

# Teaching reading in a time of Uncertainty: Bush, Obama, and the Hope of Australia

P. David Pearson  
UC Berkeley

Slides at [www.scienceandliteracy.org](http://www.scienceandliteracy.org)

# Survey

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- Elementary?
  - Secondary?
  - College?
  - What's the difference
-

# Elementary Teachers Love

- Their kids



# Secondary Teachers Love

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- Their subjects



# College Teachers Love

- Themselves



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# Teaching Reading in a Time of .....: Bush, XXX, and Australia

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Teaching  
Reading in a  
Time of  
Conflict: Bush,  
McCain (and  
what's her  
name) and  
Australia.



Teaching  
Reading in a  
Time of  
Promise:  
Bush, Obama,  
and Australia



# Now????

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- Not so sure...
-

# Hence my title today...

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- Teaching Reading in a Time of Uncertainty: Bush, Obama, and the Hope of Australia
  - My hope:
    - Research and policy can be forces for good not ill
  - My conviction: policy work is worth the effort, no matter how slow or frustrating
  - What's the alternative?
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# A little pre-test...

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Slides at:

[www.scienceandliteracy.org](http://www.scienceandliteracy.org)

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The term, **Scientifically-Based Reading Research**, occurs \_\_\_\_\_ times in the *Reading First* Portion of *NCLB*

1. 115

2. 118

3. 110

4. An average of 114.3

# Phonemic Awareness is...

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1. The ability to discern separate sounds in the stream of speech
  2. The process by which a unit of sound can experience self-actualization
  3. Something a person needs to practice a bit more IF he consistently says NUCULAR for NUCLEAR.
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# Reading Recovery is...

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1. A much missed part of our current portfolio of early interventions
  2. The plaintiff in a law suit with the federal Department of Education
  3. A 12 step program designed to assist 1st graders who have overdosed on modern reading schemes
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# Reading First...

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1. Is the reading part of NCLB
  2. Has provided more resources for compensatory reading than any previous piece of legislation in US history
  3. Means that math is a curricular second and science and social studies are not even on the radar screen (not to mention art and music)...
  4. Is something you should have done before walking into the wrong gendered facility
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# Let me fess up...

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- My political and pedagogical biases
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# I was hoping for this

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Linda Darling Hammond

---

# But we got this

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Arne Duncan

---

I suppose we could have had this?

*What, Me Worry?*



Someone Else

# Why was I hoping for Linda Darling Hammond?

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- Because I know her values from working with her on several projects
  - Return to some unfinished business from the 1990s
    - Standards that reciprocated
    - Assessments to match our curricular dreams
    - The makings of a genuine profession
      - Teacher assessment
      - National Board of Professional Teaching Standards
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# Standards that meet the test of fairness

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- The quid pro quo
  - Content and performance standards
  - Opportunity to learn standards
-

# Assessments to match our curricular dreams

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# Unfinished business: Performance Assessment

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- 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
-

# The makings of a genuine profession

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- Professional Certification
    - National Board
  - A continuum of self-initiated assessments of teacher development
    - Novice
    - Full Licensure
    - Professional Certification
-

# Unfinished business

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

# 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...

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- 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

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

# But...

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- 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
-

# Key Appointments

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- Marshall "Mike" Smith
  - Acting Deputy Secretary of Education
  - How long will he stay?
-

# Appointments



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# 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

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

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- 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 what has happened to literacy in the US in the last decade or so
  - Move to the Australian Scene
-

# So let's do a stocktaking of the past 8-12 years in Reading Research and Policy in the USA

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- 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
-

# What have we learned?

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- 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?

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- 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?

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- 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?

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- 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?

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- 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/words 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, v to do it all...



# What have we learned?

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

# What have we learned?

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

# What have we learned?

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- When research journeys into the policy world, it can be distorted, falling victim to conspiracies of good intentions
- Only the headlines make the journey.
- Do you have this problem in Australia, too?

# What have we learned?

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- Phonics helps if it is taught
  - early (NOT later)
  - 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?



shaped through  
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policy gets its hold through very  
ols:

# What have we learned?

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



# What have we learned?

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- About Reading First
- Curious Divide
- State level
  - Lots of success stories at the state level E233/E231
    - 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?

# What have we learned?

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- 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?

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- 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

# Assessment can wreak havoc on the best laid curricular plans

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- The curious case of DIBELS
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# DIBELS Detour

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- Schooling the cognitive process of test taking: Kids who are alike in terms of accuracy will differ substantially in terms of speed and fluency
- Face validity problem: What virtue is there in doing things faster?
  - naming letters, sounds, words, ideas
  - What would you do differently if you knew that Susie was faster than Ted at X, Y, or Z???

# The Achilles Heel: Consequential Validity

Give DIBELS

Give Comprehension Test

Use results to craft instruction

Give DIBELS again

Give Comprehension Test

The emperor has no clothes

# DIBELS alliteration test: Hinky Hanky

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- What do you call it when you just sort of “get your feet wet” in DIBELS?
- A DIBEL dabble.
- What if you do it twice? Hunky-hinky-hanky
- A double DIBEL dabble.

# The bottom line on so many of these tests

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New Bumper Sticker

Never send a test out to do a curriculum's job!

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

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- 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: Obama has played very few of his education cards
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# What do we know for sure? Some carryovers

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- Interventions are here to stay
  - Assessments are here to stay
  - Accountability is here to stay
-

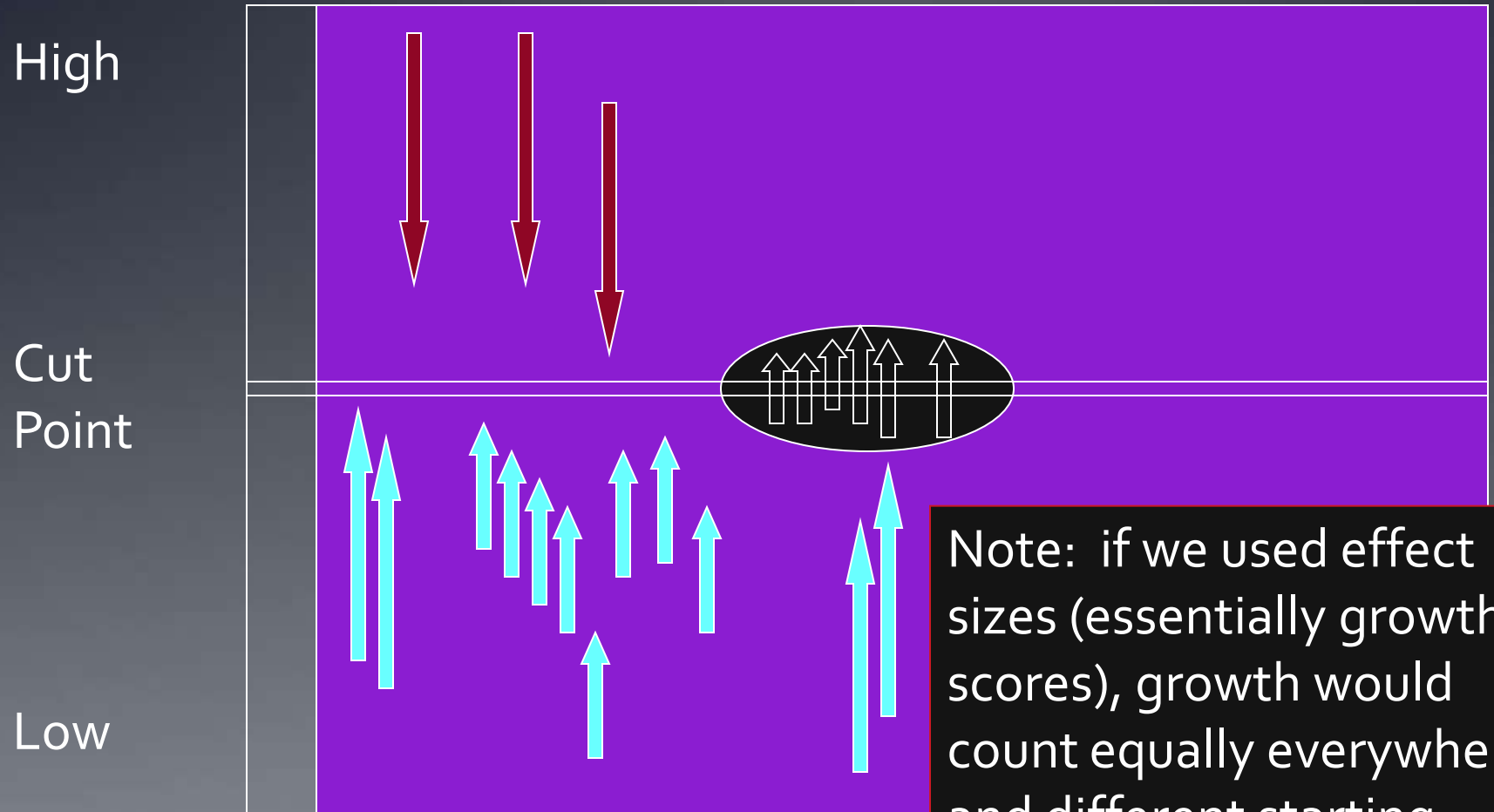
# What do we know for sure?

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- Accountability is here to stay, but...
  - Growth models will overtake Hurdle models
  - Good thing
-

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

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# Cradle to Grave

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- 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
-

# Greater Balance

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

# Learning > teaching

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- 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
-

# Research

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- 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](http://www.aera.net)
-

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So that's what I know and  
think about the Obama  
Agenda

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# Reading Australia

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- What's not to like?
  - Relationship with the press
  - National Assessment
  - A few nagging lobbies
  - A professional disposition to metaphors of war
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# What I do like about Australian Education

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- The National English Curriculum
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# Curriculum First

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- Strong traditions of curriculum development
  - Standards do not make a curriculum
  - If the framework is not sound, if the theory and the research behind the curriculum is not solid,
  - The standards will not survive.
-

# Shape of the Australian Curriculum

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- The principles and guidelines for development
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# Our current USA view of curriculum



Mathematics

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

# A model we like: Tools by Disciplines

## Academic Disciplines.....

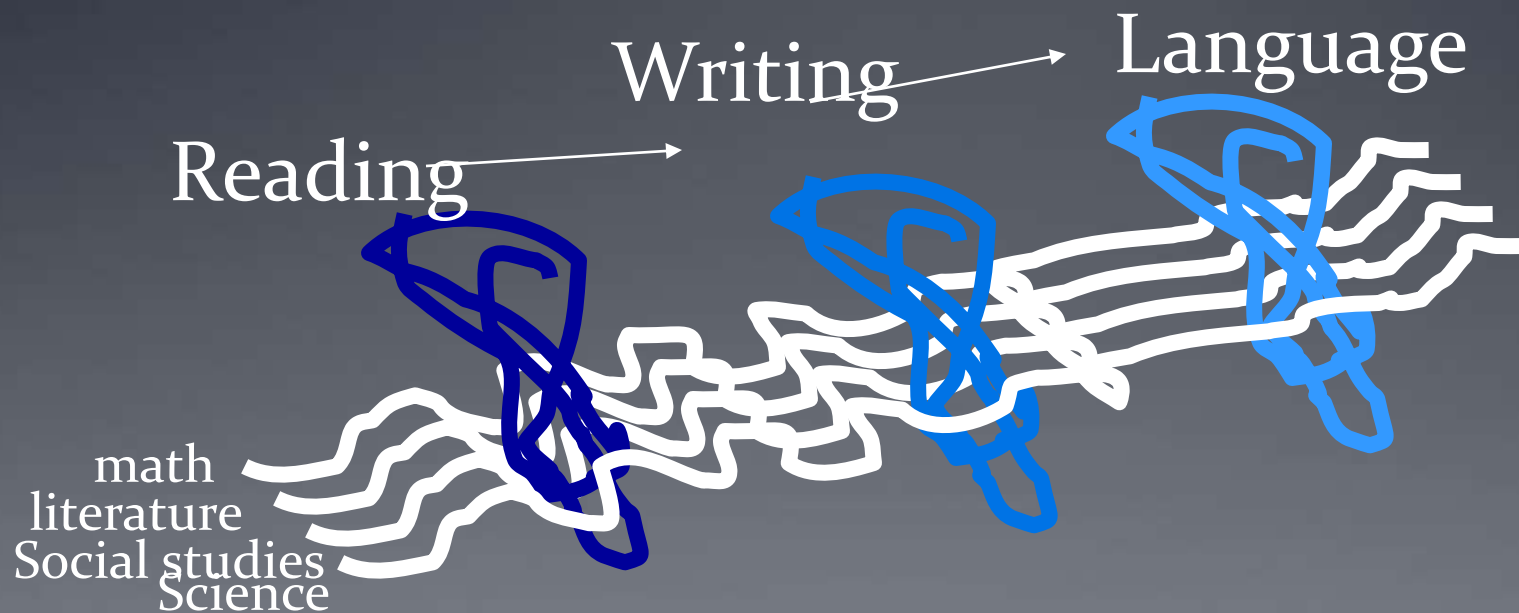
Language Tools

	Science	Social Studies	Mathematics	<u>Literature</u>
Reading				
Writing				
Language				



# Weaving is even a better metaphor than a matrix

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Reading

Writing

Language

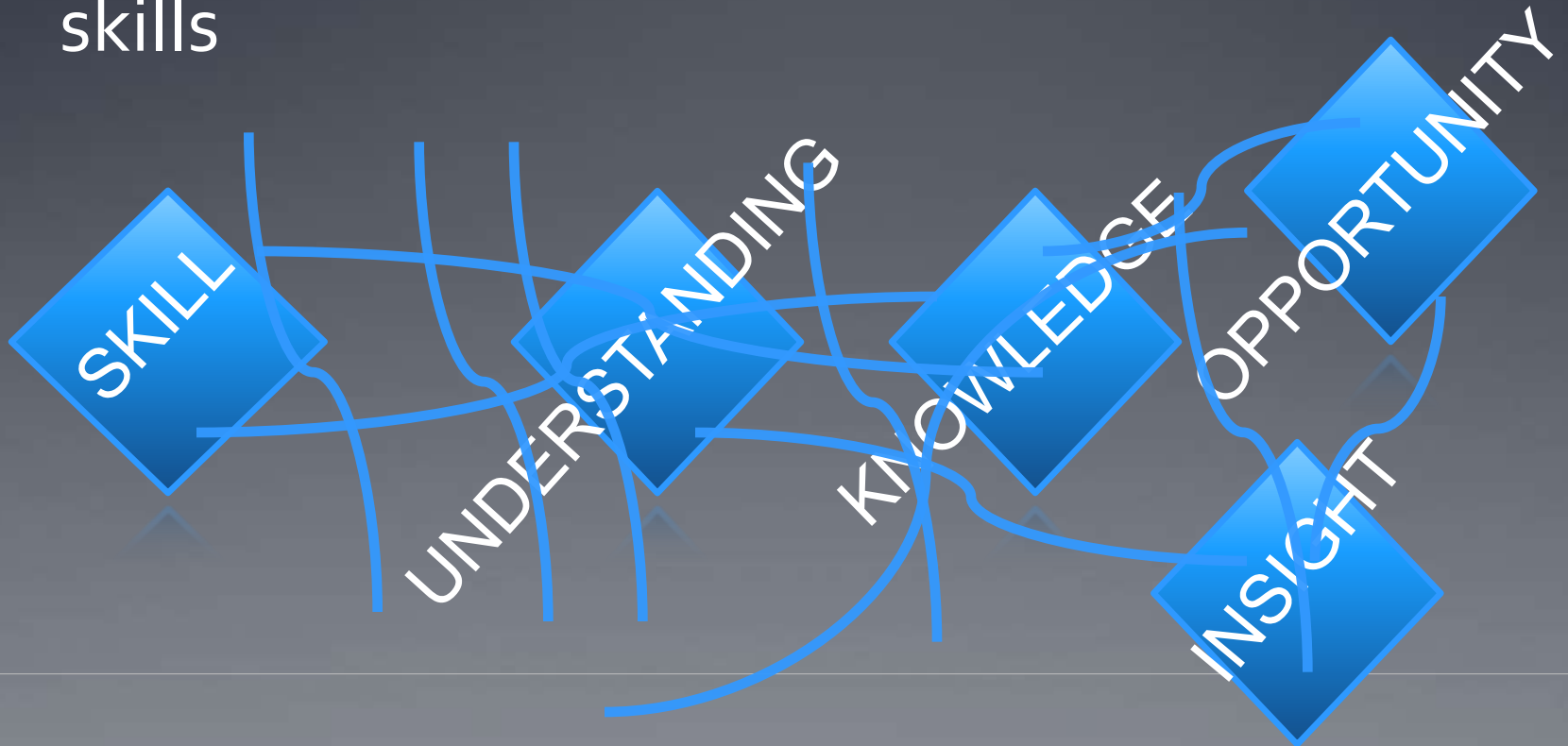
Social Studies

Science

Literature

# Shape of the Australian Curriculum

- Things to like...
- The trio of knowledge, understanding, and skills



# Things to like: The admission that will and thrill are as important as skill

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- International comparisons of educational performance and engagement suggest that Australians are high performers, but that they do not particularly like the learning in which they perform well. Students' attitudes to the knowledge, understandings and skills they are developing will be influenced perhaps more by teaching than by curriculum, but the curriculum can help if its content is sufficiently coherent over time, if students can understand their progress in learning, and if the curriculum is relevantly connected to their lives and futures.
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# What to watch out for...

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- The scope and sequence for each learning area will ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided. It will help schools and teachers coordinate curriculum across a number of years of schooling.
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# The Process

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- Lots of folks invited to the table
  - Not something done TO educators
  - Something done BY educators and lots of other constituencies
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
5346  
July 1, 2009  
202-336-7034

Contacts: Jodi Omear (NGA), 202-624-  
Kara Schlosser (CCSSO),

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS  
DEVELOPMENT WORK GROUP AND  
FEEDBACK GROUP ANNOUNCED**

*NGA Center, CCSSO Unveil New Web site; Outline Process to Develop  
Common English-language Arts and Mathematics Standards*

# What I do like about Australian Education

- Assessment trumps testing



# Learning from our mistakes in the USA

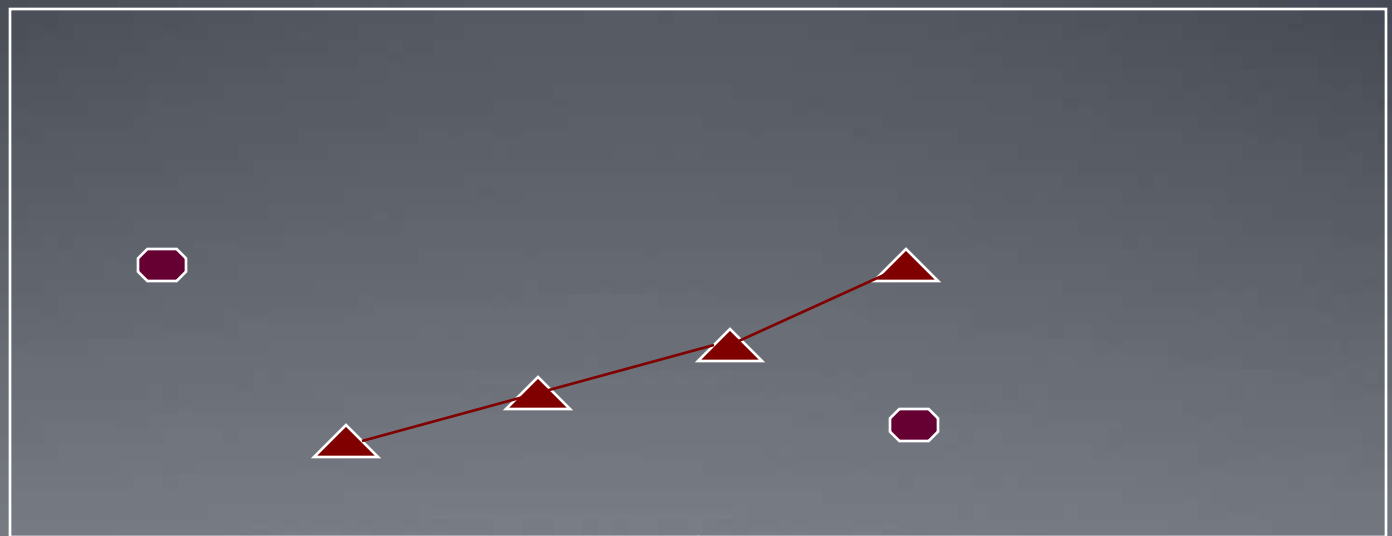
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- High stakes accountability: try not to go there
  - Responsibility for student learning over accountability for student achievement
  - If you do go down that path, insist on the quid pro quo.
    - And get your parents involved in the insisting
  - Couple low stakes indicators with the high
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# Linn and Shepard's work...

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▲ = New Standardized Test  
◻ = Old Standardized Test



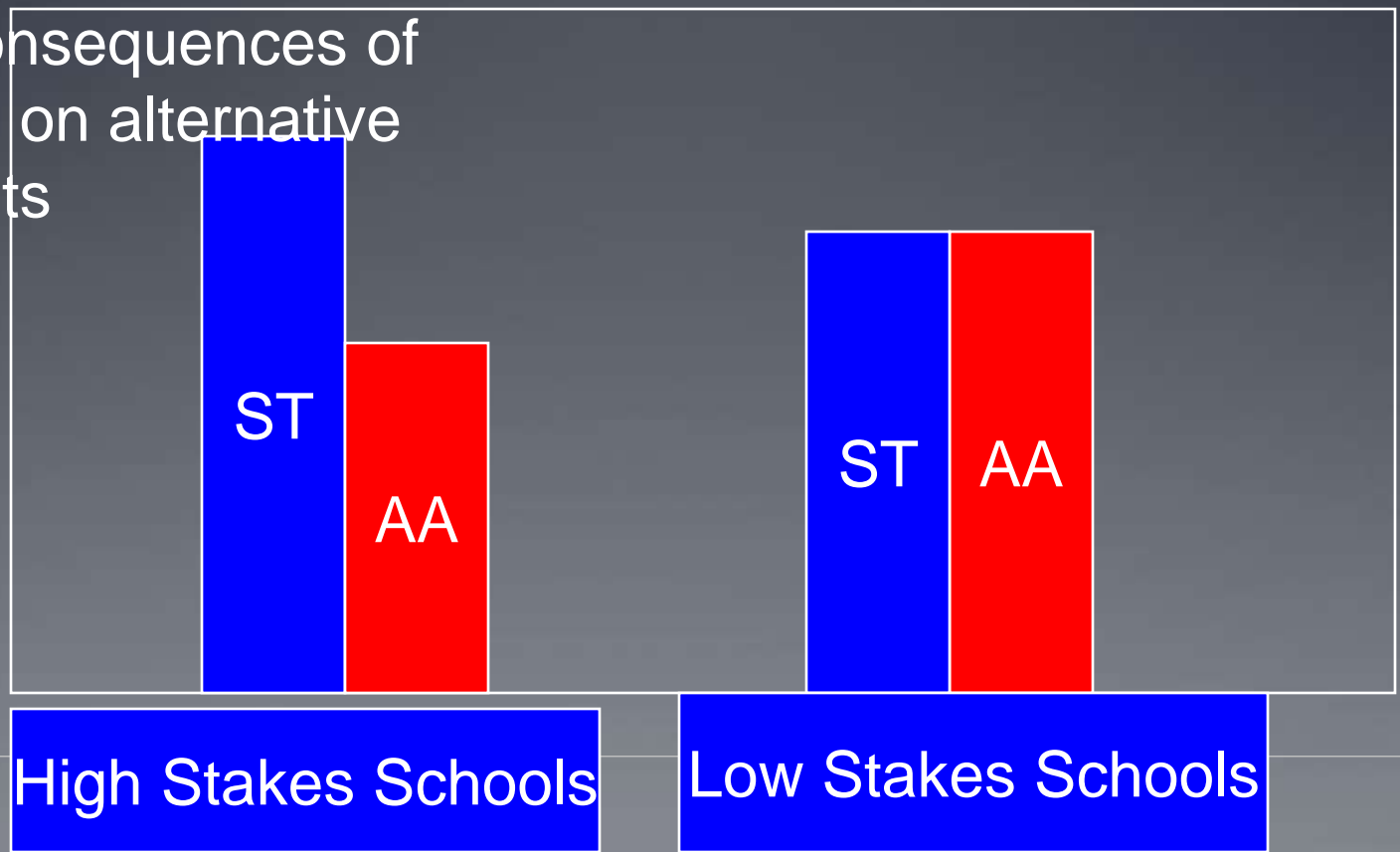
Years 1 2 3 4 5

# Shepard et al work

ST = consequential standardized assessment

AA = more authentic assessment of the same skill domain

Note the consequences of high stakes on alternative assessments



# Key Concept: Haladyna

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**Test Score Pollution: a rise or fall in a score on a test without an accompanying rise or fall in the cognitive or affective outcome allegedly measured by the test**

# Learning from our mistakes in the USA

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- Some policy tools aren't worth considering
    - Scripted curriculum
    - Pacing guides
    - Coaching yes! But monitoring for compliance, no!
  - Deprofessionalizing
-

# Learning from our non-mistakes in the USA

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- NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress
    - Drop in out of the sky: no accountability below the state level
    - Highly professional test development process
    - Highly scrutinized for psychometric and conceptual standards: National Validity Studies Panel
    - Serves as an arbiter for state tests and standards.
    - Protects against test score pollution
-

# Learning from our non-mistakes in the USA



# And in conclusion


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- Two metaphors
  - The radical middle
  - The ultimate accountability
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# The genesis of the radical middle

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- I listened to both sides and thought they were both right
  - Searched for a metaphor of balance
  - Rejected the balance beam
  - Settled on ecological balance
-

 **To achieve**  
**Ecological symbiosis**  
**Interactive Harmony**

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# The truth about pendulum swings

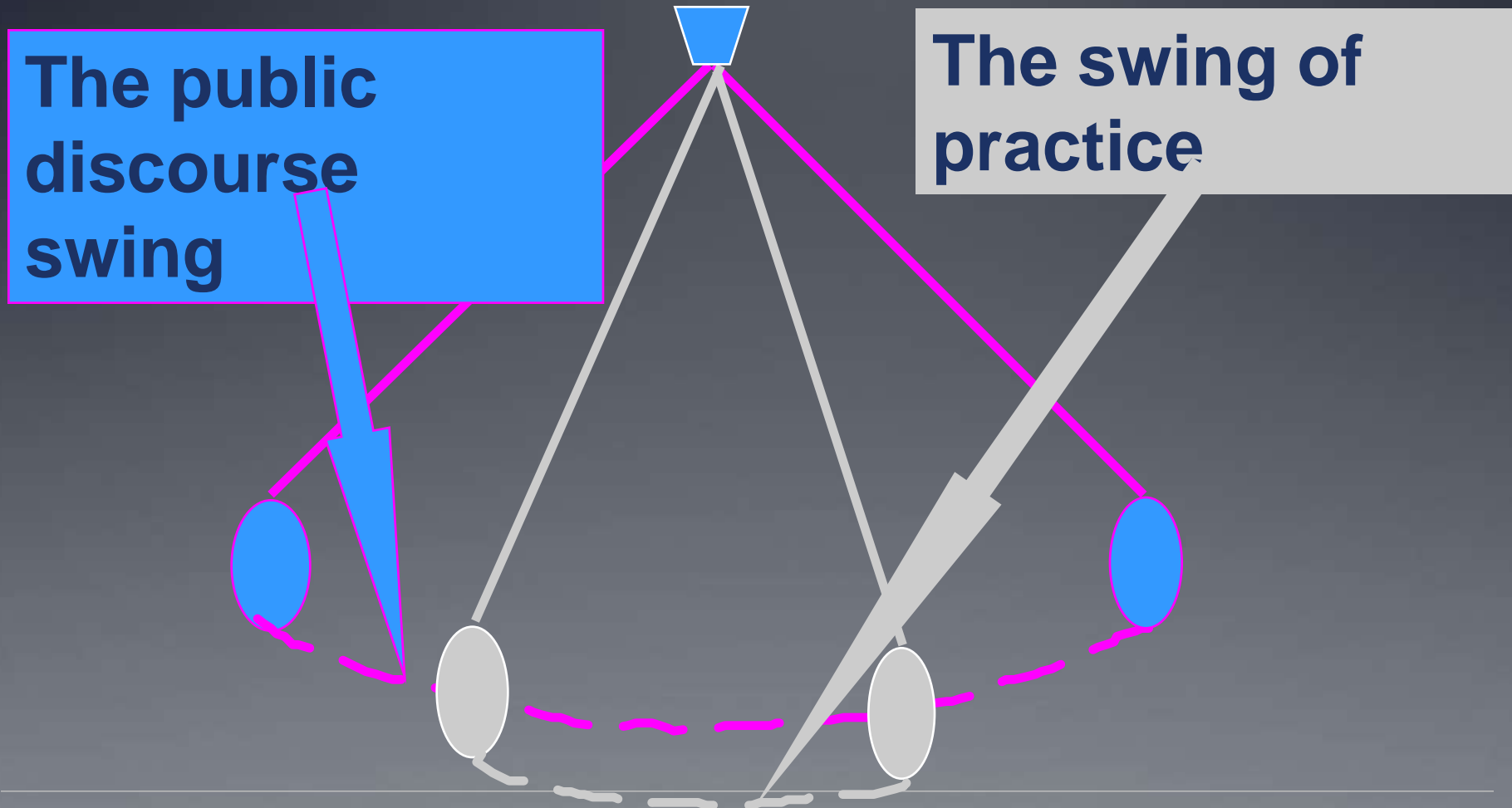
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We tend to think of everything shifting back and forth in a wide arc, both the public policy debate and classroom practice.



# The truth about pendulum swings: there are two



# A role for research

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- A fair reading of the research on reading programs and practices provides us with a guiding metaphor for balance
  - We must abandon the idea that authentic activity and ambitious instruction are **oppositional**
  - In favor of the idea that they are **complementary and synergistic**
  - Held in a delicate ecological balance
-

# You can stand where you like, but as for me . . .

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- I choose to stand in the radical middle
  - on the common ground that brings us together
  - to build the sorts of curriculum and opportunity
  - that will support the development of the kinds of readers we will need in the 21st century.
  - Readers who can think for themselves
-

# Our mottos for the radical middle

- Read me a book today, and I learn a little more, I feel new emotions, and think a bit more deeply. Teach me to read today, and you give me a lifetime of tomorrows in which I can read, and learn, and feel, and think for myself.
  - Better to be helpful than politically correct. Better to be involved than theoretically pure. Better to be searching for common ground than for ideological distinction. Better to be in the middle of a road headed somewhere than stuck in a ditch on either side.
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# Ultimate Accountability

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- Government
  - School authority
  - Kids and their families
-

# Kids are who they are

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They know what they know

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They bring what they bring



# Obama's agenda aside

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

# Learning about RTI

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- Response to Intervention
- Watch out for this one!!!!  
Why?
- Beguiling
- Frought with conspiracies of good intentions...



# What's not to like?

<b>Individualized Instruction</b>	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.
<b>Responsive Assessment</b>	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.
<b>Dynamic Assessment</b>	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?
<b>“Goldilocks” Pedagogy</b>	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)
<b>Programs fail; students don't</b>	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...

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## ■ Which model gets used?

- Standard Protocol Model
- Problem-solving Model

## ■ What counts as evidence of progress?

- Enabling Skills
  - Global measures of reading and writing
-

# Which model? Standard Protocol

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- 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

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## ■ 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 rather than the logic of successively intensive safety nets
-

# Standard Protocol Issues

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- Treatment Resisters: Kids who defy our best efforts to offer assistance
  - Alternative: Kid resistant programs
-

# Which model? Problem-solving

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- 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

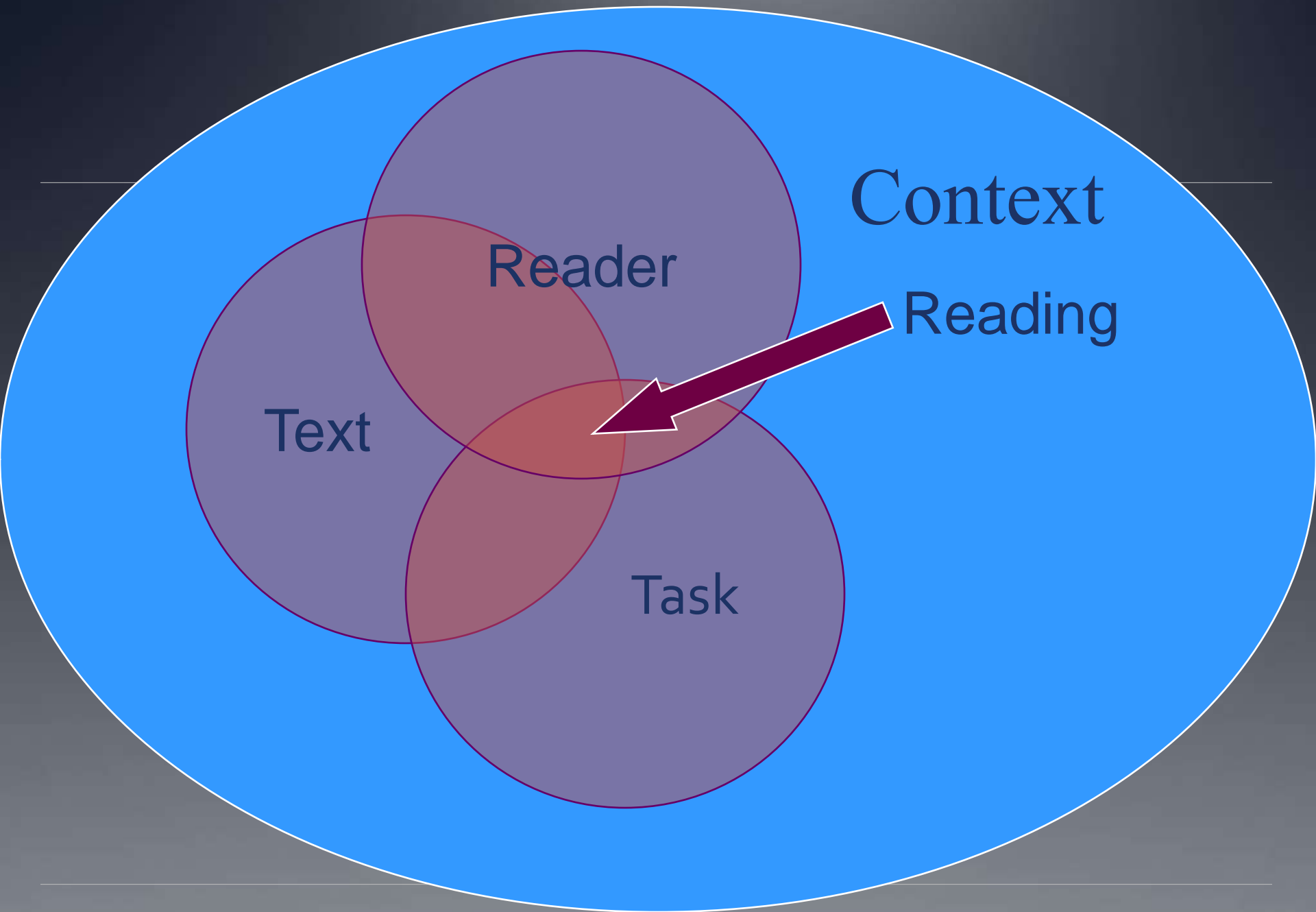
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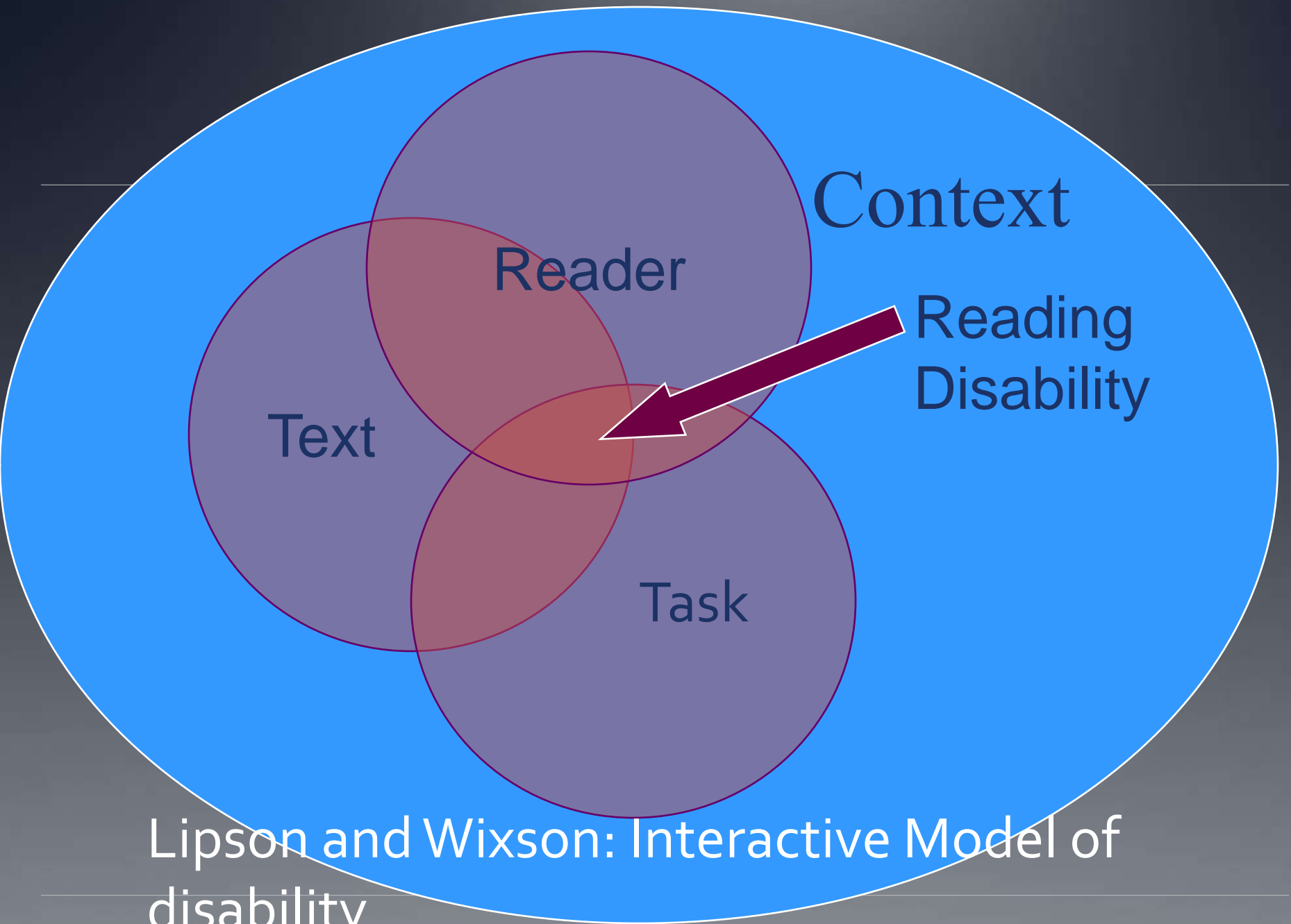
- Assumes a lot
    - Trustworthy diagnostic tools
    - Match instruction to assessment
    - Teaching to weaknesses actually works
-

# Research on RTI

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- 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
-





Lipson and Wixson: Interactive Model of disability

# Learning about reading reform

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- 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?
-

# Learning about Vocabulary

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

# Learning about Adolescent Literacy

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- Identity
  - Engagement
  - Pedagogy
  - Disciplinary Literacy
  - Genre Literacy
-

# Learning about comprehension

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- 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
-

# Learning about just plain reading

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- Start with the assumption that reading begets reading
  - Find out why
  - Active ingredients: conditions under which assigning precious school time
-

# What we still need to learn

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



# Are you ready to say uncle?

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- So much to learn...
  - Carpe diem!
  - Carpe gnaritas!
-

# Reading the Australian Scene

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- National Standards
    - After a decade of push out to the states, we are going back to them
      - Gates is pushing them
      - Smaller the grain size, the more likely they are to do mischief
  - National Assessment
    - NAEP is a pretty good model
    - Drop in out of the sky
      - No point in teaching to it
      - Curriculum-free
      - Acts as a ballast for low quality-low challenge state tests
-

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## ● Press Problems

- We had a big problem in the mid to late 1990s
  - People believed the early phonics results
  - The Big Phonics lobby was more powerful when it was reporting preliminary results
  - Hold them to the highest standards
- We had a recent problem vis a vis Arne Duncan and Linda Darling Hammond