



NYS Next Generation Learning Standards: Leading Advanced Literacies Instruction For the 21st Century

NONIE K. LESAUX, PHD

NOVEMBER 30, 2017

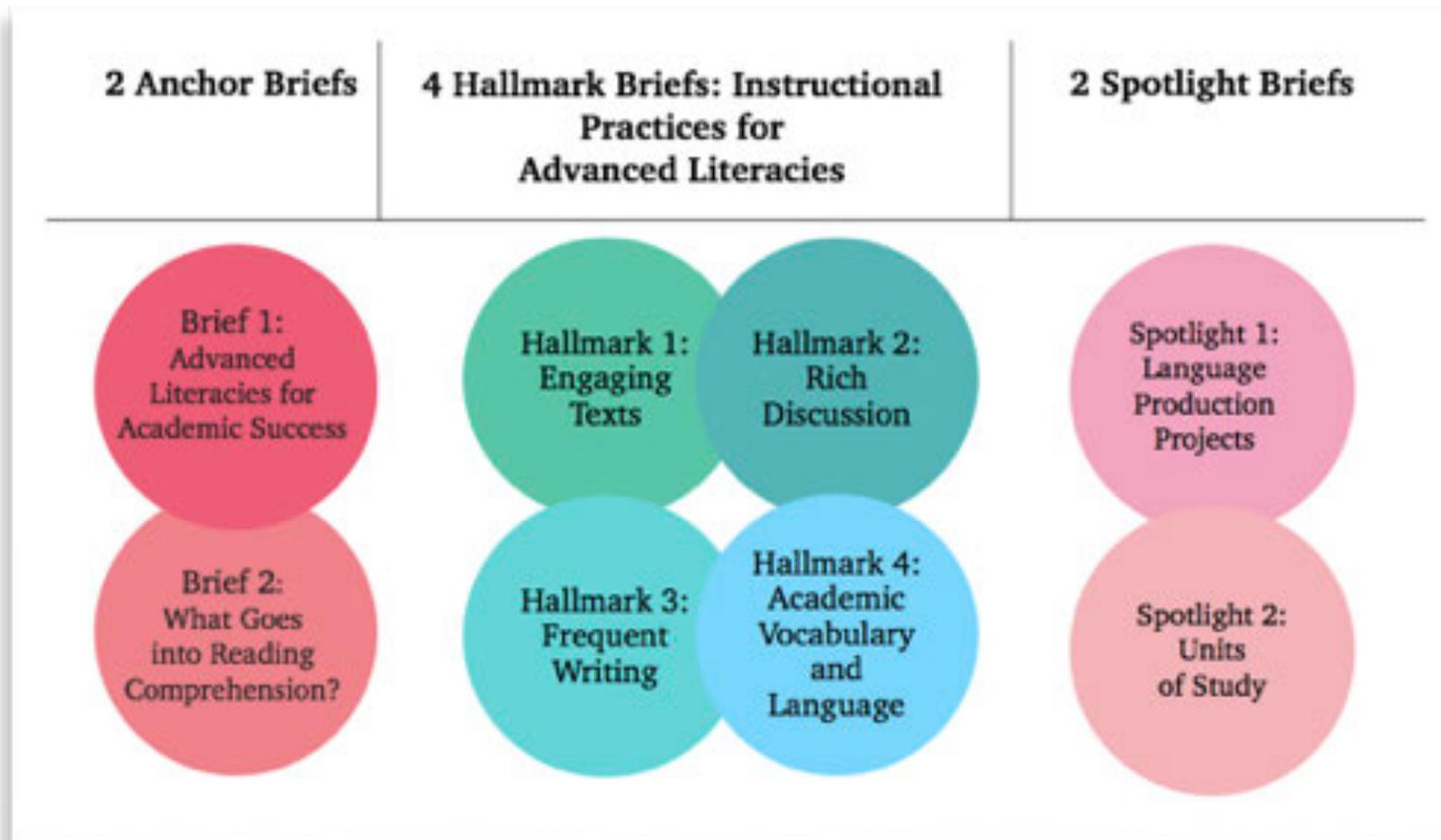
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY

Backdrop for Today's Session

- A MULTI-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- OUR LATEST COLLABORATION:

WHAT DOES A NEW SET OF STANDARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY'S LITERACY DEMANDS MEAN FOR INSTRUCTION?

Backdrop for Today's Session: Map of the Brief Series



This Morning's Session

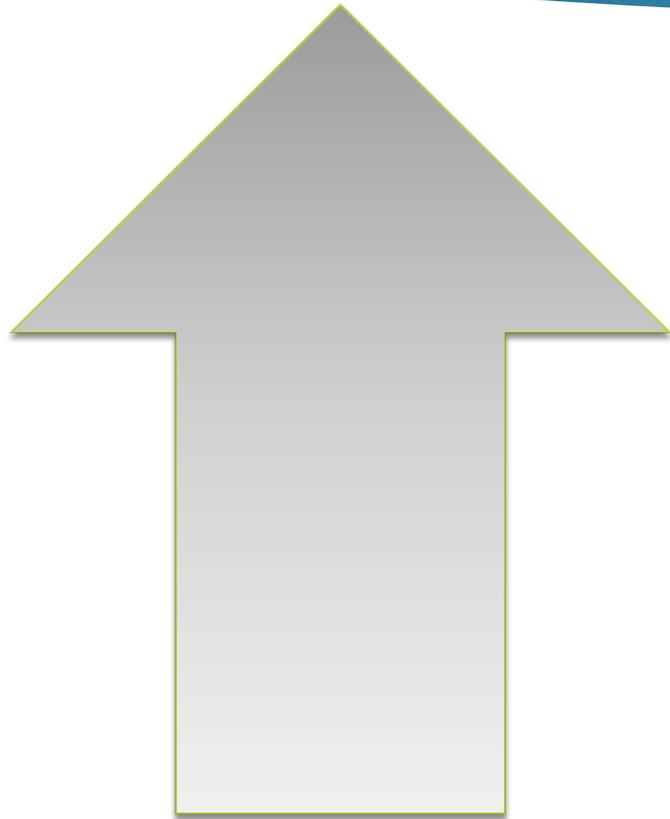
1. Today's Literacy Context
2. A Primer on Reading Comprehension
3. Advanced Literacies for Academic Success
4. Fostering Advanced Literacies in Today's Classrooms
5. Q&A

Today's Literacy Context



Today's Literacy Context

Rethinking "literacy"



Increasingly sophisticated literacy skills needed to thrive day-to-day

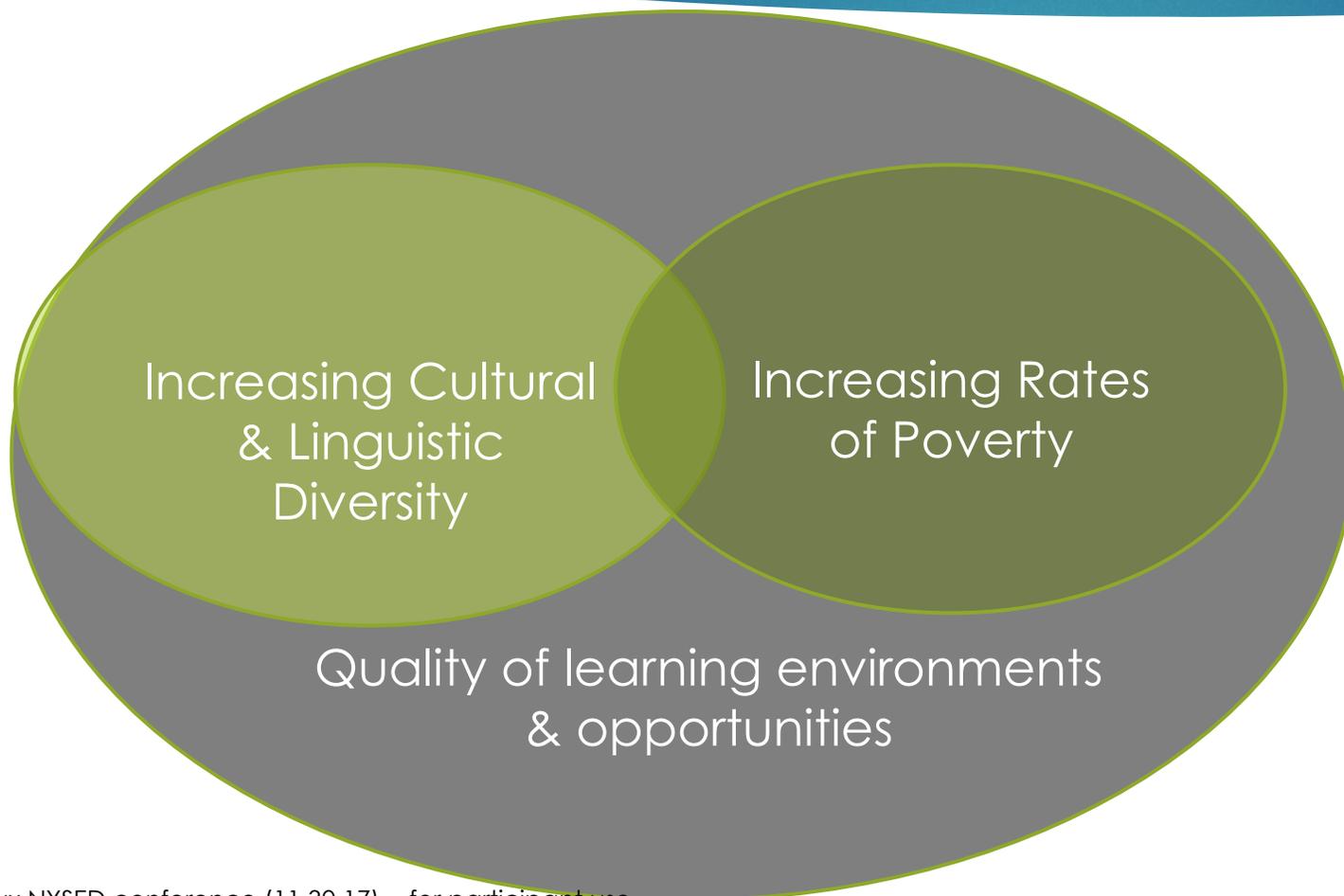
- Demands communication (orally and in writing) in diverse ways and with diverse audiences;
- Requires a need to understand and use print for a variety of purposes
- Is much more than decoding and understanding print

New role of language and literacy skills in society— in our neighborhoods and in the global world

What counts as “literate” on the rise

Today's Literacy Context

Rethinking "literacy"

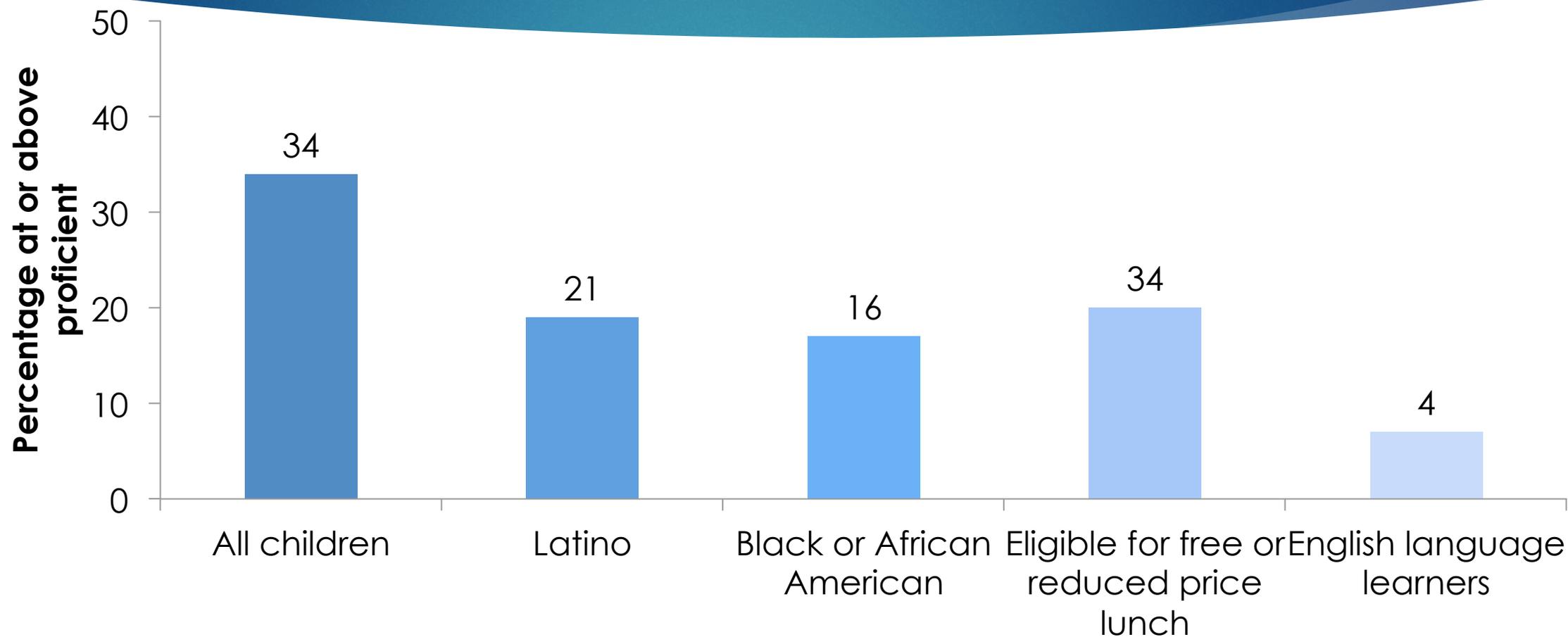


Compromised opportunities to develop:

- language and reading skills
- strong emotional, social, and cognitive skills

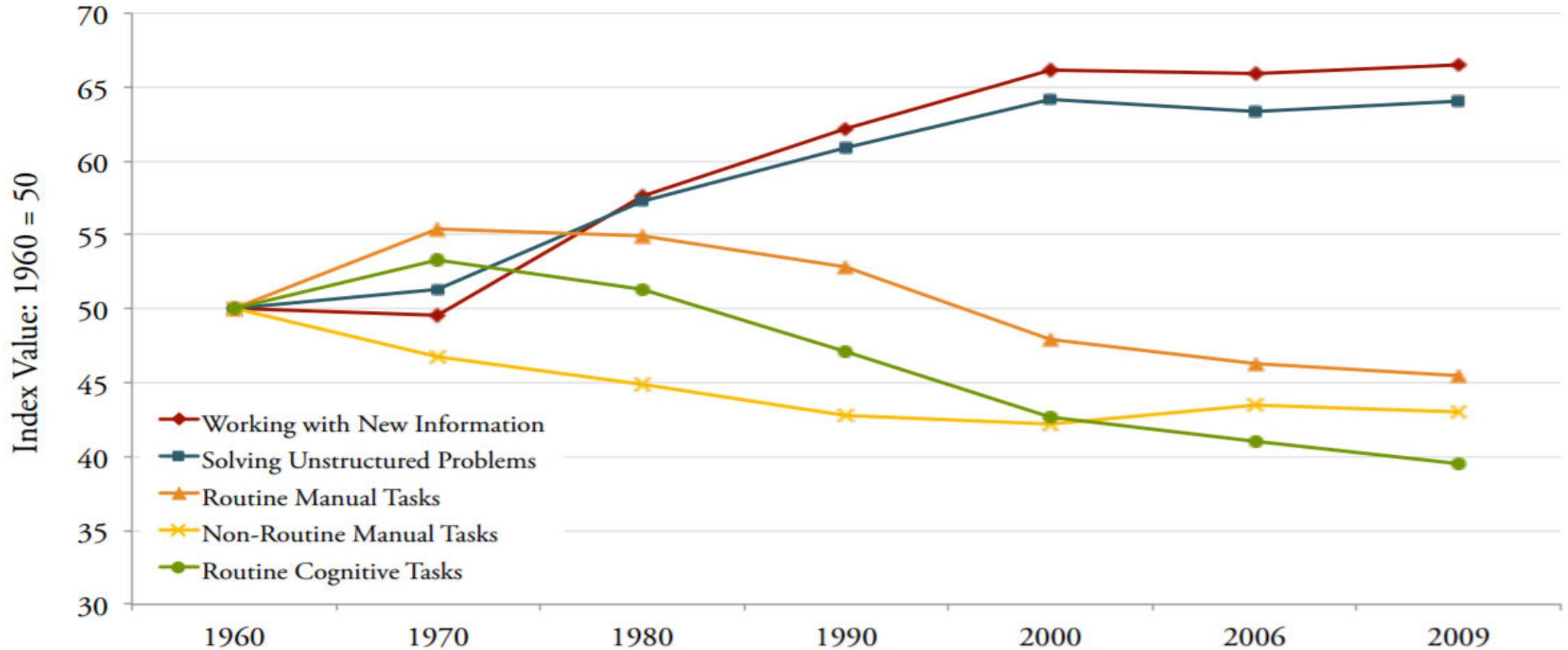
High rates of special education placement and dropout

Today's Literacy Context: U.S. 8th Graders



Changing Demands of Workforce Participation

Work tasks in the U.S. economy (1960-2009)



Changing Demands of Workforce Participation

“In order to prepare young people to do the jobs computers cannot do, we must re-focus our education system around one objective: **giving students the foundational skills in problem-solving and communication that computers don’t have.**”

““As knowledge has become more abstract, the average person’s earnings have become increasingly correlated with educational attainment.”

“Computerized work has ratcheted up the definition of foundational skills.”

Changing Demands of Workforce Participation

- ▶ Business leaders report a steady decline in workplace literacy skills
- ▶ Private sector spending approx. 3.1 billion a year on bolstering entry-level workers' literacy skills
 - ▶ 21st Century workers need to clearly communicate (in speech and writing) with a wide variety of audiences, and efficiently manage the abundant information that defines the digital age.

What about the Higher Education Context?

- ▶ Average college coursework requires 80 pages of independent reading per week
- ▶ Up to 60% of community college freshmen assigned to remedial reading courses
- ▶ 4-year colleges re-organizing freshman year curriculum offerings to provide reading and writing support
- ▶ Increasing emphasis on group projects, innovation challenges, “hack-a-thons,” etc.

Mapping Workforce Demands to Curriculum Design

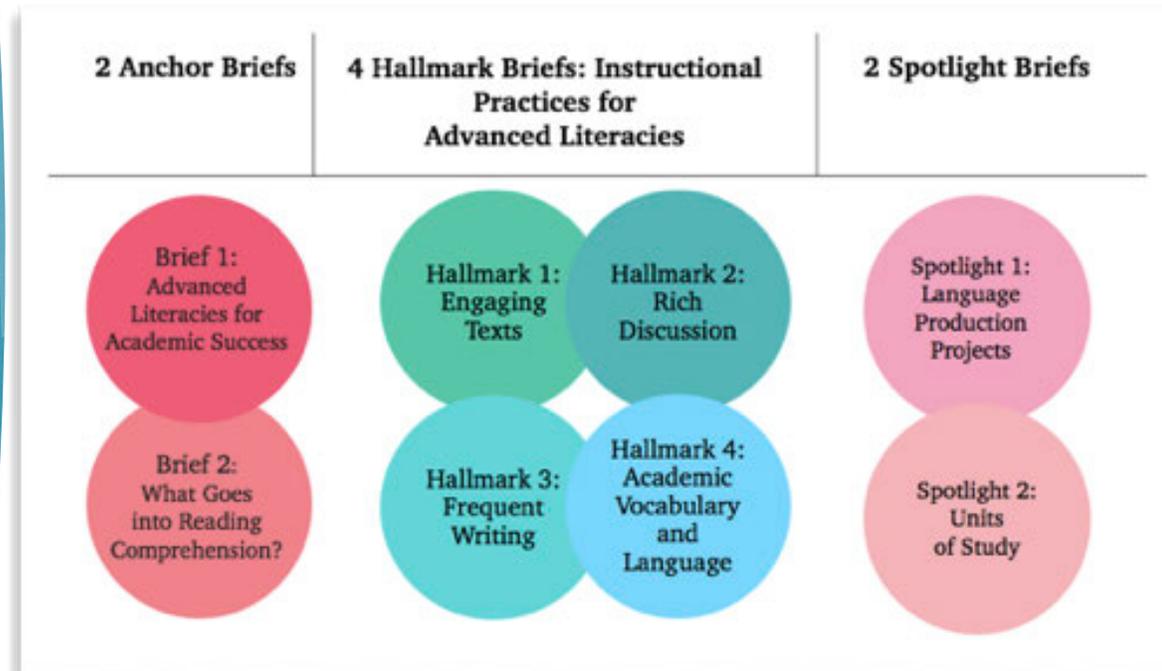
- ▶ Team-based, project-based approaches
- ▶ Emphasis on building up conceptual reasoning skills and background knowledge across subject areas
- ▶ Emphasis on oral and written communications meant to convey knowledge and reasoning to others
- ▶ Emphasis on solving unstructured problems
 - ▶ i.e., several potential solutions, weighing trade-offs against priorities to arrive at “best” solution

Summary: Today's Literacy Context

1. The school-age population is increasingly linguistically, culturally, and economically diverse.
2. What counts as “literate” today is on the rise.
 - ▶ Unlike past decades, reading and writing have become prerequisites for participation in nearly every aspect of day-to-day, 21st-century life.
3. The design of literacy instruction today has not kept pace with this shift from the need for basic to advanced literacy.
4. A more systems-level, strategic approach is needed.

A Primer on Reading Comprehension

Brief 2: What Goes into Effective Reading Comprehension?



Passage Analysis

Shark Facts: A 3rd Grade Text

There are almost 400 different kinds of sharks. Each kind of shark looks different, has a unique diet, and behaves differently. There are sharks in all four oceans of the world. Some sharks are longer than a school bus, while others are so small they can live in fish tanks. Sharks come in all kinds of colors. Most of the time, their skin color helps them blend in with their surroundings. But, some sharks that live in the deepest part of the ocean actually have parts that glow in the dark. Most sharks live in salt water, but some can live in fresh water. All sharks are unique, or have different qualities that make them so special.

Passage Analysis

Code-based skills

3 sounds, 1 word:
/sh/ /ar/ /k/

Spelling pattern:
there vs. their

~100 words correct per minute
(grade 3)

There are almost 400 different kinds of sharks. Each kind of shark looks different, has a unique diet, and behaves differently. There are sharks in all four oceans of the world. Some sharks are longer than a school bus, while others are so small they can live in fish tanks. Sharks come in all kinds of colors. Most of the time, their skin color helps them blend in with their surroundings. But, some sharks that live in the deepest part of the ocean actually have parts that glow in the dark. Most sharks live in salt water, but some can live in fresh water. All sharks are unique, or have different qualities that make them so special.

Meaning-based Skills

Cognitive strategies

Vocabulary

Relevant background
knowledge

Understanding of language

Interest and motivation

Code-Based and Meaning-Based Skills: A Critical Distinction



Spotlight: Second Grade Classroom

- ▶ Struggles because of underdeveloped word reading skills (i.e., code-based skills); she reads each word slowly and laboriously.



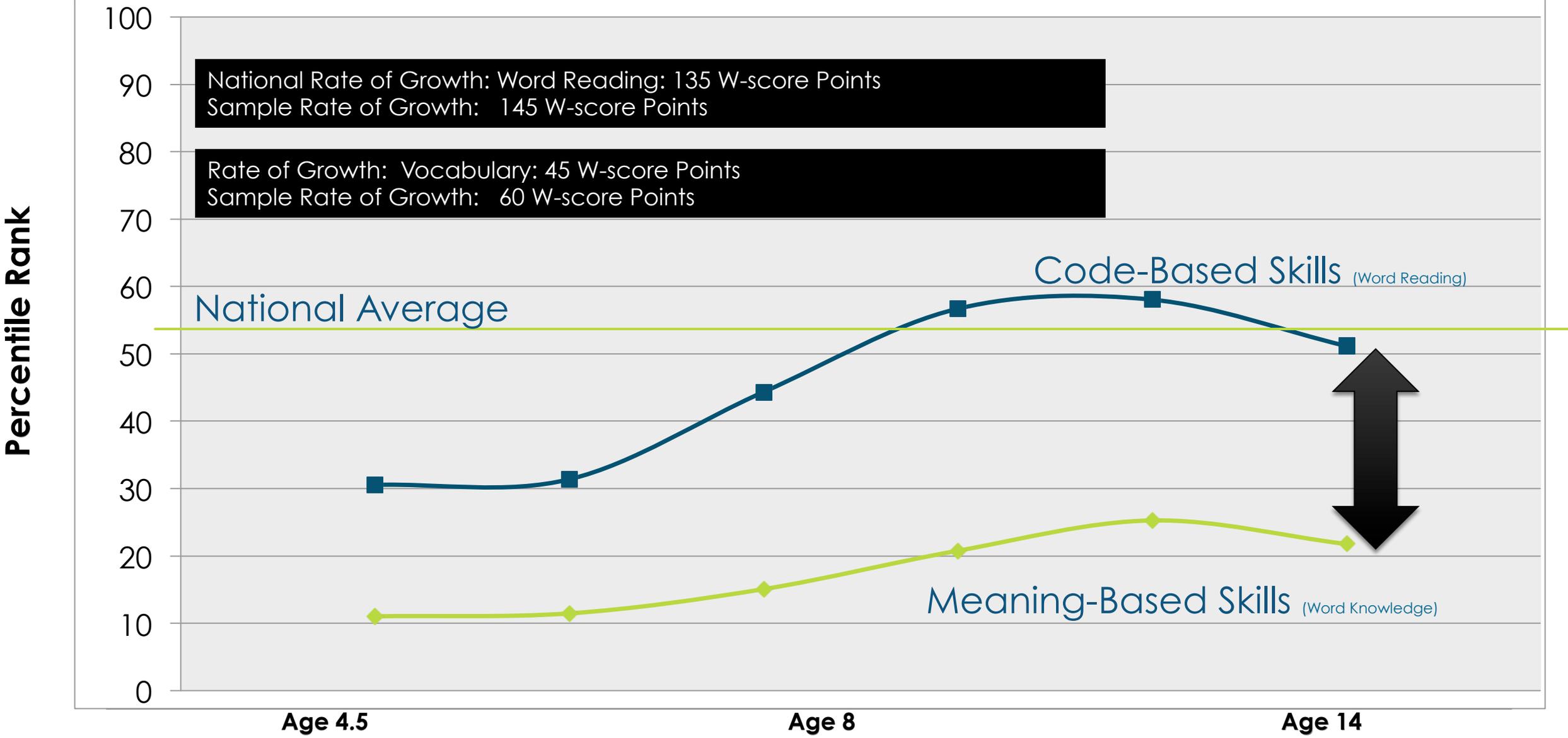
"The tr-a-ai-n is low to the g-rou-nd... The train is low to the ground."

- ▶ Struggles because of underdeveloped vocabulary knowledge as it relates to the passage (i.e., meaning-based skills); he pauses as he tries to understand the text despite the unfamiliar words.

"These... trains provided... the first passenger service."



AN EMERGING PROFILE: THE CODE-MEANING GAP



Code-Based and Meaning-Based Skills: A Critical Distinction

	Code	Meaning
Developmental Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically mastered by 3rd grade• Constrained, i.e., mastery-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops from infancy through adulthood• Unconstrained, i.e., not mastered
Instructional Implications	Highly susceptible to instruction in relatively brief period of time	Requires sustained instruction, beginning in early childhood through adolescence



Advanced Literacies for Academic Success

Advanced Literacies for Academic Success

- ▶ The skills and competencies that enable communication in increasingly diverse ways and promote the understanding and use of text for a variety of purposes

COMMUNICATE

Communicate (orally and in writing) in increasingly diverse ways and with increasingly diverse audiences.

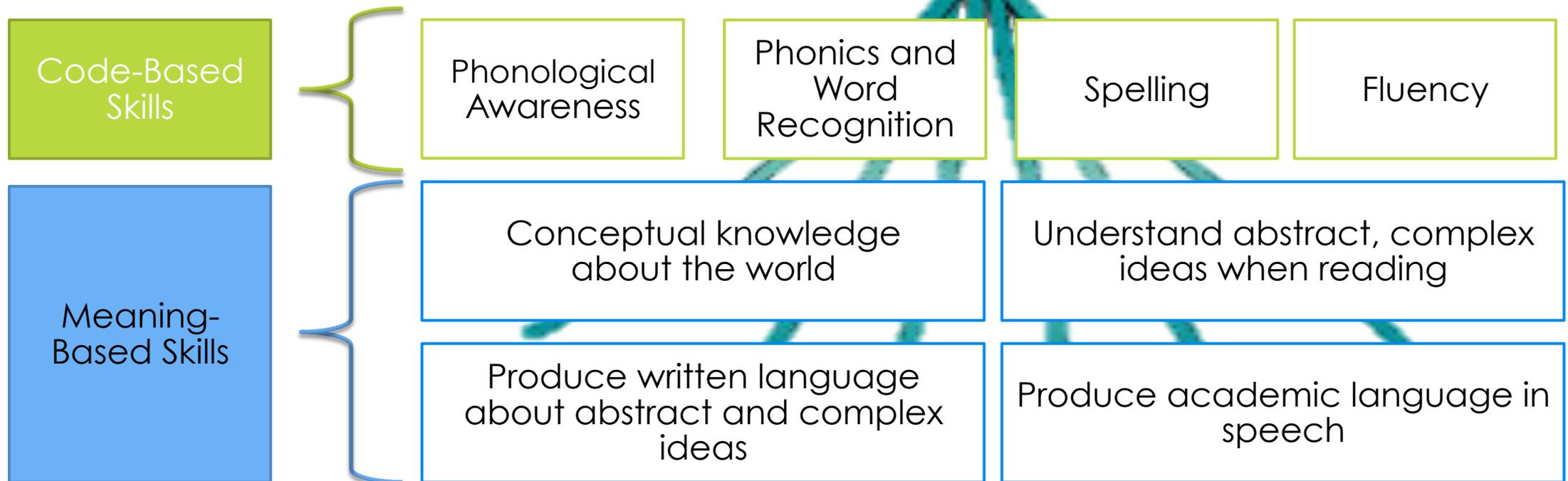
UNDERSTAND

Understand and use print for a variety of purposes.

ACCESS

Access and participate in academic, civic, and professional communities, where knowledge is shared and generated.

Code-Based and Meaning-Based Skills: A Critical Distinction



What does advanced literacy instruction look like across the school years?

Vocabulary,
Meta-Linguistic
Awareness,
Cross-Linguistic
Facility

Prekindergartener Adriana takes a bite of her apple. "This is scrumptious!" she says, demonstrating her recall of a vocabulary word that appeared in today's read aloud. She then exclaims that, "scrumptious" is the same as, 'deliciosa' in Spanish and like 'yummy.'" She then engages in an extended conversation with her teacher about when, why, and with whom she might use each descriptor.



3rd grader Ana and her peers discuss their hypotheses about whether an object will float or sink. Ana demonstrates her awareness of the language used in academic settings to explain thinking by saying, 'I agree with Sean, but think that...'. Her teacher, Mr. Flores, has taught these language structures and emphasized active listening to support his 3rd graders to engage in collaborative talk.



Academic
Vocabulary
in the Context of
Conceptual
Reasoning

What does advanced literacy instruction look like across the school years?

Reading Multiple Sources, Written Argumentation



8th grader Roscoe reads a newspaper article on the topic of immigration, as well as a historical account of immigration to the New York region. He uses information gleaned from both texts to write an argumentative essay.



12th grader Sami prepares for a class debate on whether funding should be allocated to support medical research that might decrease maternal and infant deaths internationally.

By reading a series of articles, watching YouTube videos, and interviewing a doctor participating in Doctors Without Borders, Sami produces a series of arguments to use when debating her peers. After the debate, she writes a position paper on the topic, which is shared with others.

Conducting Research, Preparing for a Debate, Technical Writing

Fostering Advanced Literacies in Today's Classrooms

HOW CAN WE PROVIDE ALL
LEARNERS WITH ENHANCED
OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD ORAL
AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE SKILLS
AND DEEPEN THEIR
KNOWLEDGE OF ABSTRACT
CONCEPTS AND IDEAS?

text- and discussion-based
strategies

Outdated Guiding Principles for Promoting Literacy

- ▶ Students learning academic English at school represent a small subpopulation of learners.
- ▶ **Reality:** The school-age population is linguistically diverse. There are 400+ native languages in the U.S., and by 2030, 40% of the school-age population will speak a language other than English at home.
- ▶ The strengths and needs of English learners and their classmates are distinct and necessarily demand different approaches.
- ▶ **Reality:** In many classrooms, the literacy strengths and needs of English learners and their English-only peers are more similar than they are different. Learning academic English, oral and written, should be an instructional priority for all.

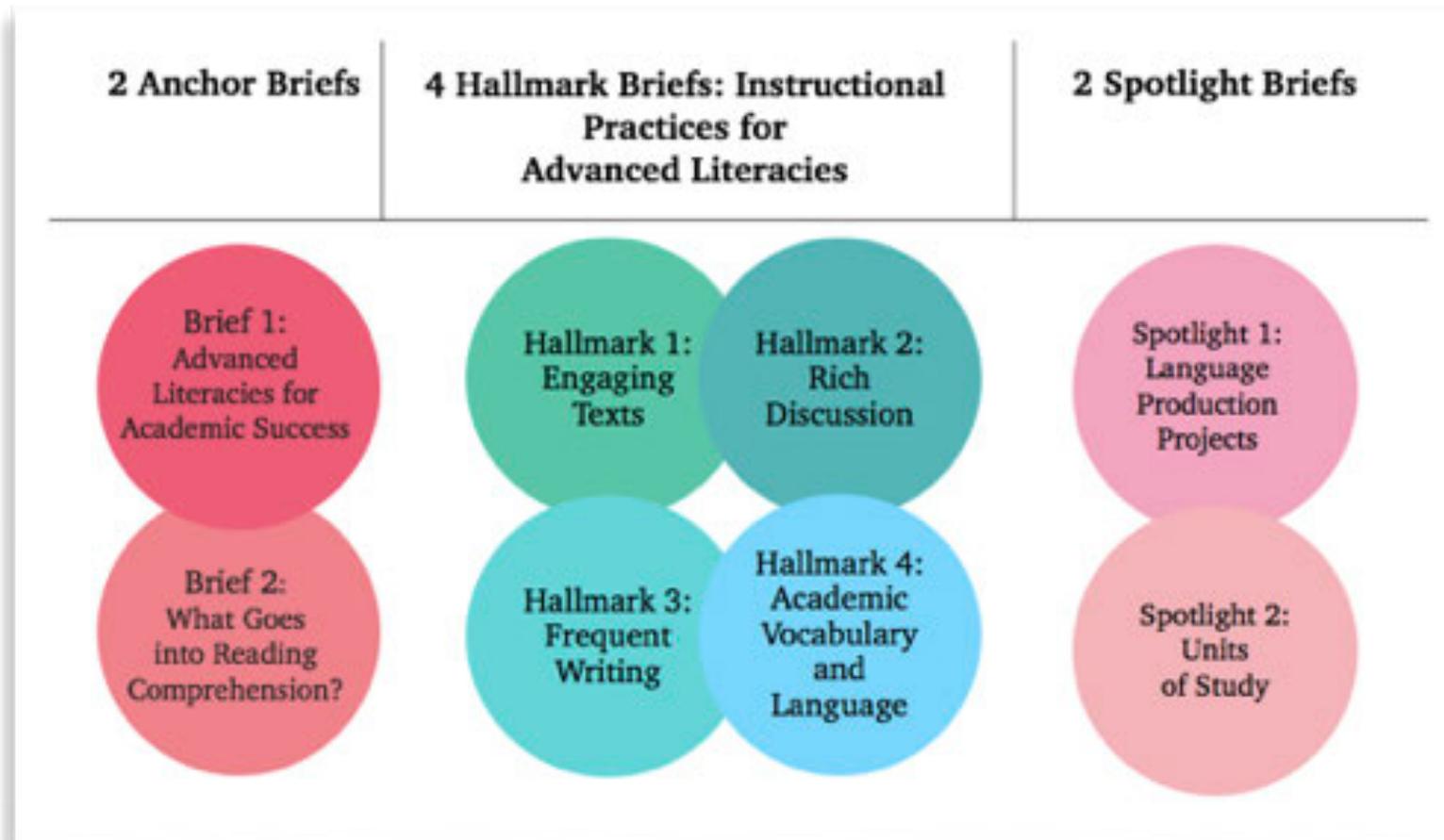
Outdated Guiding Principles for Promoting Literacy

- ▶ The instructional core is preparing the majority of students to engage in advanced literacy tasks.
- ▶ Those who struggle need supplementary intervention.
- ▶ **Reality:** In many settings, the instructional core needs to be updated to match today's literacy demands.
- ▶ The instructional core, which refers to the day-to-day instruction that all students receive, is where our students spend the majority of the school day *and* where our efforts to improve students' advanced literacies can have the most impact.

Context for Today's Session

- ▶ Developing the advanced literacy skills needed for academic and personal success requires an instructional experience that cultivates knowledge and builds academic language
 - ▶ from early childhood through adolescence
- ▶ Meeting today's demands for what counts as 'literate' requires a new approach to instructional and instruction.

Four Hallmarks of Advanced Literacies



How do we foster advanced literacies in today's classrooms?

Hallmark 1: Work with engaging texts that feature big ideas and rich content

Hallmark 2: Talk/discuss to build both conversational and academic language and knowledge

Supported by school-wide protocols

Hallmark 3: Write to build language and knowledge

Hallmark 4: Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words and academic language structures to build breadth and depth of knowledge

Hallmark 1 of Advanced Literacies

Instruction: Engaging, Content-Rich Texts

Traditional Instructional Practices

Often texts used with strugglers are extremely challenging because they are at or above grade-level OR are below grade-level, offering little engaging content and compromising learning activities.

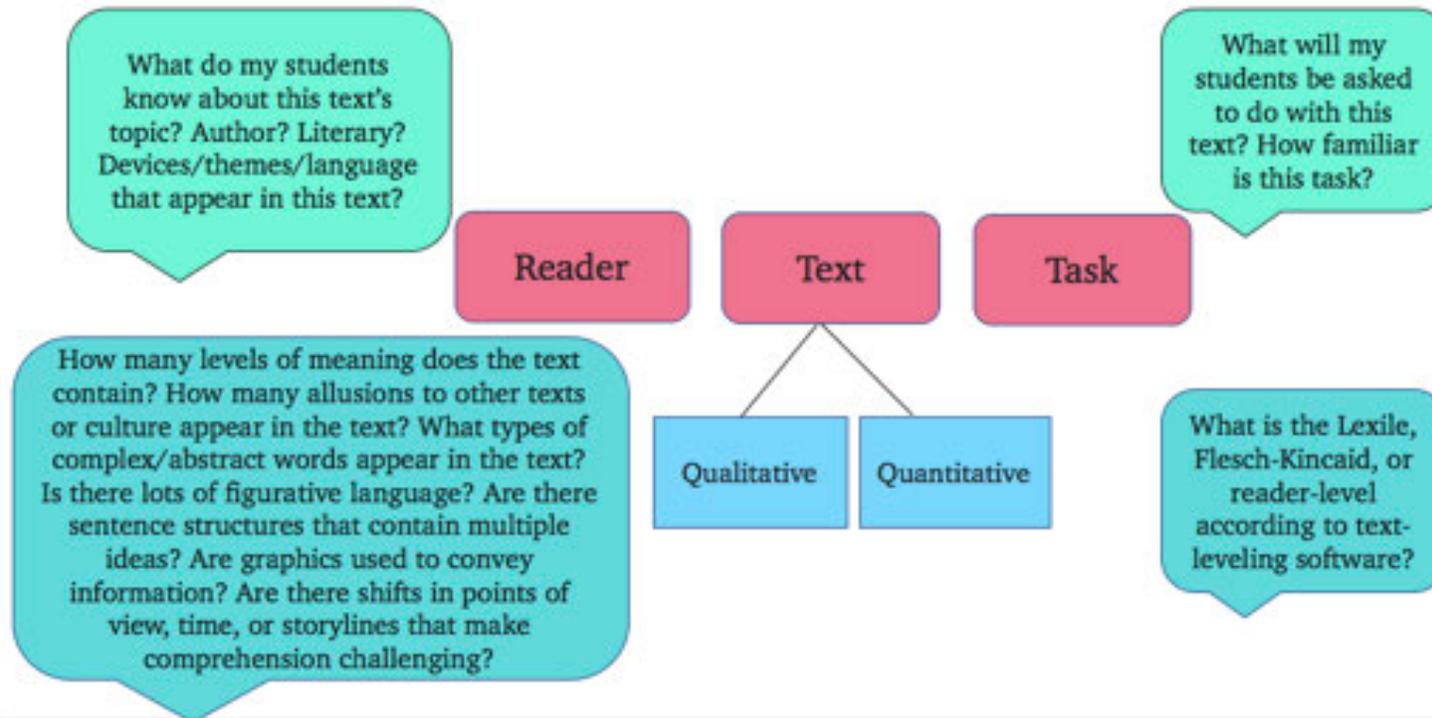
21st-Century Instructional Practices

Multiple texts at different levels are read in order to support them to develop a rich understanding of a topic and to develop their reading comprehension skills.

Hallmark 1 of Advanced Literacies

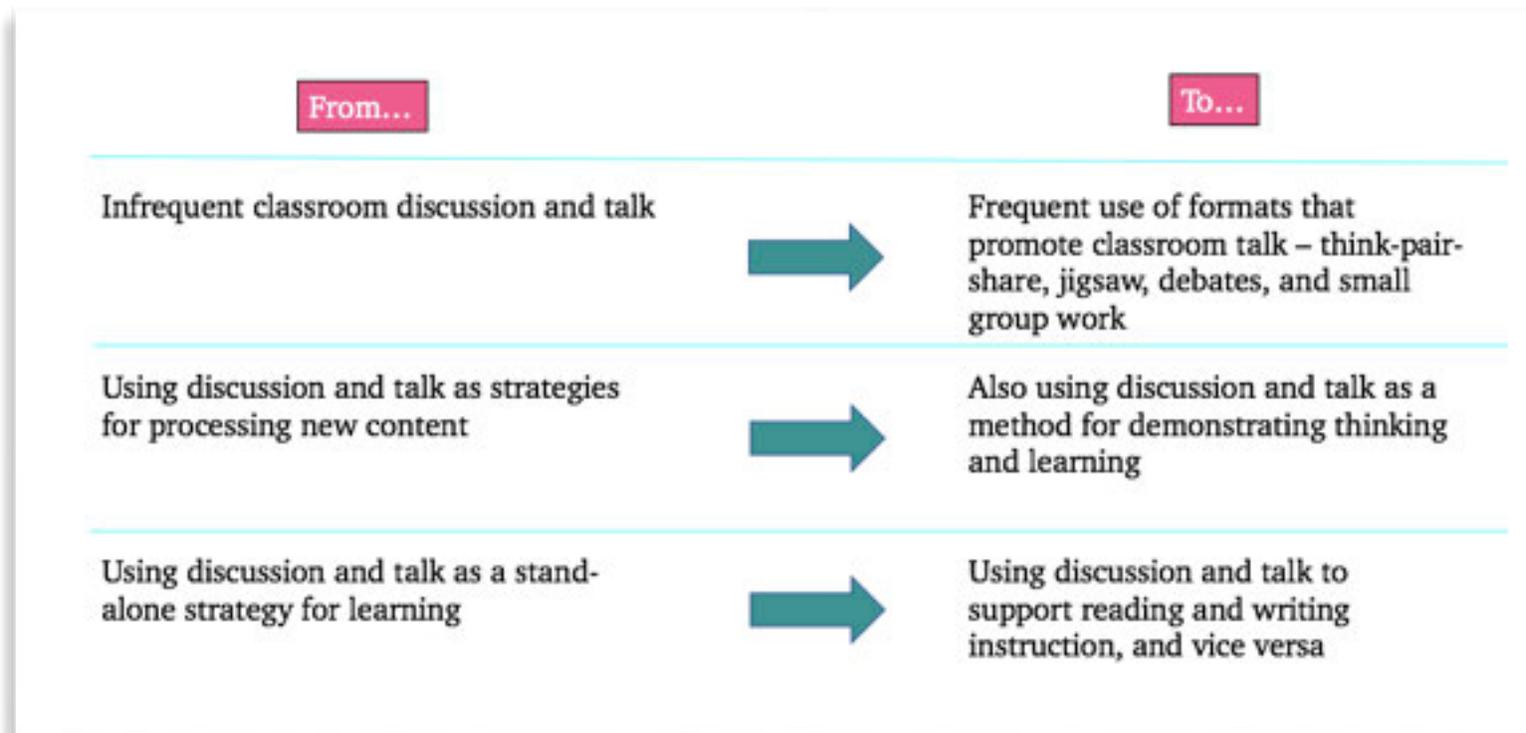
Instruction: Engaging, Content-Rich Texts

How to estimate a text's complexity for a reader



Hallmark 2 of Advanced Literacies Instruction: Classroom Discussion

- ▶ **Shifting how we think about classroom instruction:**



Hallmark 3 of Advanced Literacies

Instruction: Building Written Language

Traditional Instructional Practices

Many writing assignments in today's schools are actually just brief writing "exercises" — on-demand writing (putting pencil to paper in a hurry), often in response to a prompt, and most often drawing on personal experience and opinion.

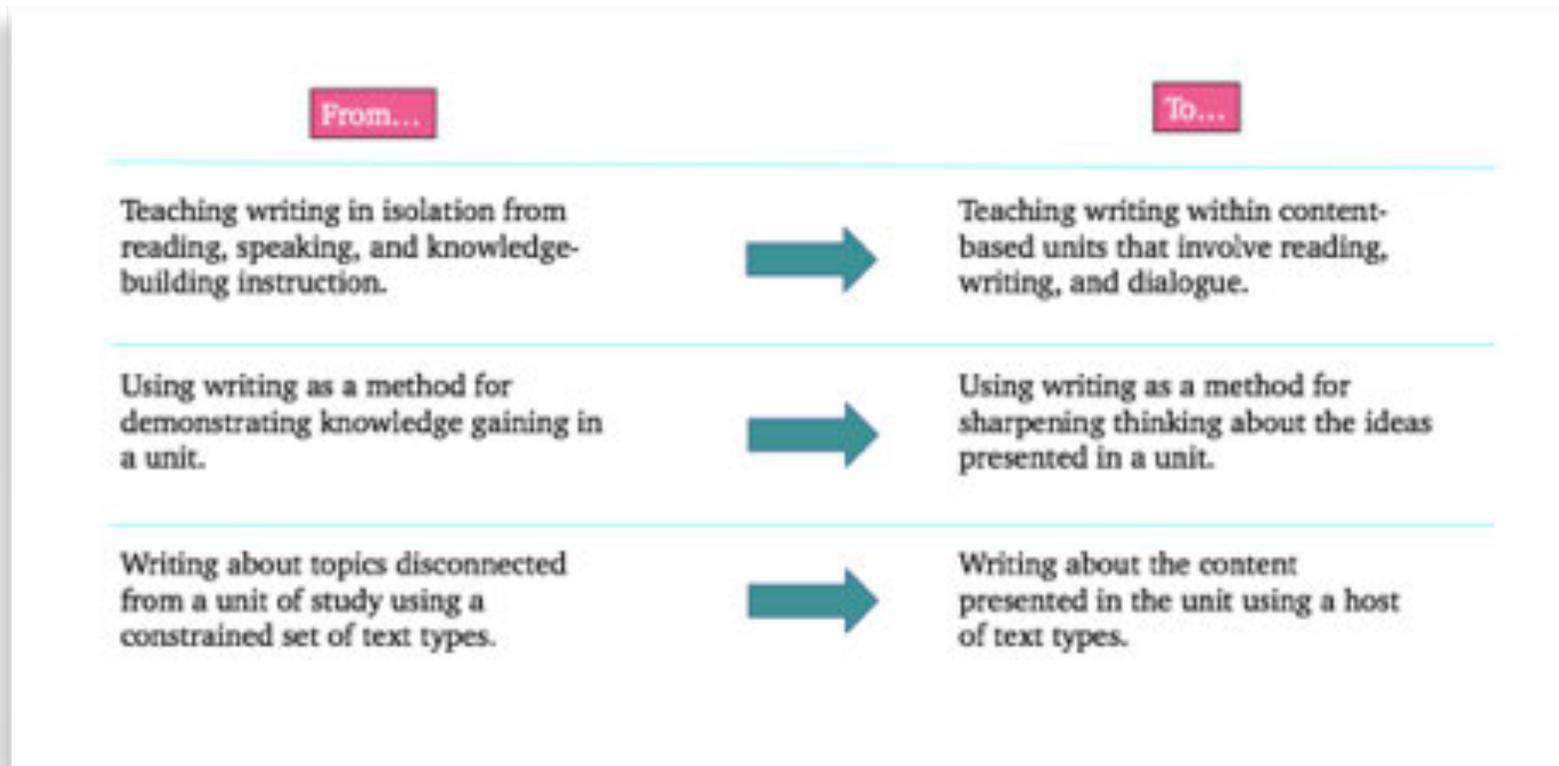
- ▶ For writing to promote students' language and cognitive skills, students need a structured, content-based approach to all writing assignments and tasks, e.g. writing prompts, text questions, or narratives.

21st-Century Instructional Practices

- ▶ Students need to have studied the material to be processed and written about.
- ▶ They also need supports and scaffolds to plan, discuss, and organize their ideas and develop an argument.

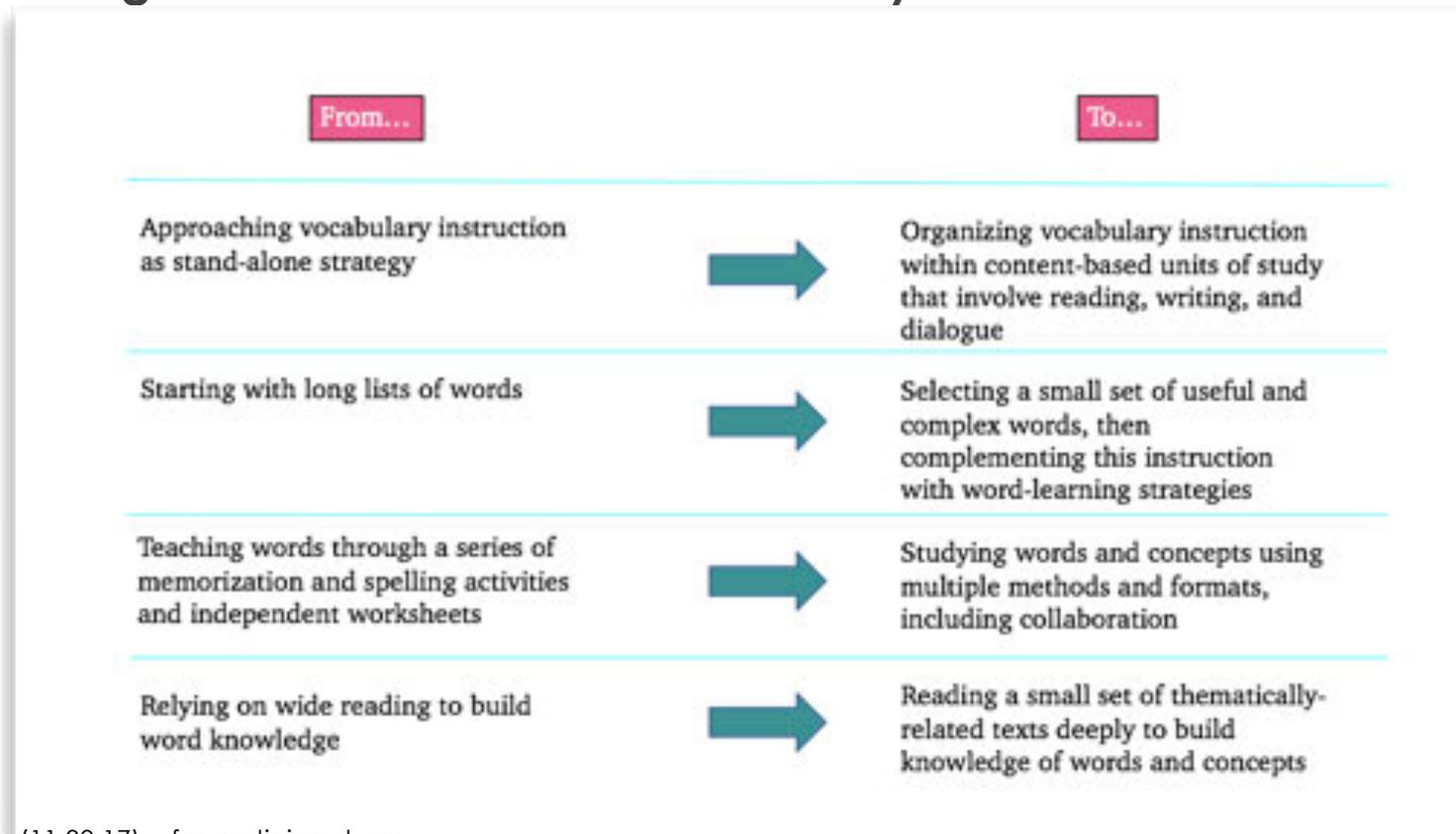
Hallmark 3 of Advanced Literacies Instruction: Building Written Language

► Shifting How We Think About Writing Instruction:



Hallmark 4 of Advanced Literacies Instruction: Academic Vocabulary and Language

► Shifting How We Think About Vocabulary Instruction:



Spotlight on Language Production Projects

**APPLY ADVANCED LITERACY
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

**CONSOLIDATE CONTENT
KNOWLEDGE**

**FOSTER ACADEMIC
MOTIVATION**

Spotlight on Language Production Projects

► Questions to Ask When Designing Language Production Projects

What is the topic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we better coexist with wildlife?
What compelling issue will students focus on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we be good neighbors to animals, supporting their survival in and around our community?
What research will they need to undertake?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document dangers that animals face every day (e.g. snowy owls mistake the low and flat land around the nearby airport for the Arctic tundra; migrating birds that collide with illuminated windows of high-rise buildings; and salamanders and frogs that migrate to vernal pools, i.e. seasonal ponds, to breed, only to find that these often flooded areas are occupied by a housing development.)
What product will they generate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create pamphlets for their state's Audubon Society, focused on how to coexist with local wildlife. This organization posts "Quick Guides" on their website, focused on advocating for particular species. Her students will add to the organization's library of Quick Guides, generating their own pamphlets that describe local species (including their adaptations), the dangers these species face, and the strategies to support their survival.

Spotlight on Instructional Units of Study

- ▶ Instructional units of study as a key mechanism for creating the conditions for knowledge-building literacy instruction

DEPTH OF LEARNING

Place a concept, word, or theme at the center to deepen understanding.

LEARNING AS A PROCESS

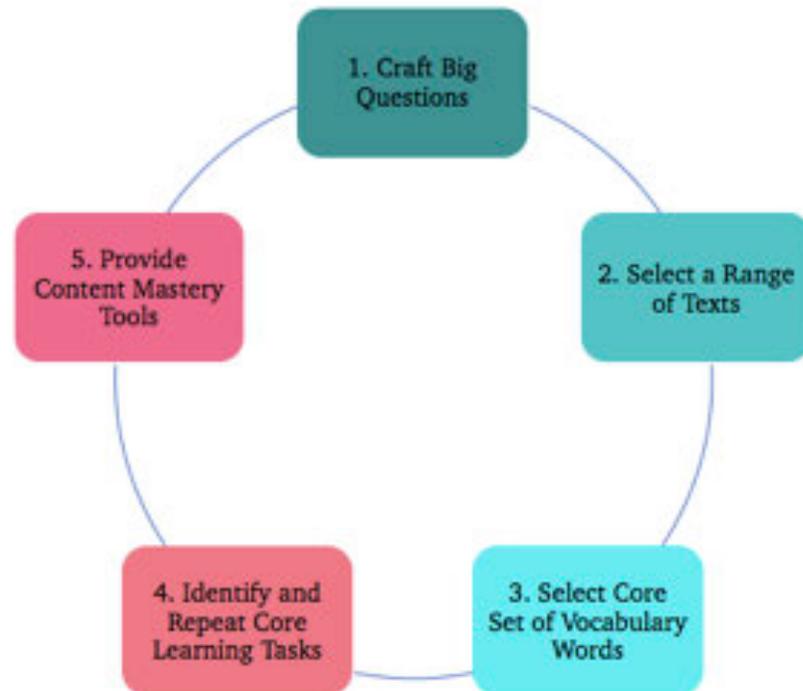
Facilitate learning such that students can grapple with ideas and learn from mistakes.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Support meaningful interactions among teachers and peers.

Spotlight on Instructional Units of Study

► Organizing Lessons within a Knowledge-Building Cycle



What happens in schools that effectively implement the hallmarks?

- ▶ growth in the language and literacy skills of all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs)
- ▶ common set of instructional practices
- ▶ shared language for discussing instruction amongst educators and school leaders.
- ▶ similar instructional approaches and strategies to achieve goals
- ▶ lessons routinely feature rich texts, discussions, writing and instruction in high-utility vocabulary

Summary: Today's Literacy Context

1. The school-age population is increasingly linguistically, culturally, and economically diverse.
2. What counts as “literate” today is on the rise.
 - ▶ Unlike past decades, reading and writing have become prerequisites for participation in nearly every aspect of day-to-day, 21st-century life.
3. The design of literacy instruction today has not kept pace with this shift from the need for basic to advanced literacy.
4. A more systems-level, strategic approach is needed.

Q&A

Q&A Summary: Reform Design Considerations

- ▶ Merging ELA and Science/Socials
 - ▶ Bring the rich content into the literacy block
 - ▶ e.g., Panorama program by National Geographic
- ▶ Doing less intervention, but more intensively and higher-quality for those who need it, esp. those with code-based difficulties
 - ▶ Intervention needs to be high-dose and strong fidelity of implementation to be effective
 - ▶ Meaning-based weaknesses mostly demand a more robust classroom learning environment vis-à-vis language- and knowledge-building, starting with text
- ▶ If the reader-writer workshop is the starting place, the challenge is to infuse into it content-based units of study (not genre-based—need to build knowledge on a topic)

Thank You

