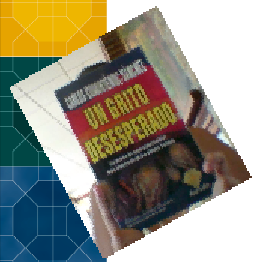


## Enhancing The Content-Area Literacy And Learning Of English Language Learners: Leveraging and Building Knowledge, Cultures, Interest, and Identities

Elizabeth Birr Moje  
The CREATE Conference

October 5, 2009

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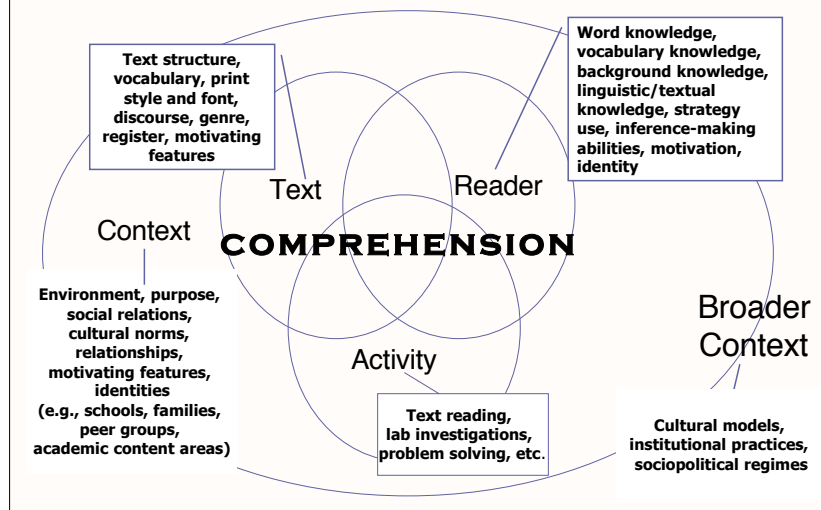
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## The big idea . . .

- Regardless of first language where a young person sits in terms of literacy development on Alexander's scale depends on the intersection of the youth's interest, culture, identity, and skills/knowledge, and on . . .
  - The text the person is reading
  - The context in which the text is being read
  - The purpose for reading

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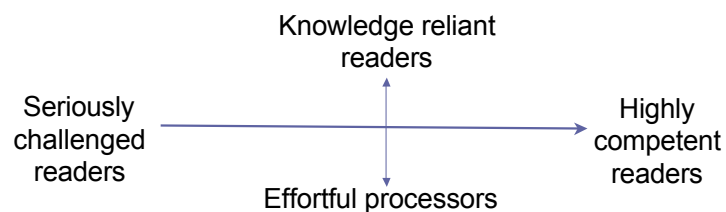
## Model of Literate Practice



## The related idea . . .

- For English language learners—particularly those new to the country—these dimensions of literate skill, particularly the world and domain knowledge dimension, are uniquely intertwined with content area learning.

## Developmental Profiles Alexander, 2003



## Some general findings from a recent study of Latino/a adolescents

- Evidence of strategic reading abilities
- Critical role of knowledge, interests, and identities
  - Funds of Knowledge
    - Ethnic, family, and community cultural knowledge
    - Popular cultural knowledge
    - Domain/disciplinary knowledge
  - Interests and Identities
    - Discourses
    - Practices
- Evidence of social supports for reading
- Little sense of self as “reader” (more as writers than readers), despite enactments of *readerly* identities

Scorer's Initials: MBB  
Date Scored: 10/6/09

## One case: Luis\*

- **Ethnicity:** Latino
- **Survey language:** English
- **First language learned:** Spanish
- **Language spoken at home:** Spanish
- **City born:** Maravatio (Mexico)
- **State born:** Michuacan
- **Country born:** Mexico (Colorado)
- **Favorite class:** "Computers, because I can tipe even better than the last time and learn new things about the computer"
- **Least favorite class:** "Social studies, because there are lots of words that is new and I don't now much about the country"
- **Job aspiration:** engineer; Job **expected:** scientist
- **Favorite book:** "The Dummy III, because is a dummy that is moving youst to do bad stuf and now it has a gang"
- **Are you a writer? What do you write?** "Spelling words so I can remember the words"

\*a pseudonym

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### The Bed

Is it difficult for you to get out of bed in the morning? Do you sometimes oversleep? Are you often late for work or school? Yes? Then Hiro Lee of Japan has a special bed for you. Here's how it works.

The bed is connected to a clock. First, the alarm clock rings. You have a few minutes to wake up. Next, a tape from the bed plays soft music. Then it plays other pleasant sounds. Lee's first recording is the sound of a waterfall. Then a sweet voice asks him to get up. A few minutes later, a second recording plays. Lee's second recording is his teacher's voice yelling, "Get up now!"

If you don't get up after the second recording, you will be sorry. A mechanical foot is on the bed that kicks you in the head. Then the bed waits a few more minutes and if you are still in bed, you will not be for much longer. Slowly the top of the bed rises higher and higher. The foot goes lower and lower. Finally, the bed is vertical. You slide off the bed on the floor. You are out of bed and awake!

### Science Passage:

Coal is a sedimentary rock. The distinguishing feature of coal is that the sediments that form it are the remains of once-living organisms. Most coal is made up of the remains of plants that captured energy from the sun to make food and to grow. These plants remain retain some of that solar energy in a changed form – chemical potential energy.

Much of the coal mined in the United States began forming more than 300 million years ago. Coal started as the remains of plants that died in swampy regions. As time went by, more plants died and sediment covered and compressed the plants. The following steps give you a clearer idea of how the coal mined today formed.

First, swamps formed in lowlands. These swamps had living plants growing in a soil composed almost entirely of decaying organic matter. Through time, layers of sediment covered and compressed the layers of organic matter. The increase in temperature that resulted from increasing depth of the sediment layers changed the organic matter into a soft brown coal called lignite.

More layers of sediment piled on top, the temperature increased further and lignite became bituminous coal. When layers of bituminous coal were severely compressed and heated by forces within Earth, the layers changed into anthracite coal, the hardest

### main message:

We use lots of different words to make comparisons – faster, stronger, taller, richer, smarter, heavier, safer, tastier, and so on. Sometimes, words alone give us all the information we need. It is enough to know that one box is heavier than another, one printer is faster than another, or one car is safer than another.

Other times, we need to know more information. We want to know, How much heavier? or How much faster? or How much safer? Answering questions like these usually involves comparing data gathered by counting, measuring, or rating things. In this unit, you will explore many different ways to make comparisons, and you will learn how to decide which comparison method is best in a given situation. Here are five methods for making comparisons, with examples:

**Ratios:** In taste tests, people who preferred Bolda Cola outnumbered those who preferred Cola Nola by a ratio of 3 to 2.

**Differences:** Students who prefer television outnumber those who prefer radio by 20.

**Fractions:**  $\frac{3}{5}$  of cola drinkers prefer Bolda Cola to Cola Nola.

**Percents:** 28% of people aged 12-17 go camping.

**Scaling:** The number of students who prefer watching television is 1.5 times the

## Luis's Reading Process: *The Circuit*

- I-Can you read the first two sentences out loud for me and tell me what think this passage is gonna be about--
- X-Ok. (:57-1:22) *student reading*
- I-Ok what do you think this is gonna be about?
- X-Its gonna be about like man working in the fields with strawberries picking up putting them in the boxes and transporting it like where there's vegetables Randazzos or something
- I-Ok what makes you think all those things?
- X-Because it says um it says about strawberries and also people working and then it said they don't have enough boxes in order to put the strawberries on.
- I-So what made you get to the place where you're thinking about transporting strawberries? That's a very good thing to think but it's not in the text
- X-Because it says um boxes and you can like transport boxes in a car or a truck or something or just take them somewhere so that's where I get it
- I-So they take them somewhere for what?
- X-Yeah to put them um in stores. You have to put them in stores

## Luis's Reading Process: Anime Magazine

- I-Ok cool. We'll be done with that one. Thank you. Now you told me you like to read Anime. Right. Would you prefer to read Anime book or something out of a Anime magazine?
- X-I say Anime magazine to *inform me*
- I-You would like to read out of an Anime magazine to be informed
- X-Yeah
- I-Ok. Pick an article in there that you might like to read. Take your time picking.
- There's more than just Play Station keep going.
- *X-This for all the systems*
- I=What is it?
- X-Sometimes the magazines that I read has for most of them I get for Game Cube and Wii because I have those systems
- I-And these are for what older systems is that what you're saying?
- *X-No its for some new systems like PS3 but I don't have that one*
- I-So you're **skimming** I'm just gonna describe into the tape recorder what you're doing right now. You're skimming this magazine cause you've never seen it before. And you just told me it was for all the systems what do you mean by that?
- X-Well there's some magazines that have like games for all systems for PS3, Wii and Xbox 360 it has them all. So *I look most of them at the systems that I have*

## Luis's Reading Process: Anime Magazine

- I-Ok describe to me what you're doing now. I'm very interested in how you're reading this magazine because you have very specific thing that you do with these magazines. You look at this little box then you just skim the first couple sentences *you told me that it's for the Wii and its by Sega and that might make you interested in reading it.* So what are you doing now?
- X-Then after that *I just read like the first paragraph all of this and read all of this and right here it says about like an alien syndrome fighting and everything so I know what's (25:43?) 21st century.* So in there I know its about like, and I also *see the pictures* and then *it says right here fighting* and everything so I know she's shooting aliens and ok and everything and then I *see the pictures* right here so I know what it is about
- I-Cool so then you read that much about the system and the characters --I'm just trying to understand cause I don't read Anime. So then you match the characters to the picture and then you decide if you're gonna continue reading
- X-Yeah. And then *after this like I know what it is about and everything.* I just leave it right there and pass to the next one

## Luis's Reading Process: Anime Magazine

- I-Cool ok go ahead and keep reading and tell me what's going on
- X-(27:04-27:19) *Student reading.*
- X-Oh like it says game elements you must have like weapons and everything and like plasmas weapons and everything-just-see-fire types. So she must have a lot of water like missile that shoots water or something *so when it says elements I'm thinking about water*
- I-Cool you know you are doing an amazing think aloud and I'm not even having to ask you. Thank you. And I'm learning a lot, so keep going a little bit for me here.
- X-(27:50-27:55) *Student reading.*
- X-And then it says right here what is most about. It says shooting box and all that they meant by this aliens you know. And right here it starts saying about the story about the game. Like game includes her as she has failed to rescue and got beat up and drops her into a qu-, drops her into a *quincon*, and its impossible so it tells about the story of where you start . . .

## Luis's Reading Process: Anime Magazine

- X-I picked out at the beginning for what systems are they and then after that I look for what is it about? And then after that I look for the story what –like where it starts and what happens and everything
- I-Ok so you're kind of zeroing in on key words about the story right now. And stopping to read those aloud to me. How come you don't want to read aloud to me?
- X-Oh its cause I read faster by like in my mind cause kind of when I'm reading I'm kind of like mumbling when some words that I don't know
- I-I noticed but do the words that you don't know does that matter to you?
- X-No because in my mind I will just like –most of the words I heard them but I don't know how to say them with my mouth so I know them in my mind so go like [gestures with his mouth]

## Luis's Reading Process: Anime Magazine

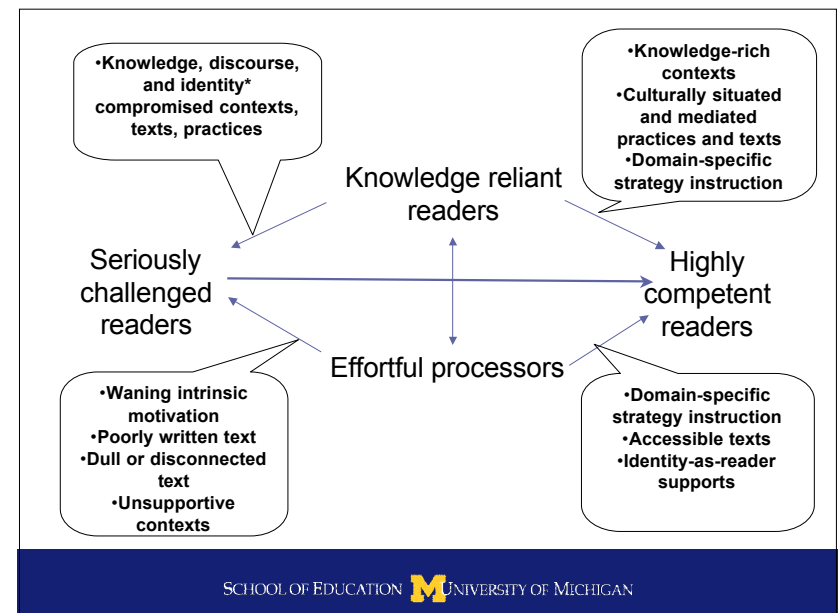
- I-So is it like Anime jargon that you recognize but can't pronounce?
- X-Yeah I know
- I-Is that what it is? Like you recognize the word what it means but you can't pronounce it because it's some weird Japanese anime word?
- X-Well it's not Japanese like I sometimes mumble some words when--
- I-Like can you pick one out for me?
- X-Like demolition expert
- I-Ok what does demolitions mean?
- X-Like something, I .....like something destroying or something
- I-Mm ok but you didn't bother to stop and pronounce that because you knew what it meant?
- X-Mm (yes)

## Conclusions

Where does Luis fall on Alexander's continuum? Is he . . .

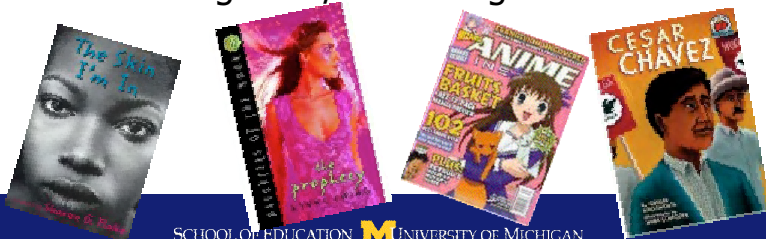
- Seriously challenged?
- Effortfully processing?
- Relying on knowledge?
- Highly competent?

–Or all of the above?????



## Implications

- Vocabulary
- Knowledge development
- Domain-specific strategy teaching
- Motivating texts/motivating contexts



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## Some Important Teaching Practices

- Prior Knowledge Elicitation Development
- Necessary Knowledge Development
- Oral to Written Language Connections
- Close Text Reading and Discussion
  - Reading, Questioning, Analyzing Summarizing, Visualizing, Synthesizing
- Writing for Understanding

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**For more information . . .**

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