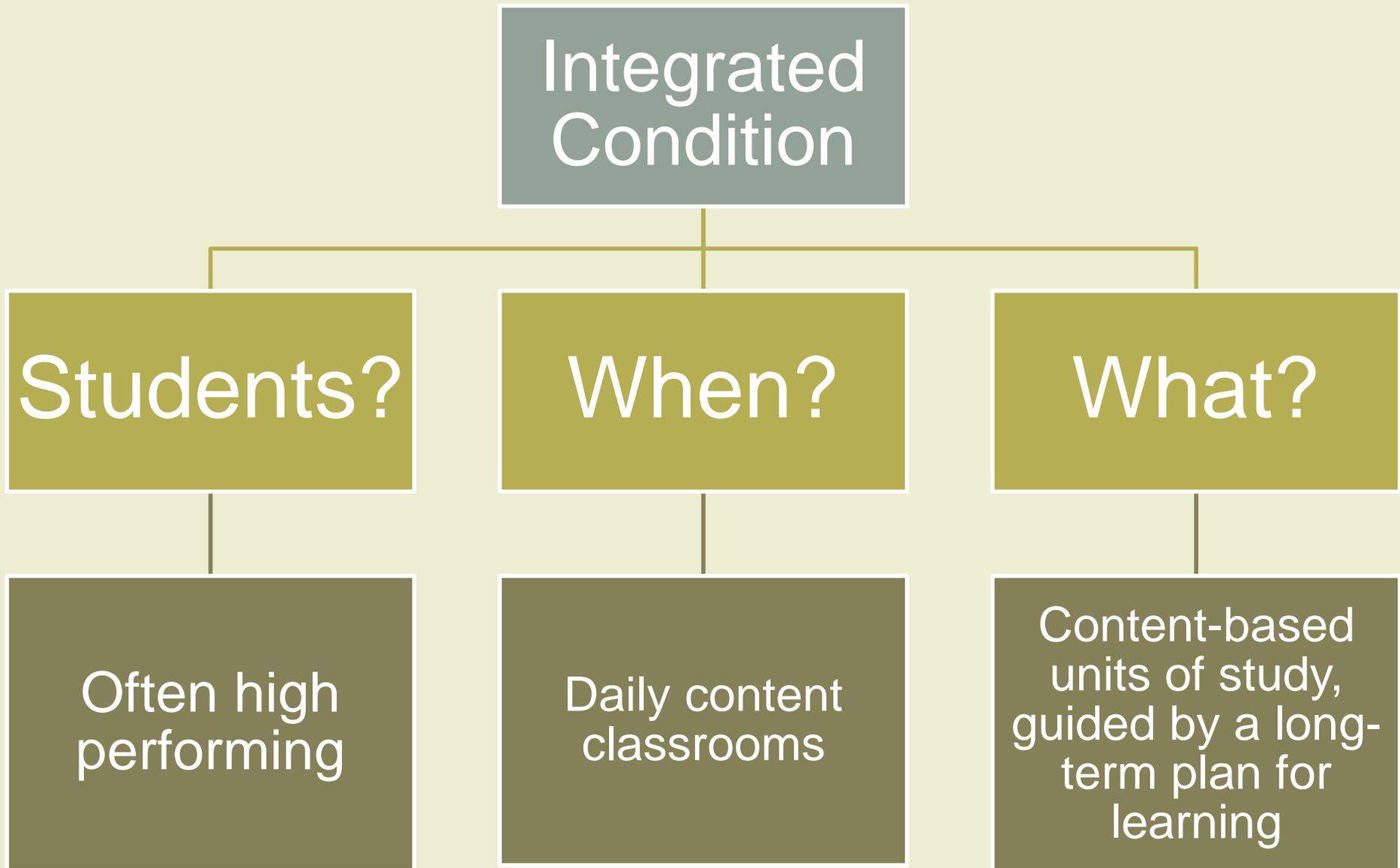
Reading newspaper and science magazine articles on tsunamis, connecting with wave length and height

Reporting on how natural forces shape human ways of living over time

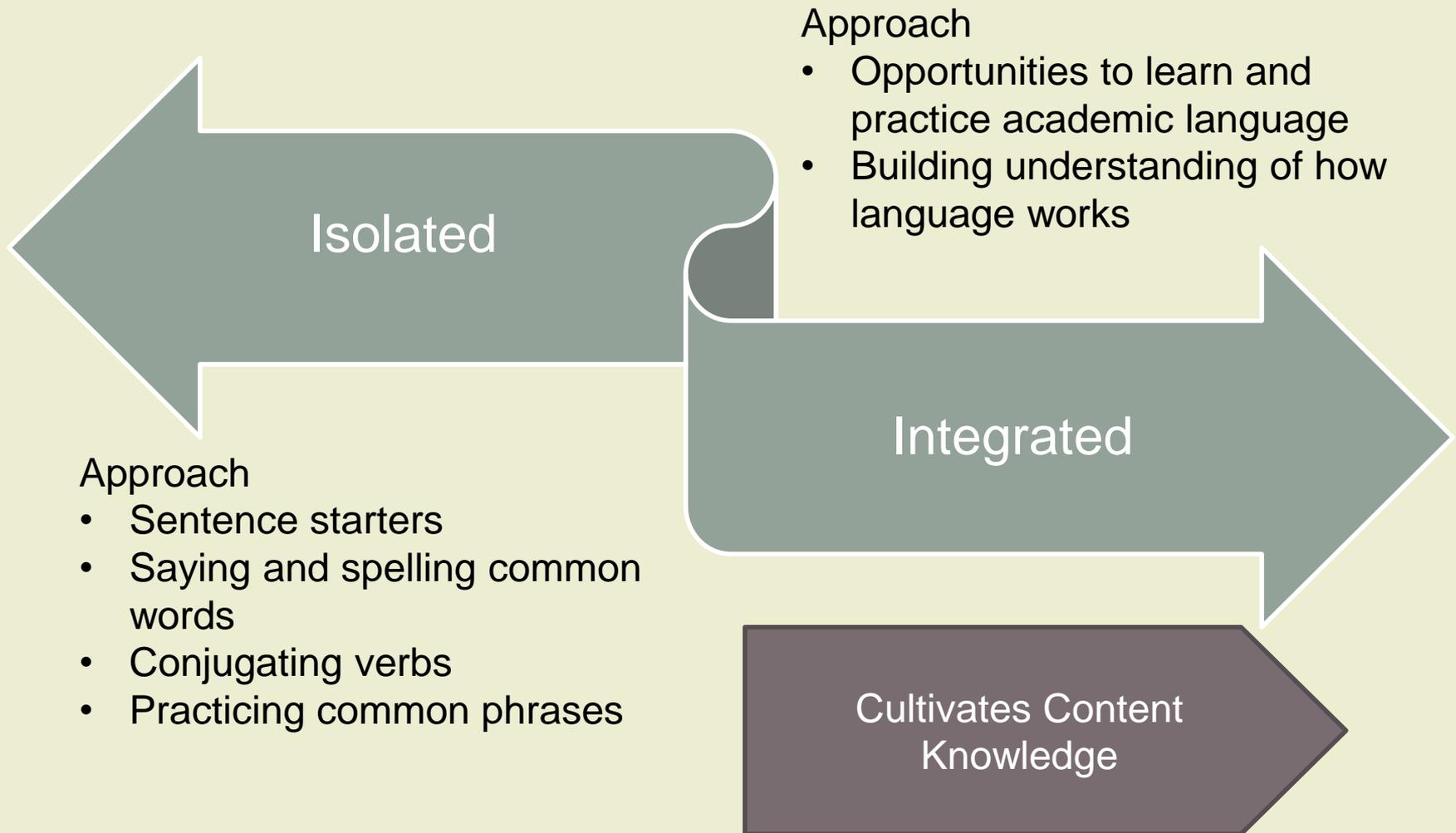
# Middle School Literacy Context



# Middle School Literacy Context



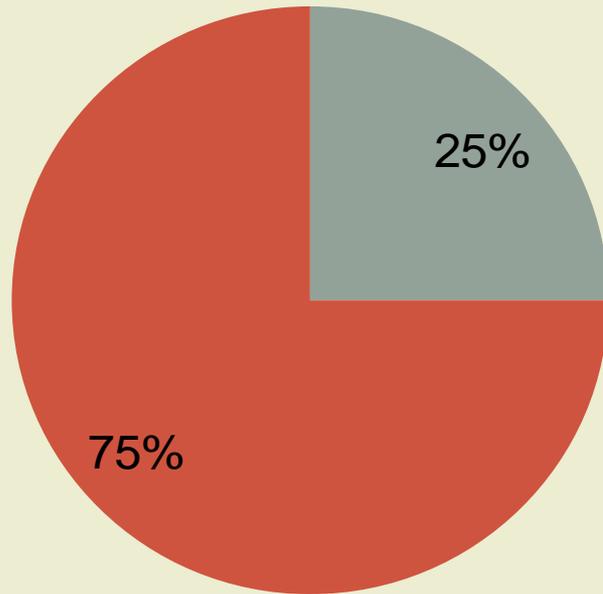
# ESL Instruction



# Time Spent in Each Part of the Continuum

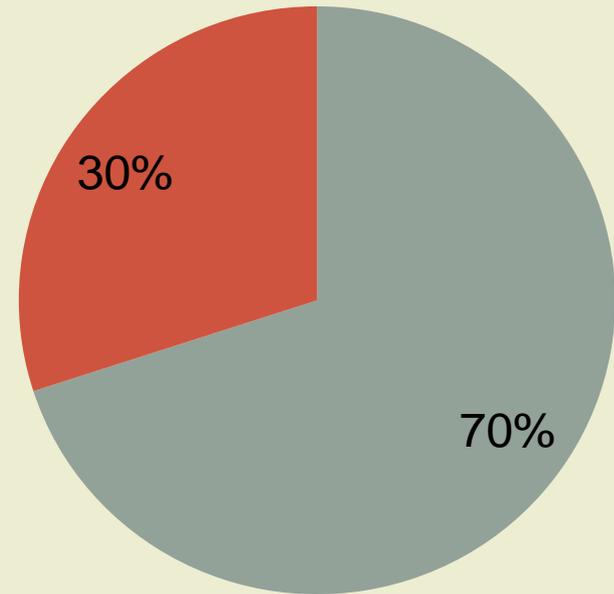
Ideal Scenario – an Approximation

■ Isolated ■ Integrated

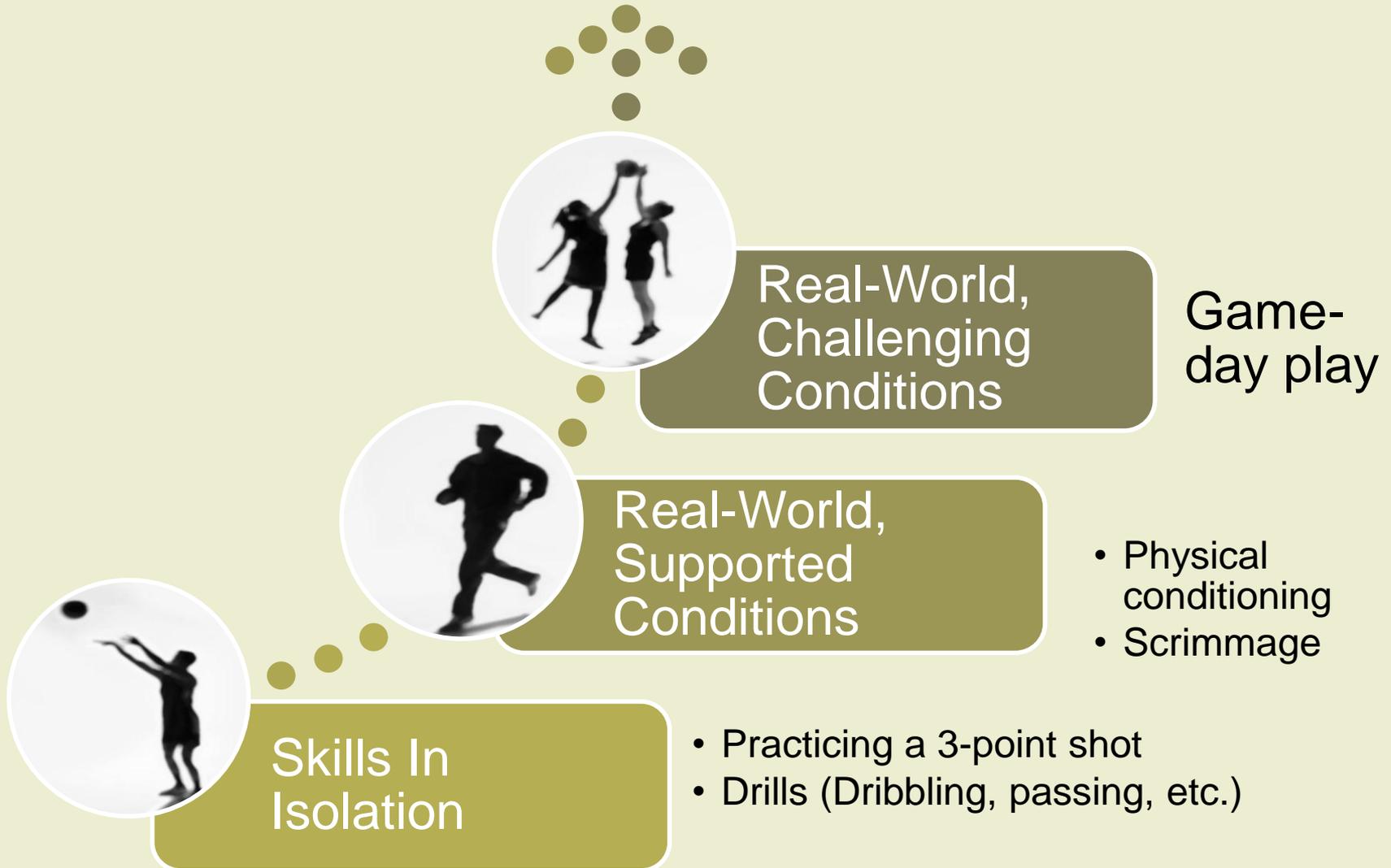


Common Scenario – An Approximation

■ Isolated ■ Integrated



# An Instructional Continuum: A Metaphor



# An Instructional Continuum: A Metaphor



Real-World,  
Challenging  
Conditions

Game-  
day play



Real-World,  
Supported  
Conditions

- Physical conditioning
- Scrimmage



Skills In  
Isolation

- Practicing a 3-point shot
- Dribbling drills

# Introducing the Case Study Students



David

- SIFE
- Limited schooling in the DR



Marcia

- Midterm ELL
- 4 years; K- 2<sup>nd</sup> in Puerto Rico



Josie

- Longterm ELL
- Parents immigrated from Haiti
- been in NYC schools from kindergarten



Anthony

- English only struggler
- Repeating 8<sup>th</sup> grade



Soojin

- New Arrival
- Excellent academic performance in Korea; social anxiety

What would you imagine would be the primary literacy of each student, given his or her general profile? What supports would each receive at your school? What part of the instructional continuum would they spend most of their time? The least?

# Enacting Shifts: A Multi-Step Process



## Step 1.

- Taking Inventory of Our Literacy Supports & Strategies

## Step 2.

- Connecting our Supports and Strategies

## Step 3.

- Gaps and Needs Analysis: Patterns & Trends

# Team Time: School-Wide Inventory

- What Literacy Supports and Strategies are in use at our School?
  - When is literacy supported? In what settings? For whom?
  - Revisit Blueprint Steps 1 and 2
- (Blueprint Step 3). Where do our Supports and Strategies Fall on the Instructional Continuum?

# Taking Stock for Instructional Improvement: Where are we at?

At this point in the institute, there are at least two major distinctions to consider when thinking about literacy supports and instruction at your school:

1. Code-Based Skills & Meaning-Based Competencies
2. Isolated - Integrated Instructional Continuum

As a team, look carefully at your blueprint and consider these questions:

- What is the primary focus of our literacy supports
- Which strugglers are we serving? When? In which classrooms?
- Where does instruction fall along the continuum?
- What are your major next steps for improvement?
- What are your challenges and barriers?

Prepare a 3-5 minute overview of the literacy supports and strategies at your school, and your next steps and challenges, to share with your institute colleagues

LUNCH

---

# Today's Agenda

- 9.00 a.m. Introductions & Institute Overview
- 9.15 a.m. Where We've Been
- 9.35 a.m. Where We're Headed: Instructional Improvement
- 9.45 a.m. Getting to Work: Moving Towards Instructional Improvement
- 11.00 a.m. Team Time
- 11.45 am. Lunch
- 12.30 p.m. Moving Towards Instructional Improvement at Your Site
- 1.45 p.m. A Primer for Meeting 4: Content-based literacy for students and teachers
- 2.30 p.m. Next Steps

# Taking Stock for Instructional Improvement: Where are we at?

At this point in the institute, there are at least two major distinctions to consider when thinking about literacy supports and instruction at your school:

1. Code-Based Skills & Meaning-Based Competencies
2. Isolated - Integrated Instructional Continuum

As a team, look carefully at your blueprint and consider these questions:

- What is the primary focus of our literacy supports
- Which strugglers are we serving? When? In which classrooms?
- Where does instruction fall along the continuum?
- What are your major next steps for improvement?
- What are your challenges and barriers?

Prepare a 3-5 minute overview of the literacy supports and strategies at your school, and your next steps and challenges, to share with your institute colleagues

# CONTENT-BASED LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

---

A Primer

# A Primer

## Looking ahead to Meeting 4

- What systems exist to support teachers in teaching complex texts? Where do we go from here?

# 4 Key Instructional Levers for Moving Toward an Integrated Approach

1

- Make tasks cognitively challenging AND context embedded

2

- Teach Language Through Content

3

- Co-construction of content and language knowledge through talk

4

- Use L1 Purposefully

# Instructional Lever #1:

Make tasks cognitively challenging AND context embedded

Ask students to read, write, and respond to complex texts while providing support

- Graphic organizers
- Providing time for thinking and writing
- Text comprehension routines
- Classroom discussion and peer talk to scaffold thinking

# Instructional Lever #2:

## Teach Language Through Content

By engaging students in writing and speaking activities that require the use of the target language features, we create an authentic context for language use

- Teach vocabulary that is necessary for conveying topic knowledge
- Read multiple texts on the same topic
- Embed lessons in units of study

# Instructional Lever #3:

Co-construction of content and language knowledge through talk

Peer discussion can be one of the richest contexts for acquiring new language and learning on a topic

- Frequent, short discussions
- Discussion as a classroom routine
- Discussions that center on texts, particularly complex texts

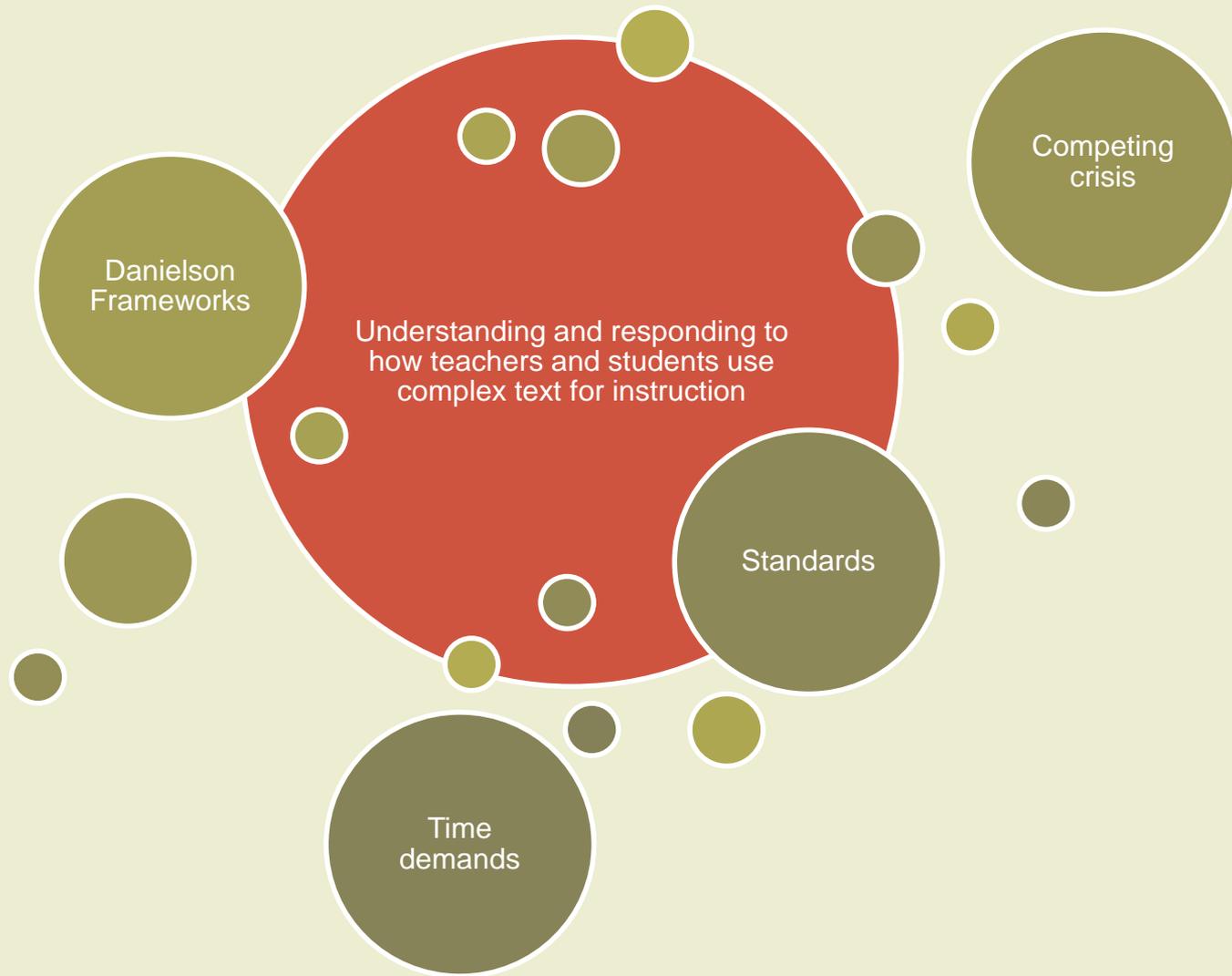
# Instructional Lever #4:

Use L1 purposefully

Allow students to connect knowledge and language in their L1 to L2 content

- Encourage peer discussion in the L1 at the start of a unit
- Allow the use of the L1 to first express thinking
- Make quick connections for common words that do not require deep exploration

# Teacher Observation: Challenges Principals Face for Adolescent Literacy



# Shifting to Integrated, Meaning-Based Literacy Instruction Across Classrooms

Using teacher observation (i.e., Danielson) as a tool

Video practice with observation

Leading Advanced Literacy Instruction to Foster ELLs' Achievement | 2013-14

## Best Practices for Knowledge-Building Instruction for ELLs

**Scenario:** You should keep in mind:

1. How do the instructional practices align to the school's beliefs about how students learn best and to the Danielson Framework for Teaching? (1.2 and 4.1)
2. How is each student being engaged and challenged? (1.1 and 1.2)
3. How are teachers checking for understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly? (2.2 and 1.2)

**Step 1:** While viewing the video, complete the anecdotal low-inference rubric drawn from the quality review framework.

Classroom Visit Tool	
Anecdotal Evidence: Low-Inference Observations	
What is the teacher doing?	What are the students doing?

20 | Lesaux, Marietta & Phillips Galloway

NEXT STEPS/Q&A

---

# Upcoming Sessions

Space for  
Teams of 3-4  
in all  
subsequent  
sessions

