

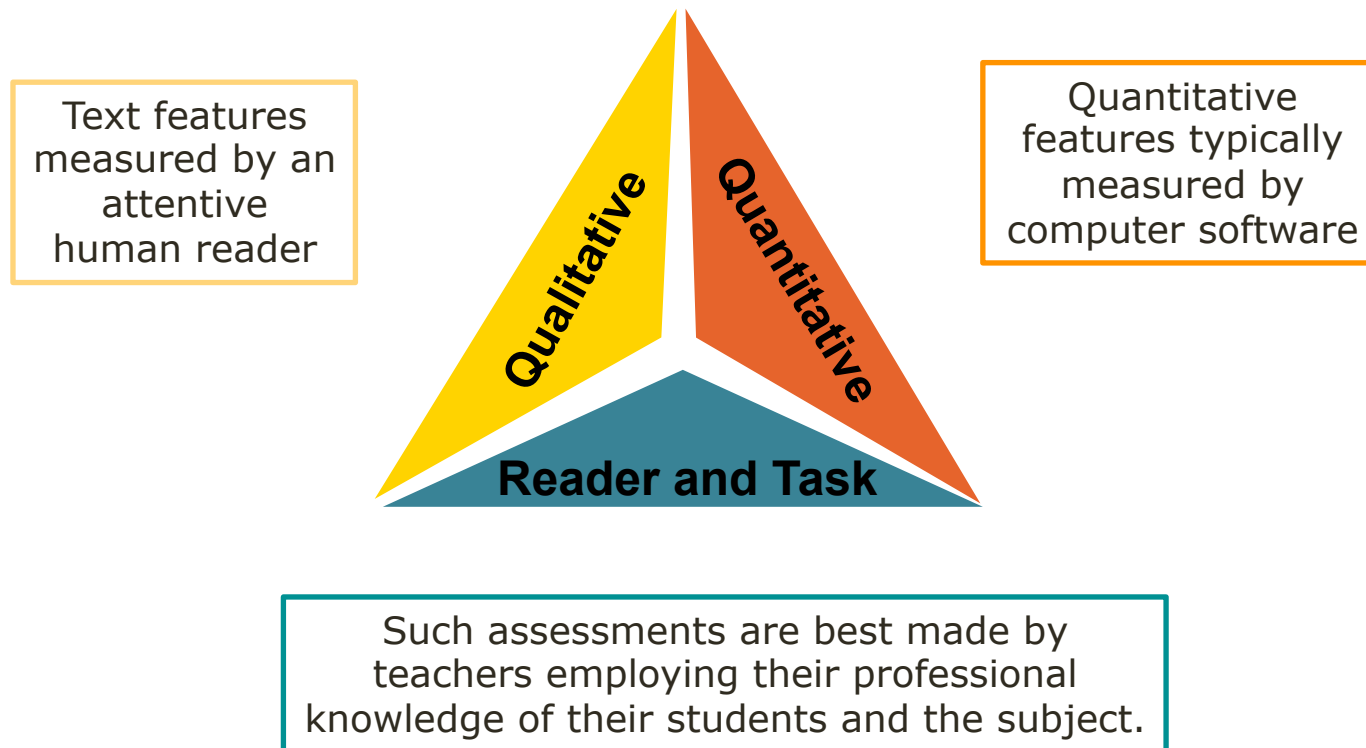
Growing Students' Capacity with Complex Text: Information, Exposure, Engagement

Elfrieda H. Hiebert,
TextProject &
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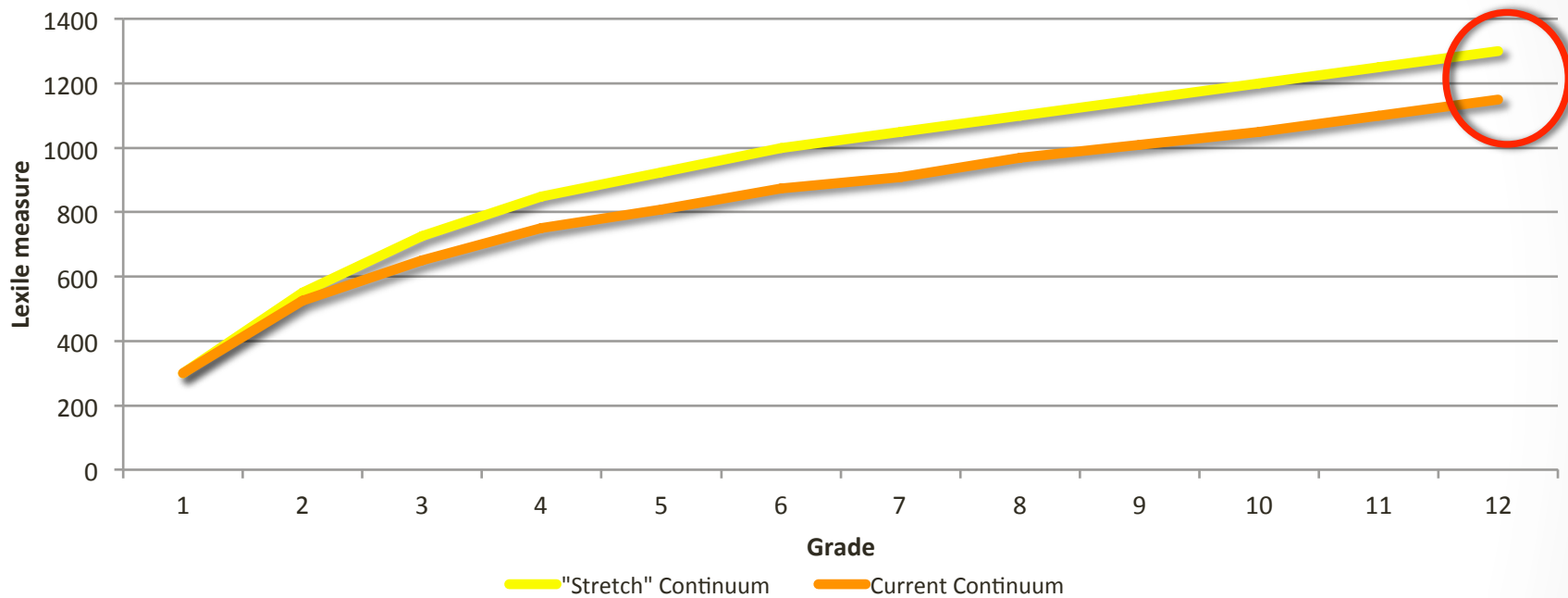
Standard #10 of the Common Core State Standards: English/Language Arts

- By the time they complete high school, students must be able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers.

Measuring Text Complexity



Discrepancy in High School & College Texts (2010)



Sourced from:

SAT I, ACT, AP

Military

Citizenship

Workplace

Community College

Online Reference Articles

Online Worldwide Newspapers

University

Graduate Record Exam

Stenner, A. J., Koons, H., & Swartz, C. W. (2010). *Text complexity and developing expertise in reading*. Chapel Hill, NC: MetaMetrics, Inc.

More information on Quantitative Measures

- Hiebert, E.H. (2012). *Readability and the Common Core's Staircase of Text complexity*, *Text Matters*, 1(4) <http://textproject.org/professional-development/text-matters/readability-and-the-common-core-staircase-of-text-complexity/>
- Archived webinar: Elfrieda H. Hiebert on *Text Complexity and the Common Core: Moving into action with confidence* <http://textproject.org/professional-development/webinars/text-complexity-and-the-common-core-moving-into-action-with-confidence-3/>
- March 26, 2013: Elfrieda H. Hiebert's webinar on *Quantitative measurement of text complexity* <http://textproject.org/events/common-core-state-standards-webinar-series/quantitative-measurement-of-text-complexity/>; registration opens on March 12, 2013)



Readability and the Common Core's Staircase of Text Complexity

Elfrieda H. Hiebert
Text Project & University of California, Santa Cruz

For a long time, educators have asked questions about what makes a text complex. Why is it harder for students to read some books than others? How are we to help students select texts that will challenge them without frustrating them? What type of texts will increase their reading achievement most effectively?



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By adding text complexity as a dimension of literacy, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS/ELA; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) bring these questions to the fore. To establish text complexity, the standards propose a three-pronged system:

1. qualitative analyses of features such as levels of meaning (e.g., readers need to make inferences to understand a character's motive);
2. reader-task variables such as readers' background knowledge of a text's topic and ways in which teachers and situations influence readers' interactions with a text (e.g., an audio of a book or the level of teacher guidance); and
3. quantitative indices such as information on the number of infrequent words and length of sentences (e.g., word indexes, sentence-length formulas, or automatic readability programs).

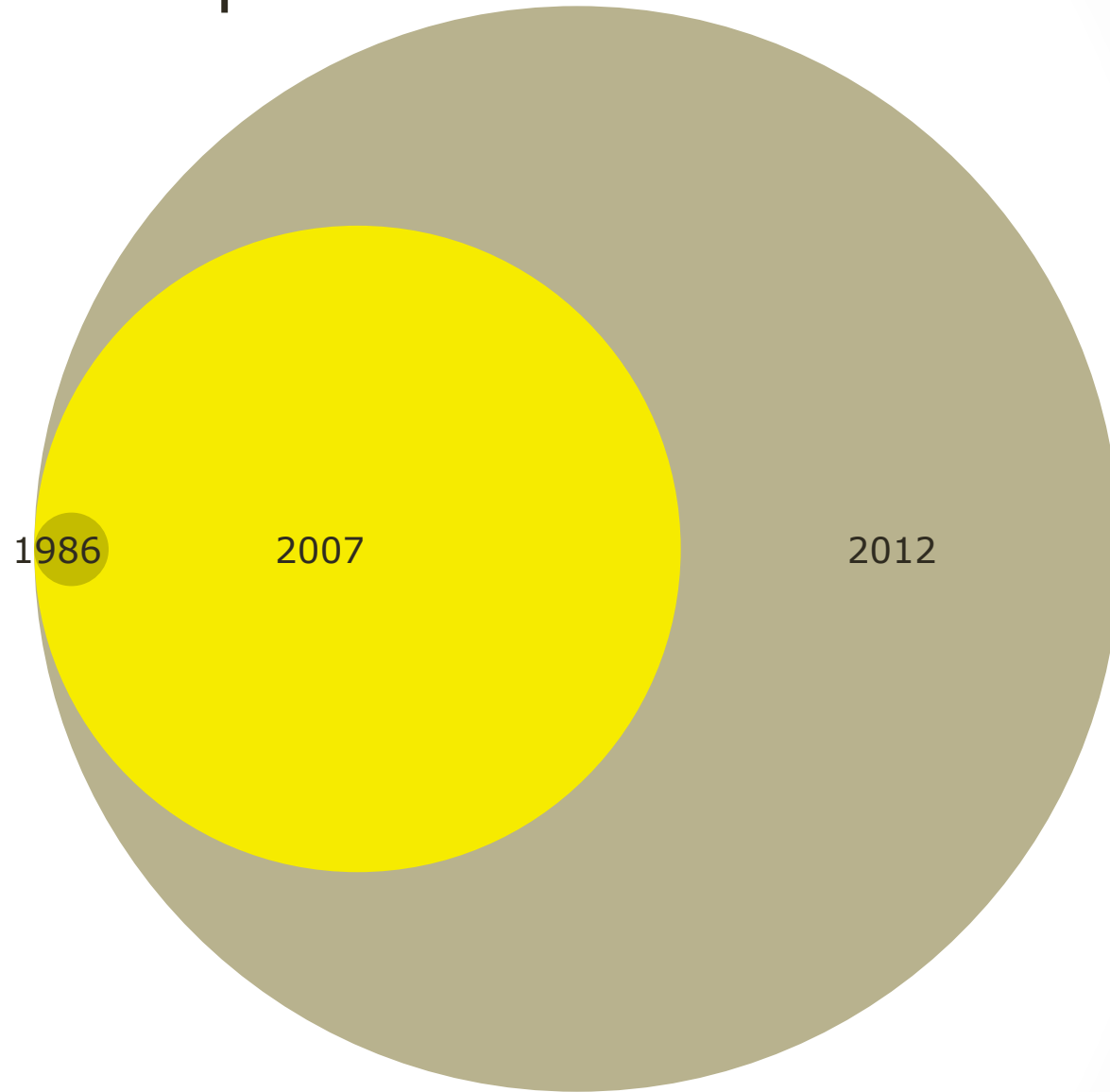
Focus of Today's Session

Text complexity and:

- Information
- Exposure
- Engagement

I. Information and Text Complexity

Information explosion



How are Concepts Communicated? Through Vocabulary

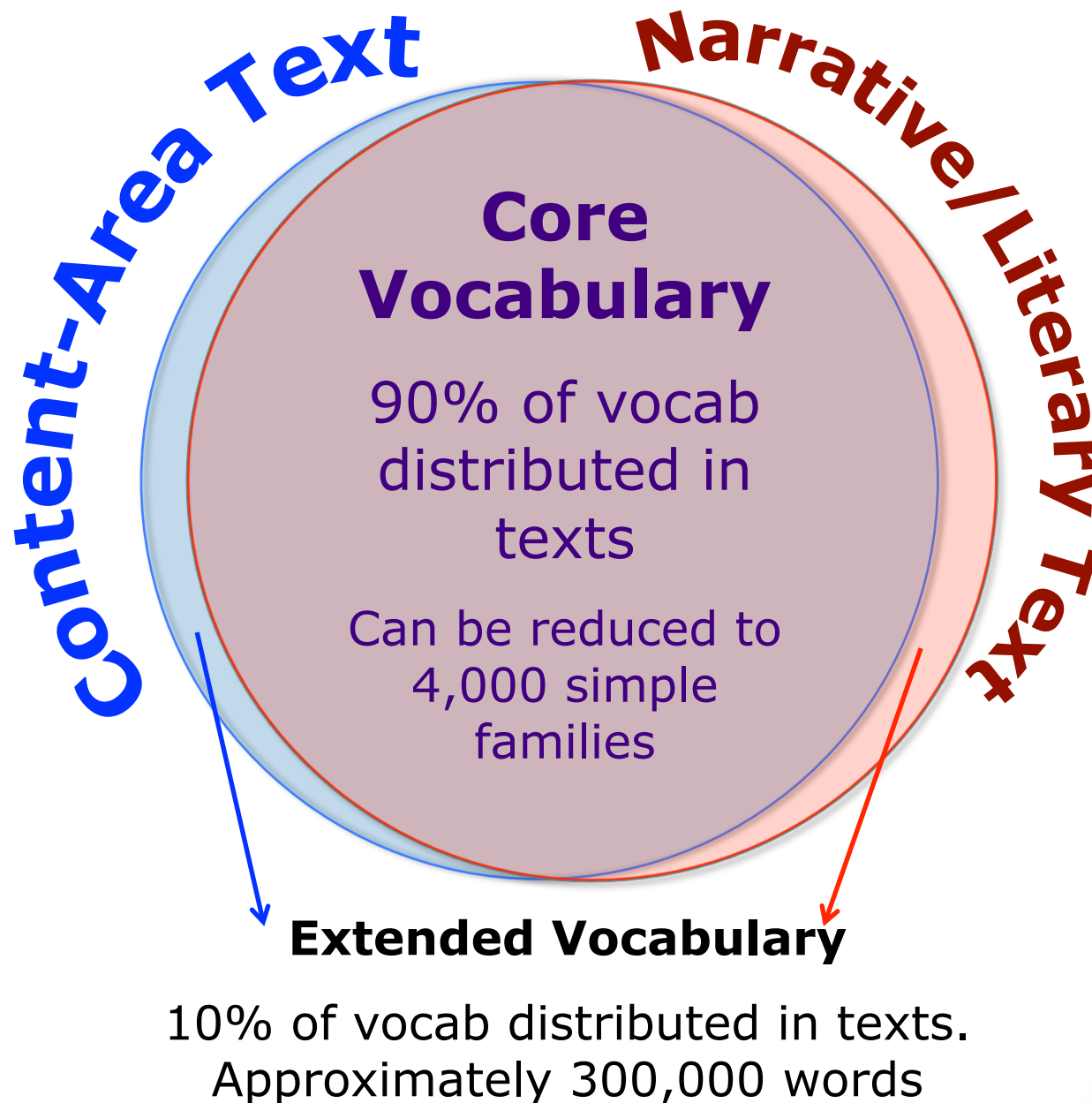
- Vocabulary is the measure that consistently predicts students' comprehension performance (Current quantitative text difficulty system(s) emphasize syntax)
- Further: evidence is strong that **vocabulary is amenable to instruction**. Syntax awareness can be improved through sentence combining/writing exercises and through extensive reading but **syntax knowledge in reading is much more difficult to influence directly through instruction** (Davis, 1944, 1968; Guo, Roehrig, & Williams, 2011; Pasquarella, Gottardo, & Grant, 2012)

Reading is where vocabularies and concepts are extended & developed

Popular Magazines	<i>Rare Words per 1,000</i> 65.7
Children's Books	30.9
Popular adult shows	22.7
College graduates to friends	17.3

(from Hayes & Ahrens, 1988)

90-10 Vocabulary Distribution in Texts



Narrative/Literary Text

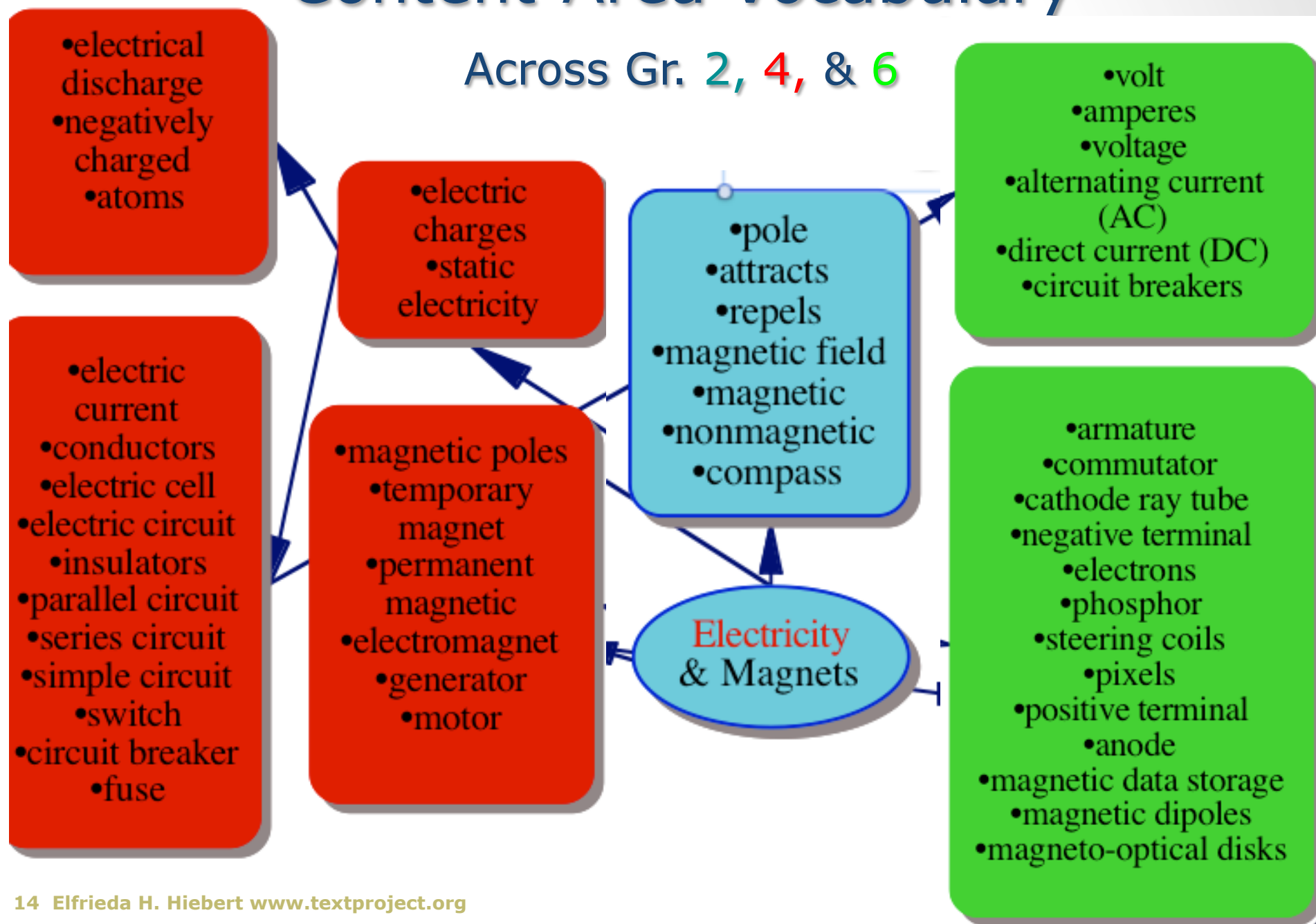
Ramona went to her room and looked at her table, which the family called Ramona's studio, because it was a clutter of crayons, different kinds of paper, bits of yarn, and odds and ends that Ramona used for amusing herself. Then Ramona thought a moment, and suddenly, filled with inspiration, she went to work.

Content-Area (Informational) Text

Sound is made when matter vibrates. To vibrate means to move quickly back and forth. You can feel vibrations if you touch a bell that is ringing or a radio that is playing. The sounds you hear may be different, but they are all alike in one way. All sounds are made by vibrating matter.

Content-Area Vocabulary

Across Gr. 2, 4, & 6



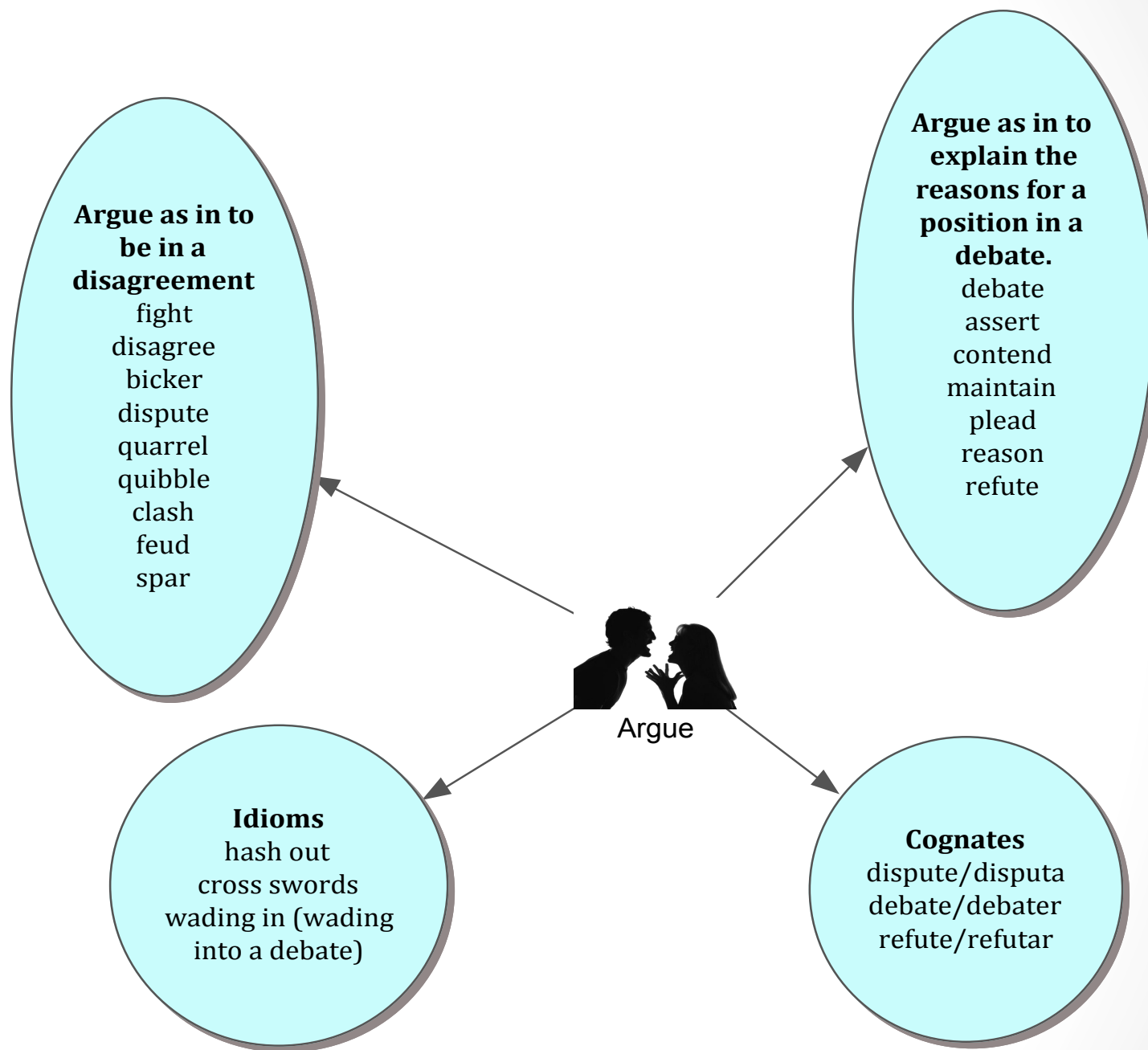
Teaching Narrative/Literary Words

Story Word	Examples of Words in Cluster (Beyond Story)
amazed	enchanted enthralled spellbound captivated transfixed
fascinated	
marveled	
baffled	confused mystified perplexed confounded
bewildered	
stumped	

Instruction for Literary Words:

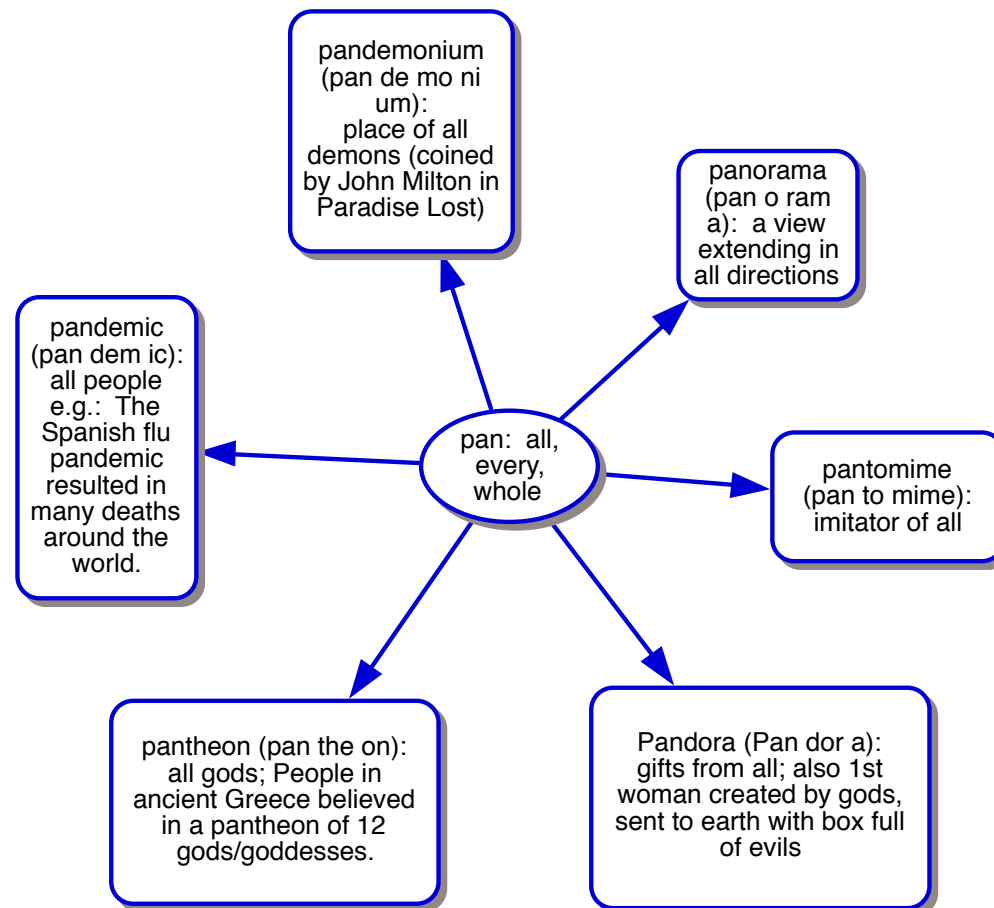
1. Teach Prolific Groups

Communication/ Internal Processes (verbs)	Emotions (adjectives)	Movement (verbs)
think	glad	go
argue	sad	send
observe	mad	start
guess	selfish	stop
say	fear	stay



Instruction for Literary Words:

2. Morphological Connections



32 lessons
available for
free download



E4-01

Listen

Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events

An everyday event in classrooms revolves around listening—listening to peers, teachers, CDs, DVDs, announcements on the school sound system, and so on. Listening is an integral part of learning.

Listen is typically used as a verb. For example, teachers may ask students to listen carefully to a guest speaker. In this instance, **listen** is used as “to hear attentively.” Another use of the word **listen** can be exemplified by a student complaining to a friend or teacher that someone isn’t listening to what is being said. In this instance, **listen** is used to describe the act of paying attention. This second use of **listen** is as a command as when someone says, “Listen! It’s important to hear the announcement.”

Although **listen** is commonly used as a verb, **listen** can also be used as a noun. A person can ask that someone give an idea or a song a listen. In this case, **listen** is used to describe trying something out by listening to it.

Follow-Ups

- How is listening different from hearing?
- How might vigilant listening differ from observant listening? Listening circumspectly and listening respectfully?
- What are some things we can do to help others listen to our ideas?

The Spanish Connection

Listen comes from an Old English word that was spoken in the northern region of the British Isles—*lysna*. The Spanish word that means **to listen** is *escuchar*. *Lysna* and *escuchar* are not cognates. None of the synonyms for **listen** have Spanish cognates.

Word Changes

- The idiom “lend me your ears” comes from Shakespeare’s *JULIUS CAESAR*. The meaning of the idiom is to ask people to listen to what is about to be said. The idea is that the speaker wants the listener’s undivided attention and is asking for the listener’s metaphorical ears.



Summary: Information:

- Reading is about gaining information which is why vocabulary is the best predictor of comprehension.
- Teaching literary words is especially important, attending to clusters of semantic groups and morphological families.

II. Exposure & Text Complexity

Recent evidence from Reading 1st Classrooms

Length of Instructional Blocks	Time with eyes on text
90-minute	17.57
100-minute	16.25
120-minute	19.25
Overall	18.33

Specific Instruction for a 50-minute period (Middle School)

	Day 1		
Warm-up Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Greek myths (320)•Of how the war with Troy began (370 wds)		
Focus Reading (texts of approximately 735-750 words)	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Horse has been built		

Specific Instruction for a 50-minute period (Middle School)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Warm-up Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greek myths (320) •Of how the war with Troy began (370 wds) 		
Focus Reading (texts of approximately 735-750 words)	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Horse has been built		
Follow-up Reading	Students select a book from Percy Jackson series (Riordan) or Companion Quartet (Golding), with assignment to finish book over week & “map that myth”		

Specific Instruction for a 50-minute period (Middle School)

	Day 1	Day 2	
Warm-up Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greek myths (320) •Of how the war with Troy began (370 wds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Map that myth (290 wds) •Trojan War (500 wds) 	
Focus Reading (texts of approximately 735-750 words)	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Horse has been built	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Menelaus & others leave on ship; Trojans find Horse in burned-out camp	
Follow-up Reading	Students select a book from Percy Jackson series (Riordan) or Companion Quartet (Golding), with assignment to finish book over week & “map that myth”		

Specific Instruction for a 50-minute period (Middle School)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Warm-up Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greek myths (320) •Of how the war with Troy began (370 wds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Map that myth (290 wds) •Trojan War (500 wds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homeric legend (portion): 840 wds.
Focus Reading (texts of approximately 735-750 words)	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Horse has been built	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Menelaus & others leave on ship; Trojans find Horse in burned-out camp	The Wooden Horse (from <i>Black Ships</i>): Sinon tells a tale & horse gets into City
Follow-up Reading	Students select a book from Percy Jackson series (Riordan) or Companion Quartet (Golding), with assignment to finish book over week & “map that myth”		

What 7 Minutes of Extra Reading Mean

- Kuhn & Schwanenflugel (2009):
 - Data from the seven classes most successful in increasing reading rate were compared to 7 least successful classes: students in former read 7 minutes more daily than students in latter.
- Average 3rd grader:
 - 127 words per minute x 7 minutes x 180 school days: **160,020 additional words**
 - Using Hayes & Ahren's (1988) data (31 rare/new words per 1,000): **5,000 additional words**

Teachability.com—7 minute challenge

Join Today!

TAKE THE **7** minute challenge

Teachability teamed up with Freddy Hiebert to bring you exclusive content and video on how to successfully add an additional 7 minutes of reading per day.

JOIN the discussion on how to make a difference in students' knowledge acquisition and capacity for reading text.

WATCH our exclusive video for tips on how to inspire your classroom



- Check back for updated videos
- Connect with other teachers
- Post success stories
- Ask questions

How Can Teachers Find Ways to Increase Students' Reading as Part of Instruction?

Several easy-to-implement classroom strategies can help you “find room” in your day to increase your students' reading time:

1. Expand your view of what counts as reading. Reading includes informational texts—in fact, for some kids that is what matters in reading. Further, most Americans today read magazine articles and Web sites. One Web site that has a permanent collection of solid magazine articles is [ReadWorks](#), which had 700 magazine articles—all of informational content—available as of November 2012.
2. Make learning the reason for reading. That doesn't mean the typical book report. It means allowing students to tell something about what they have learned, and why that information is interesting—or not. Involve students in creating mind maps and idea books that summarize what they've learned.
3. Always give students a purpose for reading, and follow up to ensure that they can share this knowledge. (An underlying feature of the Common Core State Standards is the ability to use text to learn.)
4. Give students choices, but don't overwhelm them. Initially, a choice between two books is sufficient for kids who haven't read a lot. One difficulty with many sustained silent reading efforts is that students who are not prolific readers do not know how to choose a book. Begin by giving students choices within well-defined parameters. For example, if you're doing a book study of James Patterson's books for middle-schoolers, allow students to choose among Patterson's books.
5. Make the outcomes of reading social. The “social” dimension of reading does not mean that students must read everything aloud or that everything must be discussed as a class. Look for ways students can share their evaluations of books (e.g., the 5-star system of Amazon and other Web sites). Use sites such as [ePals](#) to connect students with peers in other locations.
6. Offer a variety of ways to recognize students' learning and achievement. It can be low-key, in the form of conversations and discussions, or more formal, with students sharing what they have learned. It can also be more elaborate, with students participating in events. But supporting students in seeing themselves as learners and as people with knowledge gained through reading—is critical.
7. Use classroom events as occasions to develop a community of readers. For example, teachers can create a community of readers by selectively reading aloud texts that students might not otherwise know about. These events can become the source of sharing knowledge and also of language expressions (e.g., the “Wow!” of Luke's teacher

<http://textproject.org/frankly-freddy/7-ways-to-make-the-7-minute-challenge-produce-learning/>

Summary: Exposure

- Amount of reading influences students' proficiency with complex text.
- Establishing numerous opportunities to read *during* class time is critical.

III. Engagement and Text Complexity

ENGAGEMENT

- American students' engagement in school goes from 8/10 at elementary school, 6/10 at middle-school, and 4/10 at high school <http://thegallupblog.gallup.com/2013/01/the-school-cliff-student-engagement.html>
- Student engagement is influenced by the diets of school tasks. A steady diet of certain tasks lead to disengagement; a steady diet of other tasks fosters engagement.
- Even small changes in school tasks can support engagement.

Small Changes:

--Choices between two articles

OF HOW THE WAR WITH TROY BEGAN

By Alfred J. Church

ONCE upon a time there was a certain King of Sparta who had a most beautiful daughter, Helen by name. There was not a prince in Greece but wished to marry her. The King said to them: "Now you must all swear that you will be good friends with the man whom my daughter shall choose for her husband, and that if any one is wicked enough to steal her away from him, you will help him get her back." And this they did.

from A.J. Church (1907), *The Iliad for Boys and Girls*; Retrieved from: *The Baldwin Project* @mainlesson.com)

Greek myths

By Lynn Kloss

The people of ancient Greece shared stories called myths. Myths are stories that people tell to try to explain the world around them. In the ancient world, scientists had not yet discovered why certain things happened. For example, myths explained why there was lightning, how the sun rose and set, and why the ocean had waves.

to be posted: April 15, 2013 at: *FYI for Kids*, TextProject.org

Small Changes:

Homework assignments of topic-related magazine articles &/or “popular literature”



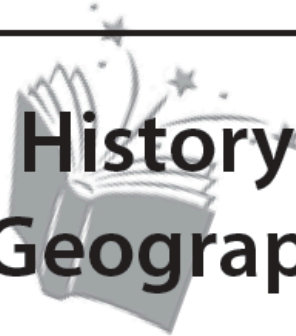
Related to a unit on Greek mythology:

- In school/public library, locate and read a book by one of the following authors (good alternatives can also be proposed to teacher):
 - Rick Riordan (*Percy Jackson & Olympians* series; *Heroes of Olympus*)
 - George O'Connor's graphic myths & legends series on Olympians (3 count as one)
 - Julia Golding's *Companion Quartet*

Moderate Changes: Developing Expertise



Funds of Information

 Stories about Heroes	Music
 Tales: Old & New	Math
Animals in the Wild	 History & Geography
How People Live	Your Choice!

Stories about heroes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joan of Arc</i> (Diane Stanley) • <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> (Rosemary L. Bray) • <i>Seven Brave Women</i> (Betsy Hearne) • <i>She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!</i> (Kathryn Lasky)
Music		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Like Music</i> (Leah Komaiko) • <i>The Philharmonic Gets Dressed</i> (Karla Kuskin) • <i>Moses Goes to a Concert</i> (Isaac Millman)
Tales: New & Old		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huckabuck Family and How They Raised Popcorn in Nebraska and Quit and Came Back</i> (Carl Sandburg) • <i>The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales</i> (Virginia Hamilton) • <i>Rapunzel</i> (Paul O. Zelinsky)
Math		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Math Curse</i> (Jon Scieszka) • <i>Grandfather Tang's Story</i> (Ann Tompert) • <i>A Very Improbable Story: A Math Adventure</i> (Edward Einhorn)
Animals in the Wild		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manatee Blues (Vet Volunteers)</i> (Laurie Halse Anderson) • <i>Animals and the Seasons</i> (Susanne Riha) • <i>Amazing X-Rays: Wild Animals</i> (Jacquelin A. Ball)
History & Geography		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes</i> (Eleanor Coerr) • <i>The Scrambled States of America</i> (Laurie Keller) • <i>Shaka: King of the Zulus</i> (Diane Stanley)
How People Live	Fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Want to be a Fashion Designer</i> (Stephan Maze) • <i>My Wonderful World of Fashion: A Book for Drawing, Creating, and Dreaming</i> (Nina Chakarabarti) • <i>Frankly, Frannie: Fashion Frenzy</i> (AJ Stine)
	Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The World's Greatest Soccer Players</i> (Matt Doeden) • <i>The Wild Soccer Bunch: Kevin the Star Striker</i> (Joachim Masannek) • <i>A Beautiful Game: The World's Greatest Players and How Soccer Changed Their Lives</i> (Tom Watt)

Summary: Engagement

- Ultimately, the degree to which students are engaged with reading will influence their involvement in reading.
- Even small changes in classroom tasks can go a long way to increasing and sustaining engagement in reading.

Focus of Today's Session

Text complexity and:

- Information
- Exposure
- Engagement

All resources at
textproject.org
are available for
free download

CCSS

Webinar Series

Learn more about the Common Core State Standards by watching our new webinar series. Our first webinar with Dr. P. D. Pearson is now recorded and can be viewed [here](#). Information about our other webinars is found at the [webinar series homepage](#).

Student Resources

TextProject provides free, downloadable sets of texts that fill specific needs:

Summer Reads™ 

Stop the summer slump

"Read to learn" while learning to read

Beginning Reads™ 

Talking Points

For Kids

Increase meaningful, text-based discussions

Teacher Resources

TextProject helps teachers with evidence-based lessons and lists, all available for free download.



Use everyday words to model how words work



Use pictures to teach complex words

WORD LISTS

Be informed about vocabulary

Professional Development Resources

TextProject provides resources for teacher education.

Keep up with the latest reading research



Learn the essentials of text complexity

complexity

View the latest **Webinars** + Presentation Slides presentations

TextProject Answers

Answers to frequently asked reading research questions

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