

Reading in High School: Strategies for Teaching Comprehension in Secondary School Content Area Classrooms

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Based on

- Chapter to be published soon:
 - Moje, E. B., & Speyer, J. (in press). The reality of challenging texts in high school science and social studies: How teachers can mediate comprehension. In K. Hinchman & H. Thomas (Eds.), *Best Practices in Adolescent Literacy*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Slides available at www.umich.edu/~moje



What is the main idea?

Comprehend This . . .

Emergency Quota Act of 1921

AN ACT

To limit the immigration of aliens into the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled...

Sec. 2. (a) That the number of aliens of any nationality who may be admitted under the immigration laws to the United States in any fiscal year shall be limited to **3 per centum** of the number of foreign born persons of such nationality resident in the United States as determined by the United States census of **1910**.

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- What makes this text easy to read?

- What makes this text difficult to read?

Foreign-Born Residents by Selected Country of Origin, 1890-1920

<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>1890</i>	<i>1910</i>	<i>1920</i>
Great Britain	1,251,402	1,221,283	1,135,489
Ireland	1,871,509	1,352,251	1,037,234
Germany	2,784,894	2,311,237	1,686,108
Italy	1,887	1,343,125	1,610,113
Romania	NA	937,884	1,139,979
Poland	48,557	65,923	102,823

Immigration Statistics, 1920-1926

		Country of Origin		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Entering U.S.</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Eastern Europe</i>	<i>Italy</i>
1920	430,001	38,471	3,913	95,145
1921	805,228	51,142	32,793	222,260
1922	309,556	25,153	12,244	40,319
1923	522,919	45,759	16,082	46,674
1924	706,896	59,490	13,173	56,246
1925	294,314	27,172	1,566	6,203
	304,488	25,528	1,596	8,253

Understanding this text depends on . . .

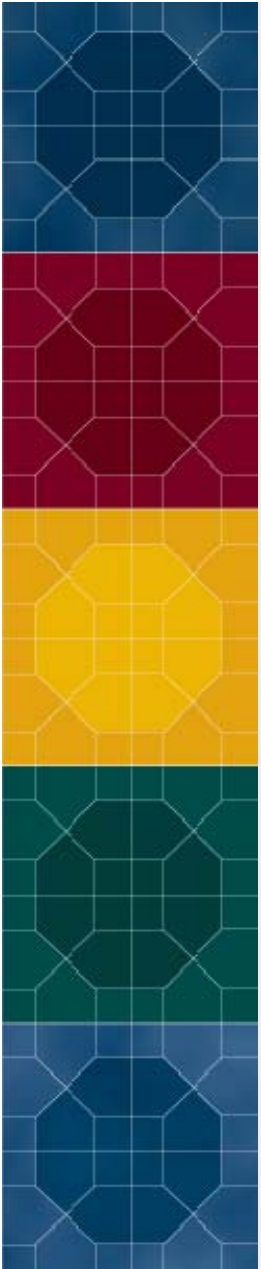
That the number of **aliens** of any nationality who may be admitted under the immigration laws to the United States in any **fiscal year** shall be limited to **3 per centum** of the number of foreign born persons of such nationality **resident** in the United States as determined by the United States **census** of **1910**. This provision shall not apply to the following, and they shall not be counted in **reckoning** any of the percentage limits provided in this Act . . .

- Knowledge
 - Semantic
 - Mathematical
 - Historical
 - Geographical
 - Discursive
 - Pragmatic



Understanding this text also depends on . . .

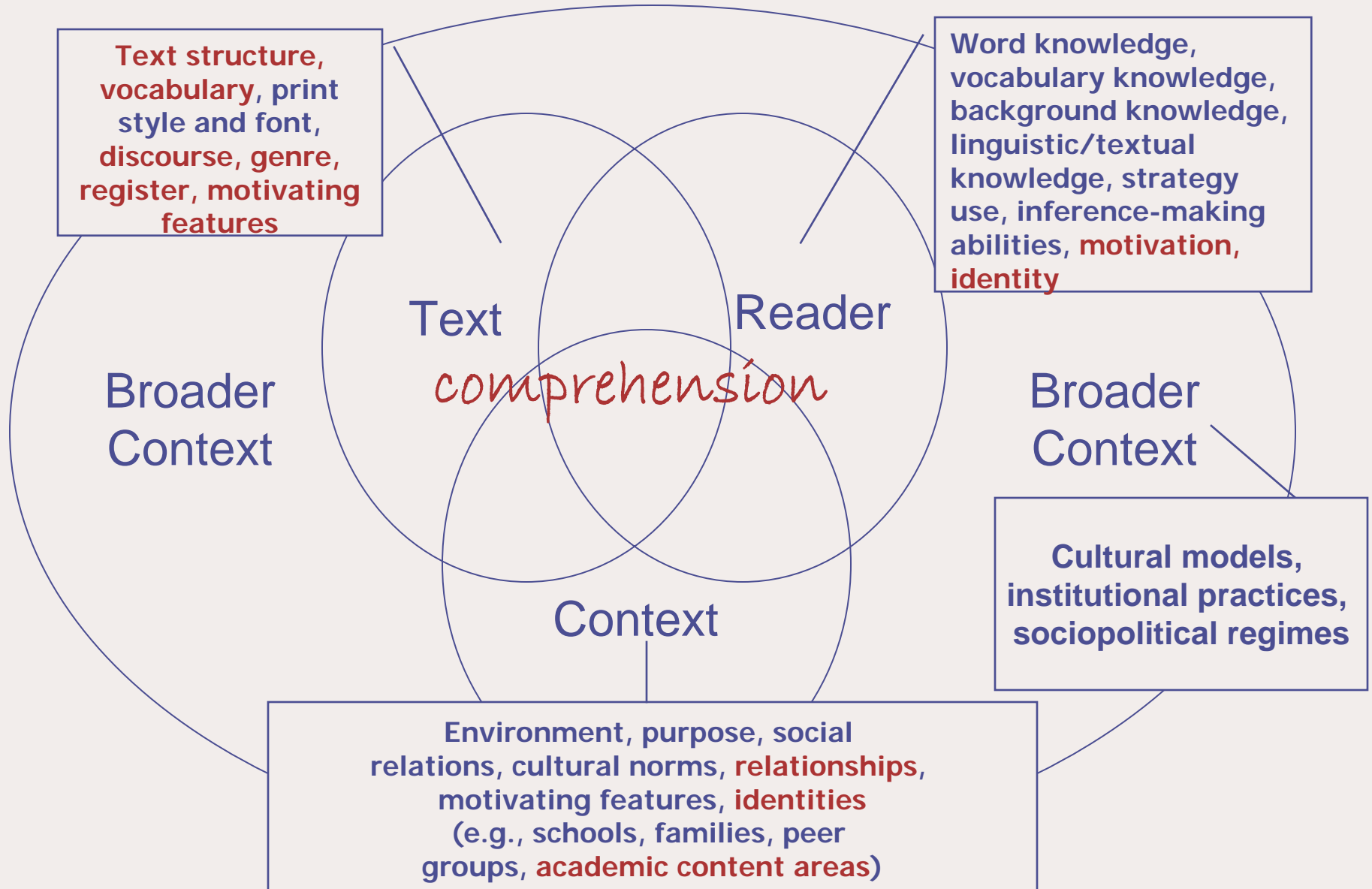
- Recognition that one should get information, ideas, perspectives from texts
- Recognition that texts can be questioned
- Knowledge of how to access relevant information
- Ability to make sense of relevant information



Understanding this text depends on more than just the knowledge and skills the reader brings to the text . . .

It also depends on the intersection of reader experiences, knowledge, and interest, with the demands of the text and your goals of instruction

Model of Literate Practice





Building on Students' Backgrounds, Knowledge, and Interest

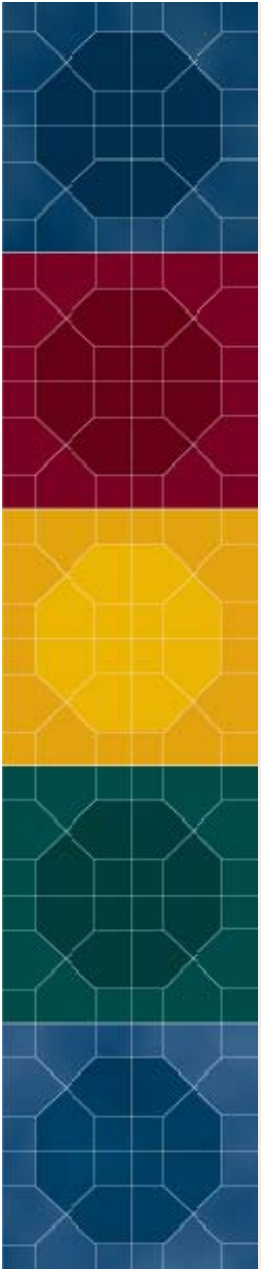


Possibilities

- Students'
 - high engagement in topic
 - opinions
 - rich experience base
 - rich youth culture vocabulary
 - interest in challenging immigration law

Challenges

- Students'
 - lack of engagement in text
 - self-interested perspectives
 - lack of broad and deep knowledge
 - lack of technical vocabulary
 - lack of critical literacy skills



Some Practices and Strategies for Building Necessary Knowledge and Skills



Content-Area Literacy Teaching Practices vs. Strategies

- Literacy Teaching Practices
 - are routines or habits that match what people do in your discipline
 - provide a framework for thinking
 - provide organization for instruction
- Literacy Teaching Strategies are
 - tools for helping youth learn reading and writing skills
 - chosen based on the purpose of the lesson, the demands of the text, and the needs of your students



Purpose Setting

- Free writing
- Advanced organizers
- Prediction activities (preview guides; anticipation/reaction guides)
- K-W-L
- Images



Whole-Group Knowledge Building

- Read texts together
- Talk about the texts (think alouds)
- Make texts visible (make words visible)
- Defining words; interpreting nuanced meanings
- Reading charts and tables



Sonnets.

I.

The New Colossus. Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightening, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Emma Lazarus, 1883.
(Written in aid of Bartholdi Pedestal Fund)



Questioning

- Pressing for understanding
- Turning to texts
- Specific feedback



Visualization

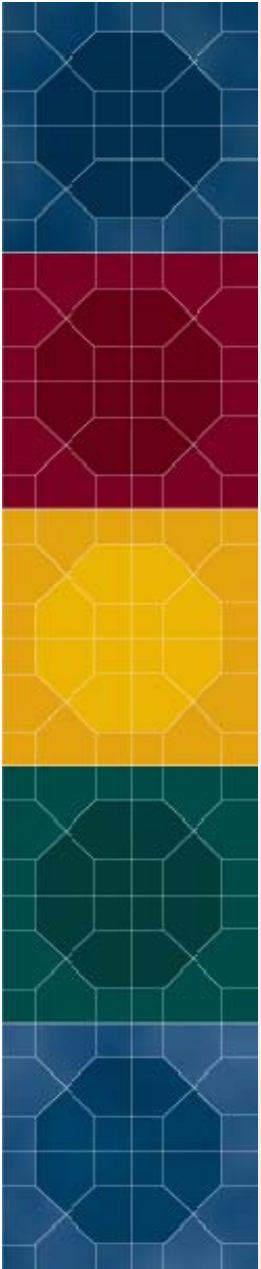
- Read texts aloud and ask students to visualize and to describe or to draw what they hear
- Have students illustrate the main points of the text (great assessment tool, as well)
- Provide images to build visualization skills





Summarization

- Synthesize across texts
 - “Coming back around”
- Refer back to texts
 - To ideas or concepts
 - To key actors, events, or findings
 - To procedures
 - To words or phrases
 - To images

- 
- The following classes shall be excluded from admission to the United States ... All idiots, insane persons, epileptics, and persons who have been insane within five years previously; paupers; persons likely to become a public charge; professional beggars; persons afflicted with a loathsome or with a dangerous contagious disease; persons who have been convicted of a felony or other crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude.

- --32
Stat. 1214, sec. 2 of 1903
US Statutes at Large

- "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free," The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."
- Lazarus, 1883



Summing Things Up



What Does Comprehension Instruction Require of Us?

- Knowledge of students' interests, knowledge, and skills
 - Relationships with students and knowledge of students/community
 - Ability to maintain student engagement
- Disciplinary knowledge
 - Facts
 - Discursive styles



What Does Comprehension Instruction Require of Us?

- Knowledge of how to build relevant knowledge and skills for finding and interpreting information
- Knowledge of how to support reasoned critique
 - . . . While acknowledging passionate beliefs



For more information . . .

www.umich.edu/~moje