

Teaching reading in a time of promise: What can we expect of the Obama years

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The back story

- September request
 - Put Cathy and Barbara off
 - Two options, depending
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Teaching
Reading in a
Time of
Conflict: What
can we expect
of the McCain
years?



Teaching
Reading in a
Time of
Promise:

What can we
expect of the
Obama years?



Now????

- Not so sure...
-

I was hoping for this



Linda Darling Hammond

But we got this



Arne Duncan

I suppose we could have had this?

What, Me Worry?



Someone Else

Why was I hoping for Linda Darling Hammond?

- Because I know her values from working with her on several projects
 - Return to some unfinished business from the 1990s
-

Let me be clear about my biases...

- Progressive view of education
 - The role of education is to
 - prepare a generation of citizens who will render their ancestors obsolete.
 - Instill an ethic of respect for the past generation: look how far we have come
 - Instill an ethic of critique: nothing is EVER good enough for the next generation
 - Ensure that every child has the tools to become
 - A conformist
 - An iconoclast
-

Unfinished business

- Powerful learning
 - Project-based learning
 - Cross-curricular connections
-

Unfinished business: Performance Assessment

- Go back to the drawing board
 - Get the psychometrics right
 - Get the money to fund it
 - Get on with the real agenda:
Tests to match our
pedagogical and curricular
dreams
-

Unfinished business: Teacher Professionalism

- Pursue the idea of a highly qualified teacher from a whole different perspective
- Re-invigorate the idea of a trajectory of teacher development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions over a series of stages in a career.
- Distance the professional from the marketplace model of teacher quality



That was a dream...

- Arne Duncan is the reality
 - So what does that mean?
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What can we expect from a Duncan Administration vis a vis reading

- What do we know?
 - He likes standards
 - He likes tests
 - But he'll support Obama's press for 21st Century Skills
 - He likes charter schools
 - He likes market forces: incentives for people to improve
 - Incentive pay for teachers
 - Improvement
 - Difficult assignments
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But...

- He knows what he doesn't know
 - He picks really smart people to work for and with him
 - He isn't too proud to give credit to others
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Key Appointments



- Marshall "Mike" Smith
 - Acting Deputy Secretary of Education
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Key Appointments

- Acting Assistant for Elementary and Secretary:
- Joseph Conaty
 - A long term Ed Department stalwart
 - OERI



John Easton

- Designee for Assistant Secretary of Education for IES
- Took over the reins of Consortium on Chicago School Research from Tony Bryk
- History of someone who thinks that research must make a difference



Literacy Strategy



- Kris Gutierrez
 - UCLA
 - Literacy and Language researcher
 - AERA President Elect
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Rest of the morning

- Work toward toward some predictions about what we will see in literacy policy from this administration
 - Curriculum
 - Pedagogy
 - Research
 - Ease into by trying to understand the last decade or so
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So let's do a stocktaking of the past 8-12 years in Reading Research and Policy

- What have we learned?
 - What has improved?
 - What has taken a turn for the worse?
 - What could be a plan for the future?
 - Could that be the Obama plan
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What have we learned?

- Explicit attention to the code in the early years pays dividends in terms of kids' ability to decode unknown words and has a modest but variable effect on comprehension. IF...
 - Done in conjunction with a balanced program of vocabulary, comprehension and reading
 - Done relatively early in the learning process

What have we learned?

- It is easier to learn to decode words if we help kids pay attention to the sounds that comprise words they will read (The Phonemic Awareness Effect). IF...
 - It is done quickly (about 18 hours max in K or 1)
 - In conjunction with learning letter sounds
 - Accompanied by opportunities to engage in phonics-based spelling and writing (close your eyes, say the word, listen for the sounds, find the letters that go with each sound). The APPLICATION of PA, if you will.

What have we learned?

- Vocabulary divides us
 - Economically (the Hart and Risley effect)
 - Linguistically (second language and dialect issues)
 - Semiotically (as windows into our knowledge)
 - Scholastically (the academic language effect)

What have we learned?

- BUT... Vocabulary can unite us...
- if we teach it, they will learn...
 - The NRP finding
 - The Tier 2 effect
 - The Tier 3 effect
 - The Academic Language effect

What have we learned?

- We can improve comprehension in a variety of ways...
- We can teach it explicitly, but that is not enough...
- We can engage students in rich discussions of ideas, but that is not enough
- We can focus on the ideas in the text and the disciplines underlying the texts but that is not enough...
- We can bathe it in motivation and identity, but that is not enough

What have we learned?

- When it comes to comprehension, we have to do it all...

What have we learned?

- Progress in adolescent literacy
- Pedagogy
- Motivation
- Identity
- The particularity of disciplines
- The particularity of genre
- New Literacies

What have we learned?

- Reading helps reading
- Just not sure where and when we should have kids do it

What have we learned?

- When research journeys into the policy world, it can be distorted, falling victim to conspiracies of good intentions
- Only the headlines make the journey.

What have we learned?

- Phonics helps if it is taught
 - early,
 - as a part of balanced curriculum in which it is a tool to unlock word pronunciation on the way to meaning,
 - In any one of a variety of approaches,
 - and applied to a variety of texts (not necessarily decodable)
- Teach synthetic phonics
 - Early
 - Often
 - Until it gets mastered
 - No matter how much evidence amasses that it isn't working

What have we learned?

- People play fast and loose with the research card

Decodibul Text

Remedial Phonics



The Dark Side

What have we learned?

- Policy gets shaped through a range of influence networks (Miskel and colleagues)
- Policy gets implemented, thwarted, or shaped through a range of social networks within schools (Coburn's work).
- Sometimes policy gets its hold through very top-down tools:

What have we learned?

- We must be vigilant about conflicts of interest.
- The GAO audit of Reading First



What have we learned?

- About Reading First
 - Curious Divide
 - State level
 - Lots of success stories at the state level
 - Some failure stories too
 - Lots of happy customers
 - Some sad customers too
 - National level: When its components got tested by the gold standard, we learned that you get what you pay for.
 - Balance perhaps?
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What have we learned?

- That even within the overall frame of balance, things can become easily imbalanced
- First amongst equals problem in Reading First.
 - Even though it was supposed to include all of the Big 5, Phonics and Phonemic Awareness and maybe Fluency trumped Comprehension and Vocabulary

What have we learned?

- When it comes to reform, bottom up and home grown works just fine
- And may have more staying power
- Two new reports:
 - Mathis: Great Lakes Center
 - Mintrop and Sunderman: Civil Rights Center UCLA

So let's get specific about Obama's likely literacy agenda

- Sources
 - Washington Banter
 - Interviews with education reporter sources
 - A couple of summits with Kris Gutierrez when she was on the transition team
 - Still has the force of rumor
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What do we know for sure? Some carryovers

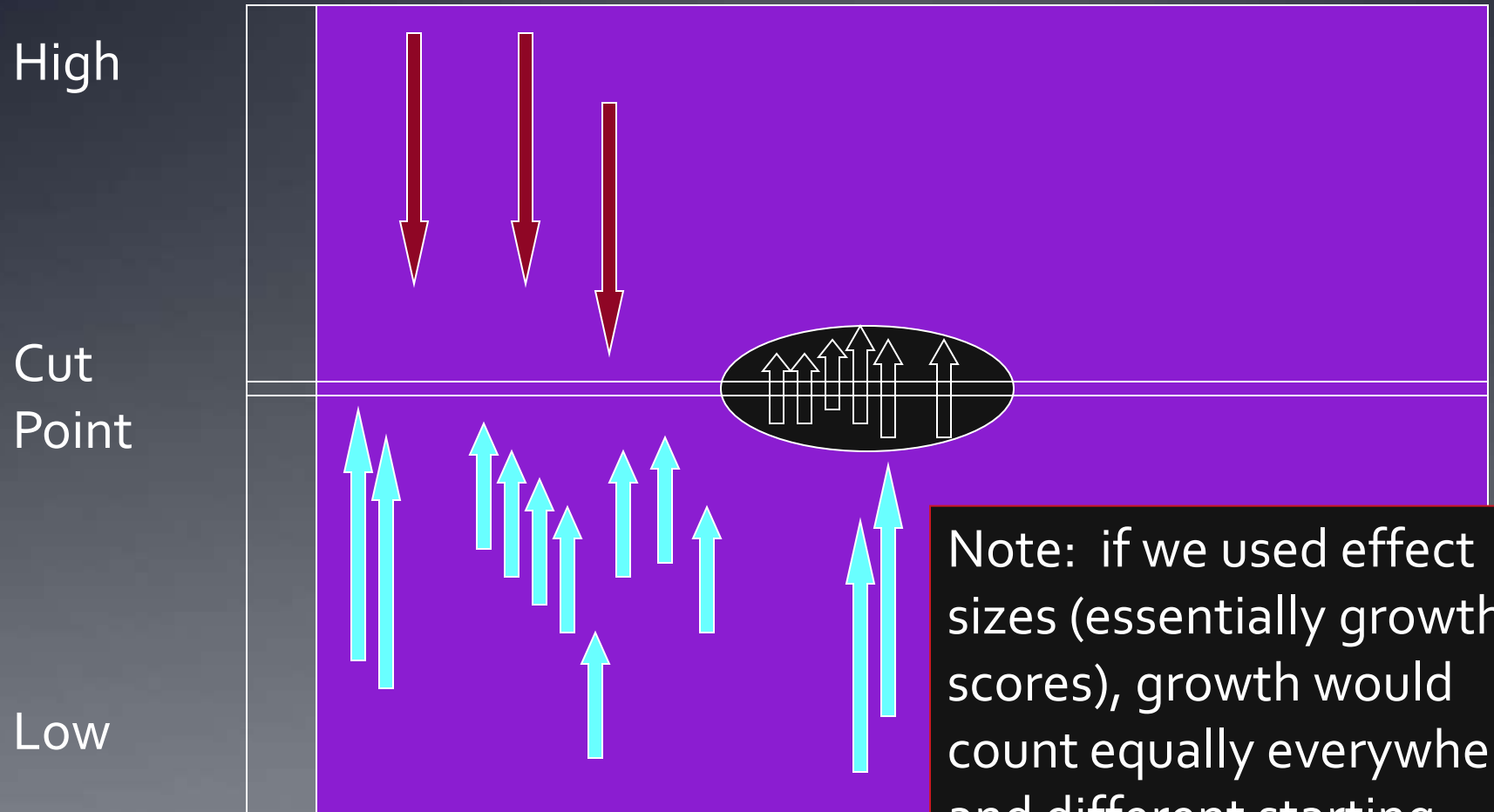
- Interventions are here to stay
 - Assessments are here to stay
 - Accountability is here to stay
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What do we know for sure?

- Accountability is here to stay, but...
 - Growth models will overtake Hurdle models
 - Good thing
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Arrow denotes direction of the movement of an individual from one year to the next

A single cut score promotes perverse incentives



Note: if we used effect sizes (essentially growth scores), growth would count equally everywhere and different starting points would not matter

What might happen

Cradle to Grave

- We know about early childhood: Likely to be first amongst equals
 - But
 - More balanced program expenditures across the age span, including adult and community literacy
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Greater Balance

- Writing
 - Language
 - Reading/writing/language as tools for learning
 - Critical reading/thinking
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Learning > teaching

- More emphasis on making sure that deep and rich learning occurs
 - Project based learning
 - Cross disciplinary efforts
 - Maybe reading will not have to continue to play the bully role
 - Make Title I accountable to more students
 - ELL
 - IEP
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Research

- Don't know much yet
 - Scientifically-based Reading Research
 - Gives way to
 - Scientifically valid Reading Research
 - Use a rough paraphrase of the AERA statement: www.aera.net
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Obama's agenda aside

- What do we as a reading research community need to learn?
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Learning about RTI

What's not to like?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Individualized Instruction | There is no one best method of teaching reading, just a best method for a particular child. It is the job of the teacher is to find that right combination for every student. |
| Responsive Assessment | Each step a teacher takes in instruction must be responsive to the evidence provided by the child in the immediately previous performance and/or assessment situation. Increasing instructional depth (down into the skill infrastructure), specificity, and intensiveness are provided on an as-needed basis. |
| Dynamic Assessment | Instead of giving all students the same task and observing the variability among them, a teacher should ask, What are the differential supports I need to offer various students in order to help them all perform a given task successfully? |
| “Goldilocks” Pedagogy | Working in the zone of proximal development, a teacher provides just right materials (not too easy, not too hard) and just in time scaffolding (the right clue or support at just the right moment) |
| Programs fail; students don't | When a student cannot perform successfully in a given tier or with a given set of supports, we should conclude that the instruction has failed, not the student—and the approach should be changed. |

Second Glance: Lots of Things Not to Like, or at least to be cautious about...

■ Which model gets used?

- Standard Protocol Model
- Problem-solving Model

■ What counts as evidence of progress?

- Enabling Skills
 - Global measures of reading and writing
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Which model? Standard Protocol

- Buy an “off the shelf” program
 - Scientifically-based...
 - Implement it with fidelity
 - Let it run its course (several weeks at a minimum)
 - Decide:
 - Success? Return to classroom
 - Failure? Down to the next tier
-

Standard Protocol Issues

■ Scientific basis

- Fast and loose with the gold standard
- Possesses elements that can be traced back to a research study somewhere
- Who is affixing the scientific seal of approval
 - Programs
 - Assessments

■ Commercialization

- Emphasis on off-the-shelf programs
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Standard Protocol Issues

- Treatment Resisters: Kids who defy our best efforts to offer assistance
 - Alternative: Kid resistant programs
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Which model? Problem-solving

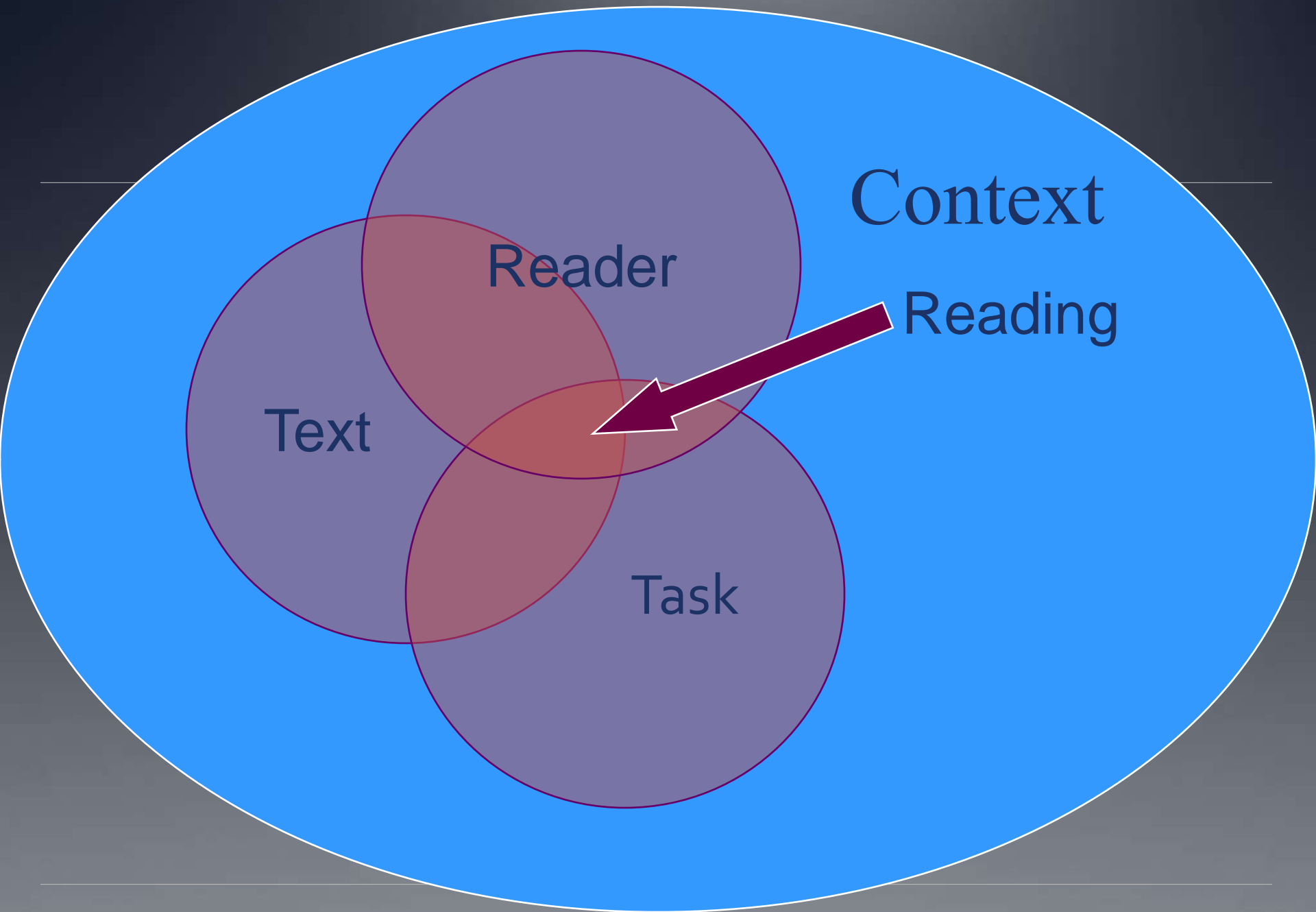
- Conduct a thorough diagnosis
 - Plan an individually tailored intervention
 - Assess progress
 - Curriculum-embedded
 - Benchmark tasks
 - Adjust intervention as needed
 - Use benchmarks to decide which direction to move
 - Everyday instruction
 - Next tier down
-

Issues with Problem-Solving Model

- Assumes a lot
 - Trustworthy diagnostic tools
 - Match instruction to assessment
 - Teaching to weaknesses actually works
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Research on RTI

- Fundamental efficacy of the two models
 - Do kids actually make progress on some external index of progress when you implement?
 - Validity of the assessments
 - What is the right grain size for entering
 - Monitoring?
 - Exiting?
 - Policy has gotten way ahead of the research
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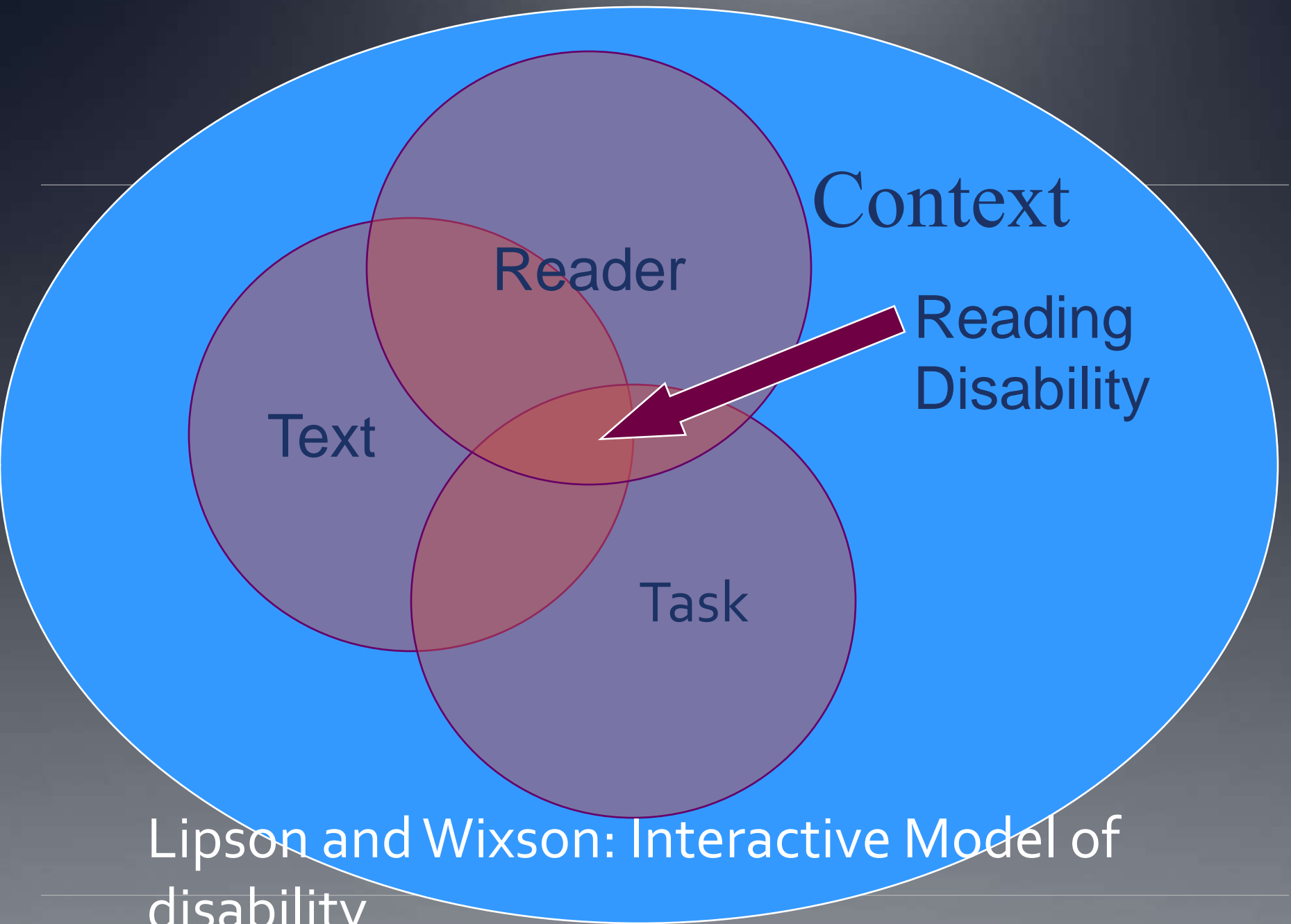
Context

Reader

Text

Task

Reading



Lipson and Wixson: Interactive Model of disability

Learning about reading reform

- We need more work to understand
 - What is it about externally imposed or bottom up reforms that accounts for
 - Failure
 - Success
 - Are there any common factors across the approaches?
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Learning about Vocabulary

- How to assess it
 - Morphology
 - Unlocking the meanings of new words
 - Inside->Outside->Beyond the text
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Learning about Adolescent Literacy

- Identity
 - Engagement
 - Pedagogy
 - Disciplinary Literacy
 - Genre Literacy
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Learning about comprehension

- The other side of the knowledge-comprehension nexus
 - Continue the important work on talk about text
 - Finding the right mix of explicitness in strategy instruction
 - Settle this skill-strategy battle that plays itself out in our curricular enterprises
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Learning about just plain reading

- Start with the assumption that reading begets reading
 - Find out why
 - Active ingredients: conditions under which assigning precious school time
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What we still need to learn

- How to work across the boundaries that divide us
 - School-University
 - Code-Meaning
 - Disciplines
-

Are you ready to say uncle?

- So much to learn...
 - Cape diem!
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