

# Providing for Struggling Readers in an Efficient Way: Considerations and Practices for Establishing Sustainable School-Wide Literacy Models at the Secondary Level

# Agenda

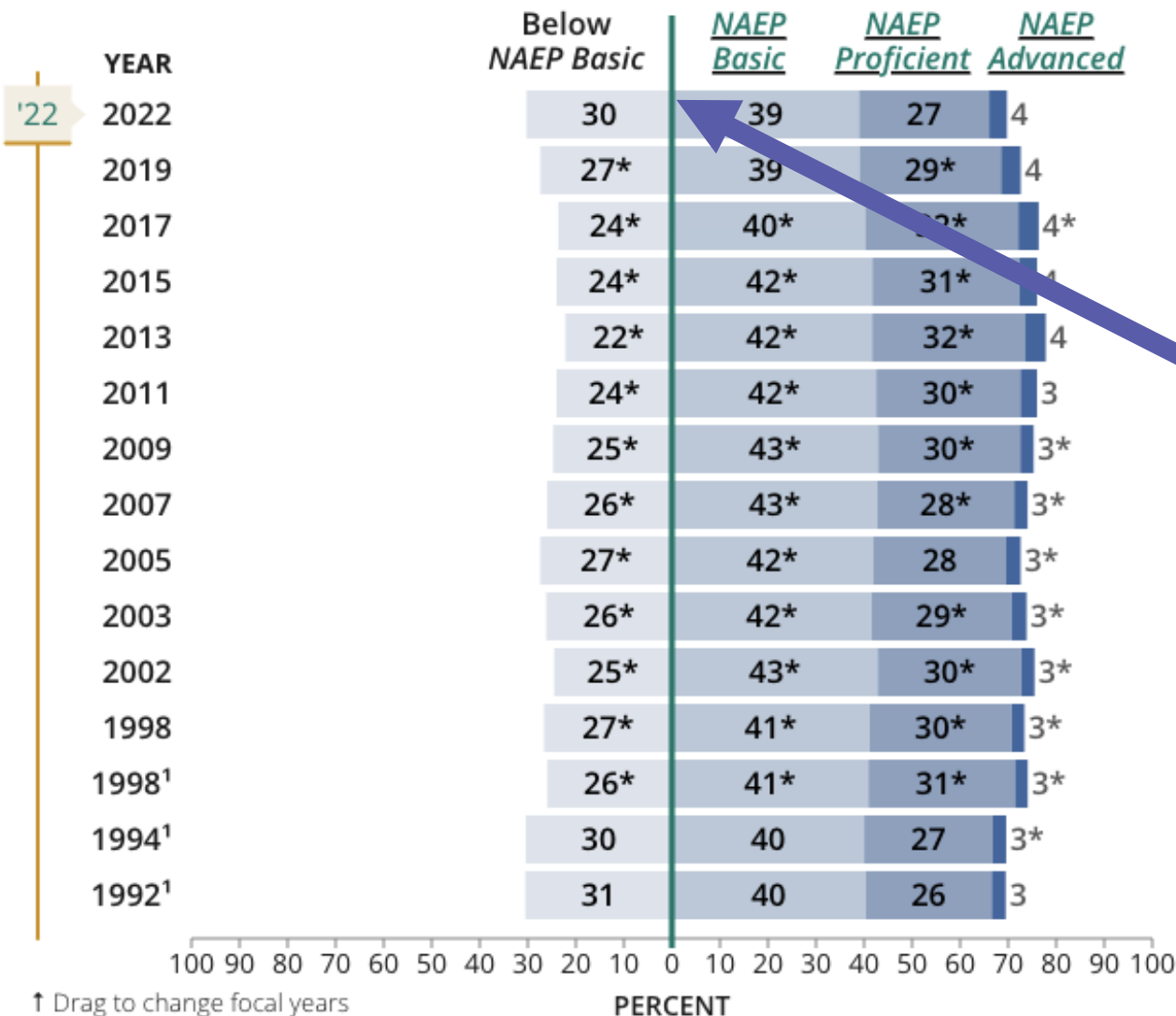
- Background
  - State of Adolescent Literacy
  - What Works for Students at the Secondary Level?
- Practice and School-Level Support Considerations
  - Example: PACT Plus and PACT Instructional Practices (overview!)
  - A Model of Sustainability of Tier 1 Evidence-Based Literacy Practices
- AIM Coaching
  - The PACT Practices: How Did We Make Adaptations Based on Lessons Learned from PACT Plus?
  - How Were We Responsive Based on Lessons Learned about School-Level Support?
- Final Reflection and Q & A

# Acknowledgements

- This work was supported by the following grants:
  - H326M150016 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, to The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Maryland: **PACT Plus**; <https://meadowscenter.org/project/pact-plus/>
  - R324A200012 from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education: **AIM Coaching IES**; [www.aimcoaching.org](http://www.aimcoaching.org)
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The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the U.S. Department of Education.

# Many Middle School Students Struggle with Reading



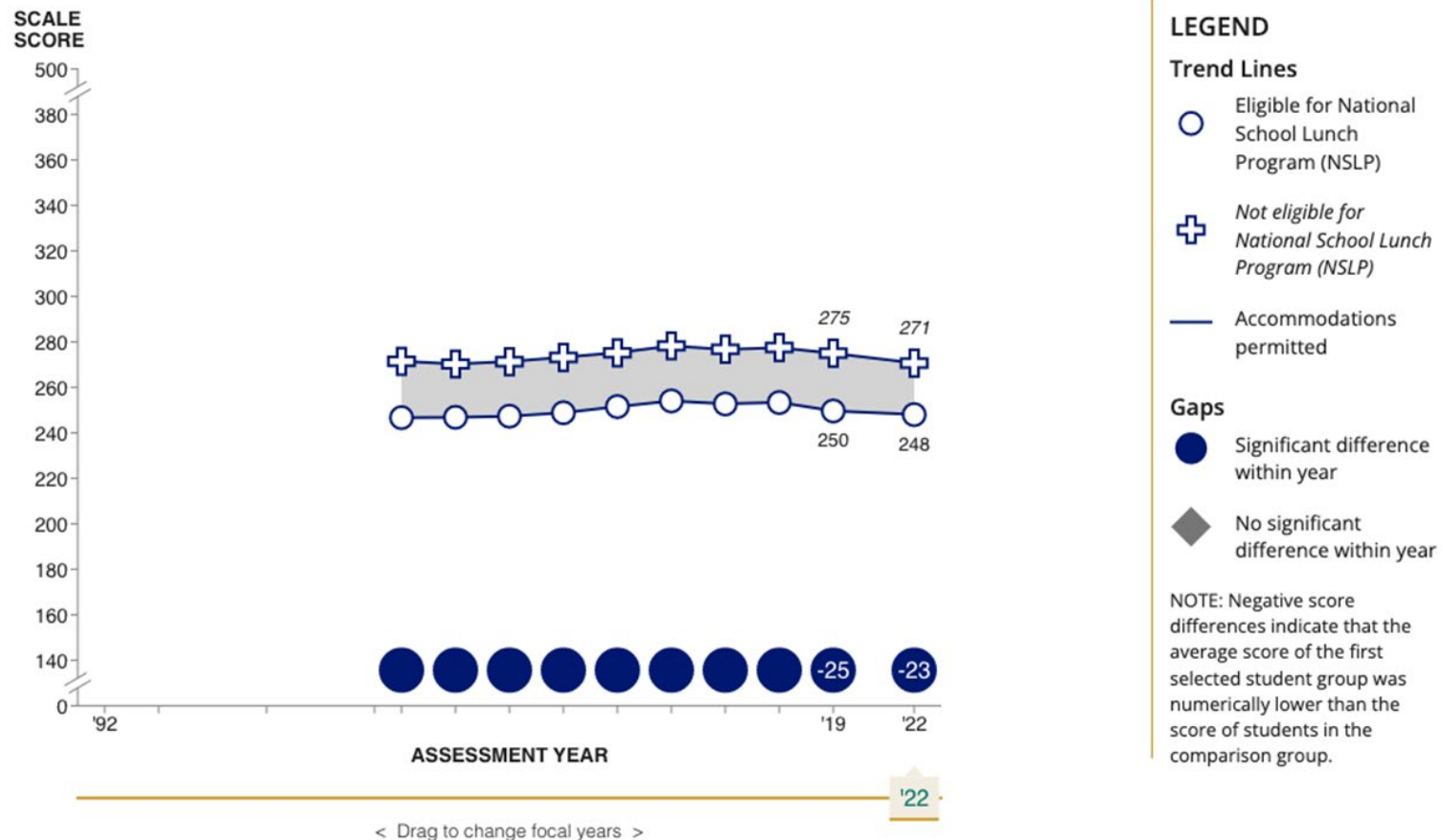
## NAEP Basic

- locate information in a text
- identify main idea
- identify theme
- identify author's purpose
- make simple inferences
- interpret meaning of a word as it is used in text

# Performance is Lower for Some Groups

## 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Receive Free or Reduced Lunch

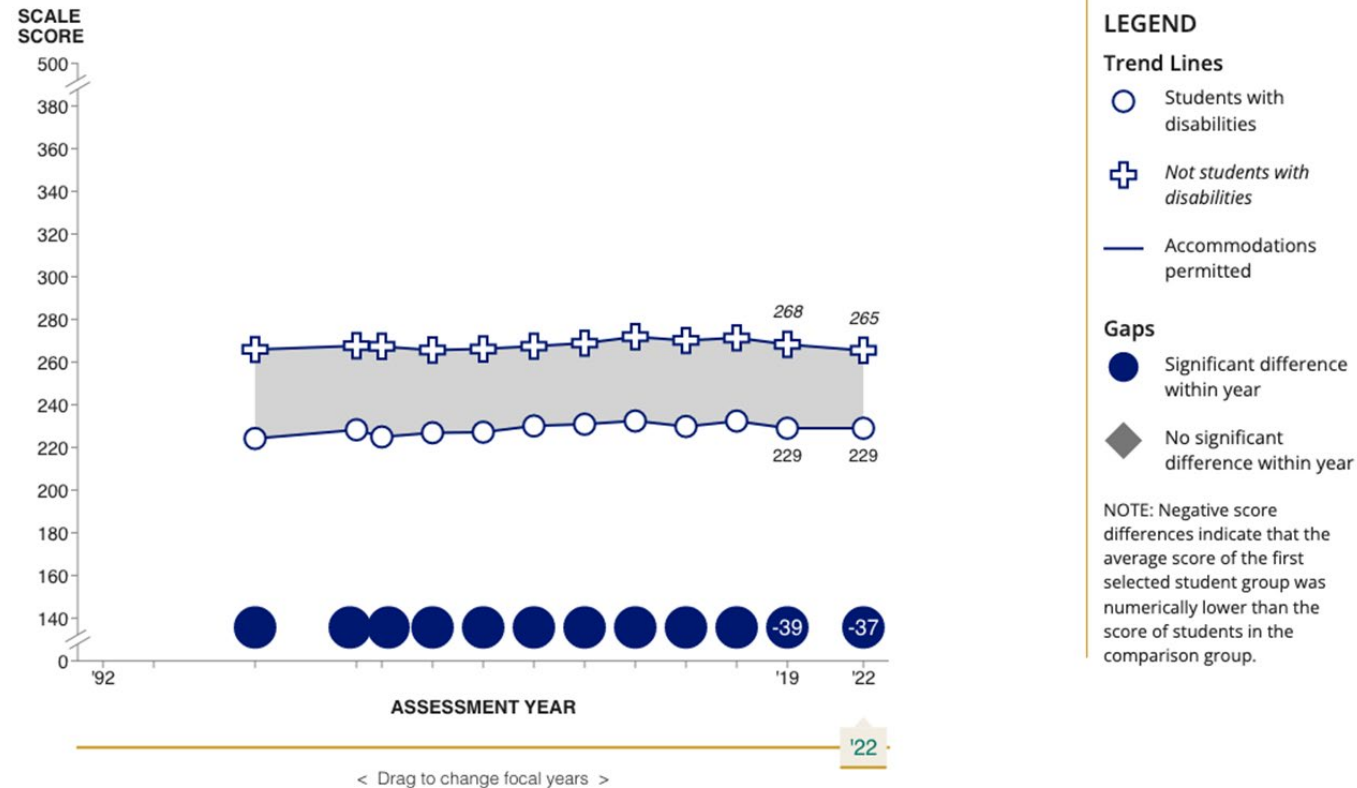
FIGURE | Trend in eighth-grade NAEP reading average scores and score gaps, by eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)



# Performance is Lower for Some Groups

## 8<sup>th</sup> Graders With Disabilities

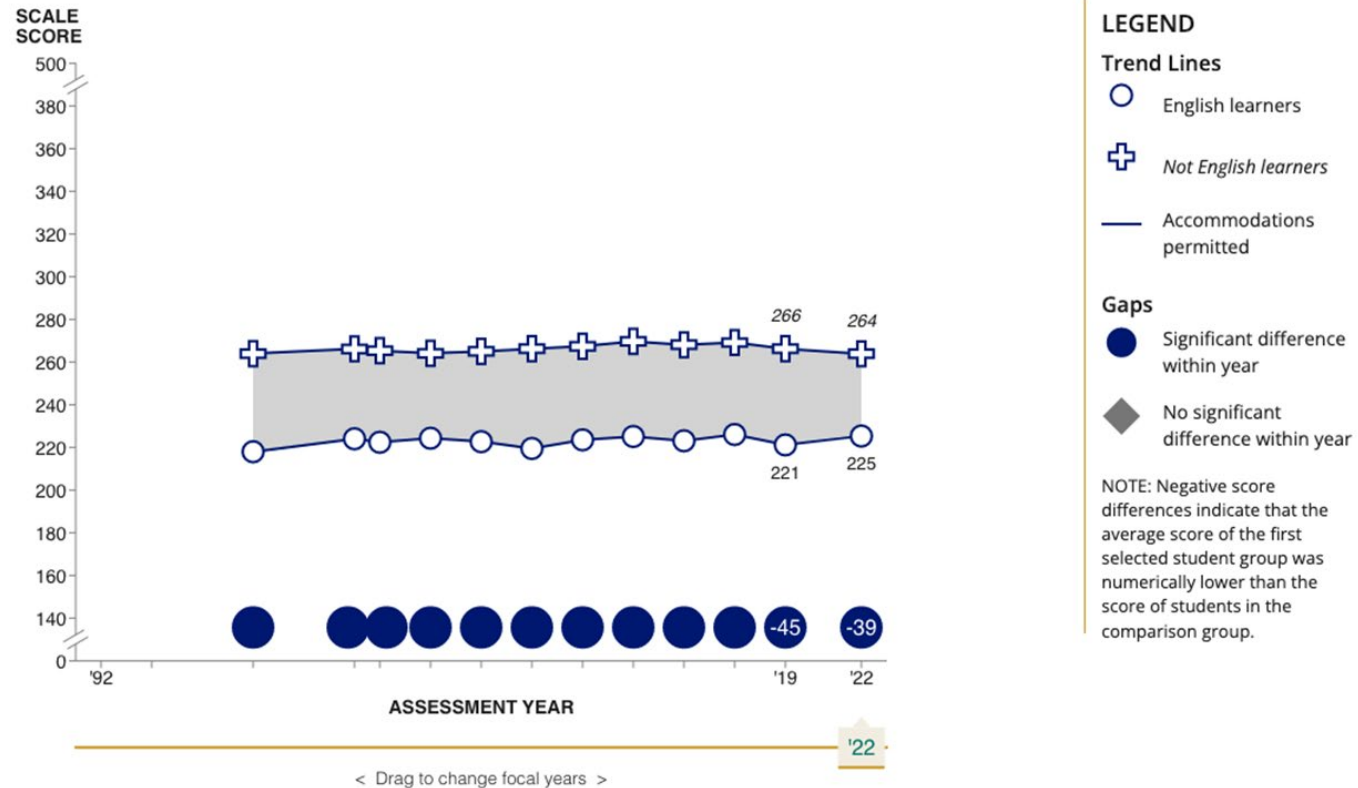
FIGURE | Trend in eighth-grade NAEP reading average scores and score gaps, by status as students with disabilities



# Performance is Lower for Some Groups

## 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Are English Learners

FIGURE | Trend in eighth-grade NAEP reading average scores and score gaps, by status as English learners



# What Works for Students at the Secondary Level?



# School-wide Literacy Models

Provide students access to content through **text reading across the content areas with co-occurring literacy instruction...and supplemental intervention** for students who need more support.

# Guidance from the Institute of Education Sciences

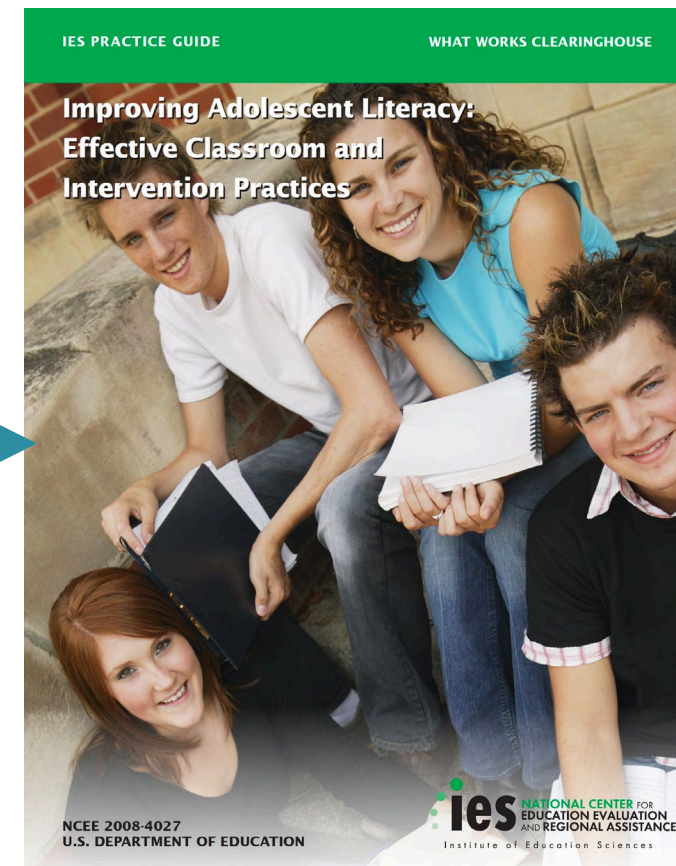
U.S. Department of  
Education

Institute of Education  
Sciences

Research arm of the  
U.S. DOE

Independent and  
Non-Partisan

Mission: Provide  
scientific evidence on  
which to ground  
education practice.



aim  
coaching

# IES Recommendations Based on Strong or Moderate Scientific Evidence

Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.

Strong

Explicit Instruction

“They always tell us to get the main idea but no one ever shows us—how do you [actually] get the main idea?”

Practice

Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.

Moderate

Corrective Feedback

Make available intensive interventions for struggling readers.

Strong

# Guidance from the Institute of Education Sciences

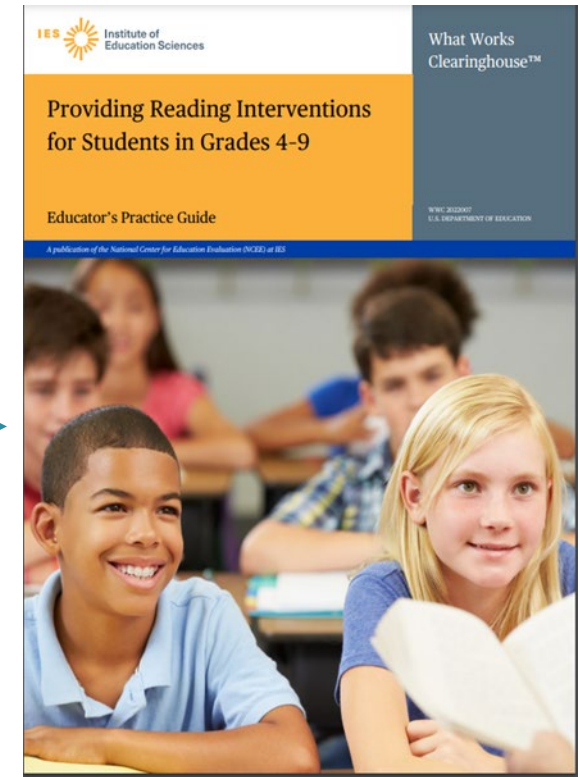
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# IES Recommendations Based on Strong or Moderate Scientific Evidence: Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9 (2022)

Build students decoding skills so they can read complex multisyllabic words

Strong

Provide fluency-building activities to help students read effortlessly

Strong

Routinely use a set of comprehension-building practices to help students make sense of text

Strong

Provide students with opportunities to practice making sense of stretch text.

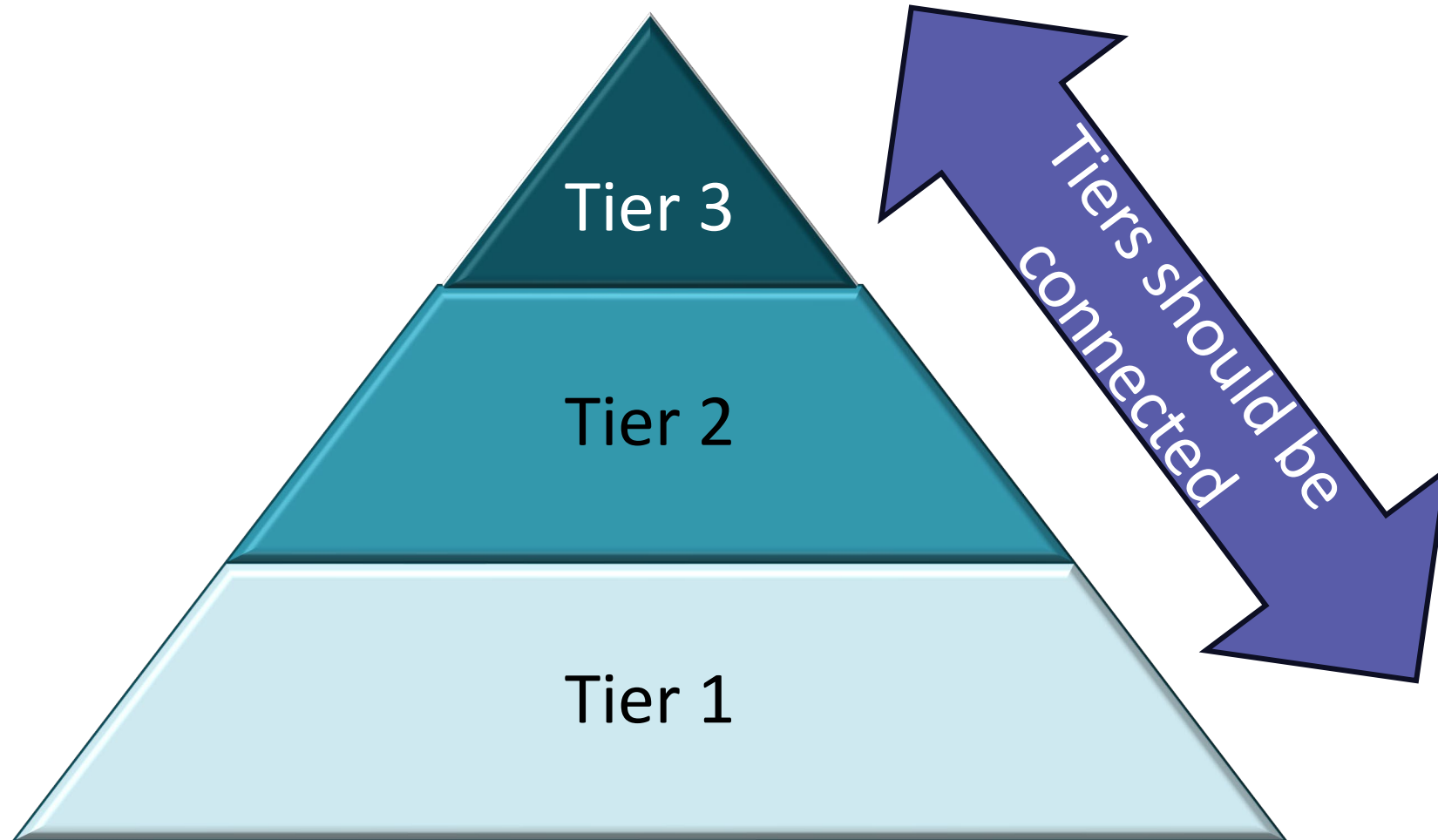
Moderate

Explicit Instruction

Opportunities to Respond and Practice

Corrective Feedback

# Connection Between Tiers of Support



# Example: Connection Between Tiers

Evidence-Based Vocabulary and Comprehension Practices  
(Possibly Some Word Study Practices)

Tier 1

1 Science 

1 Social Studies 

1 ELA 

Topics & Texts

Tiers 2/3

# School-Wide Literacy Models Provide for Struggling Readers in an Efficient Way



- 1 Science 
- 1 Social Studies 
- 1 ELA 
- 5 Reading/SPED



# Practice and School-Level Considerations: Lessons Learned from PACT Plus

# Phase I: PACT

## Unit Based 8<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History

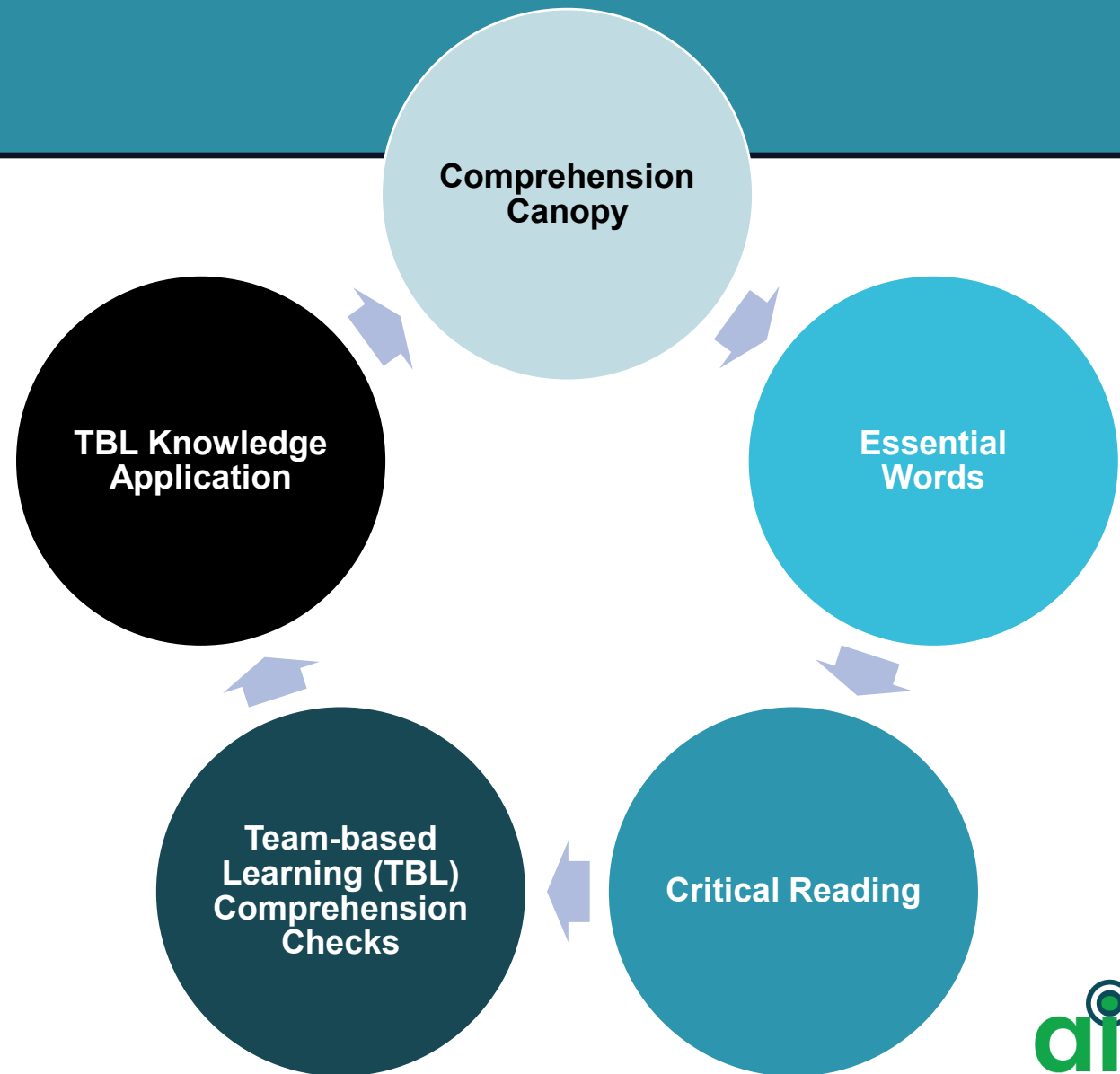
Vaughn et al., 2013



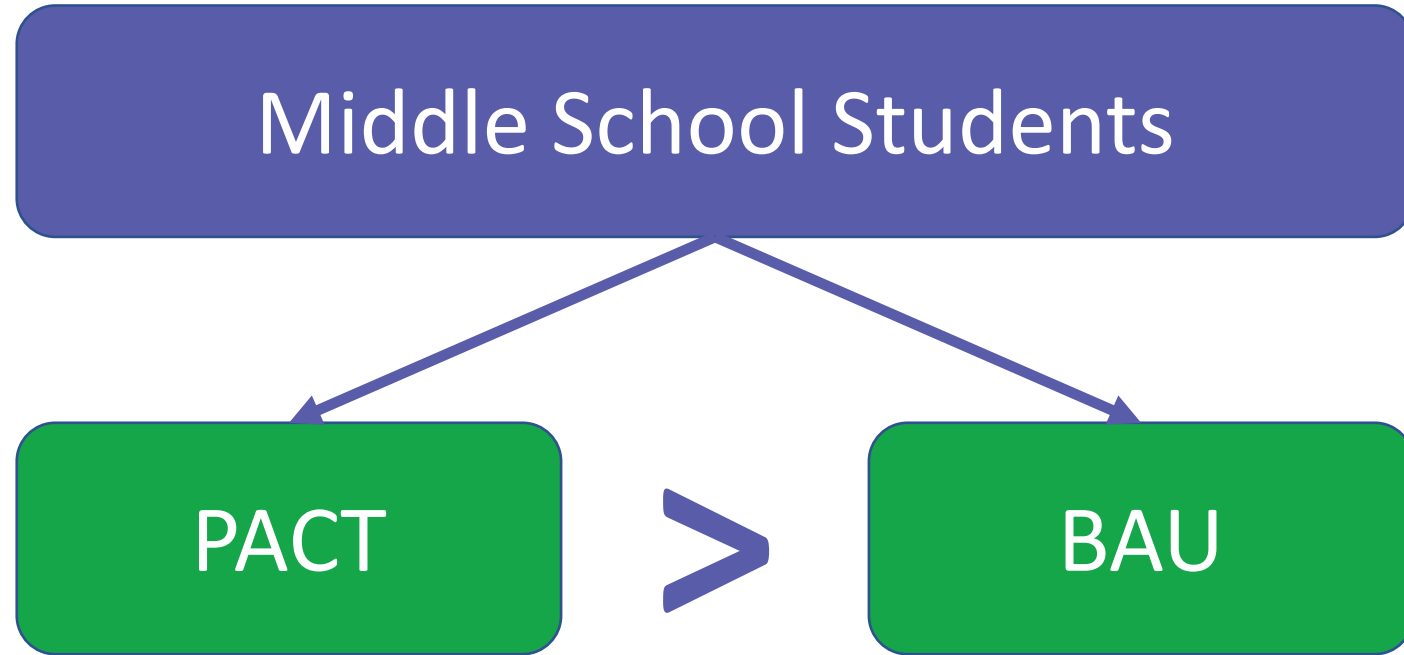
**Institute of  
Education Sciences**



**The Meadows Center**  
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK

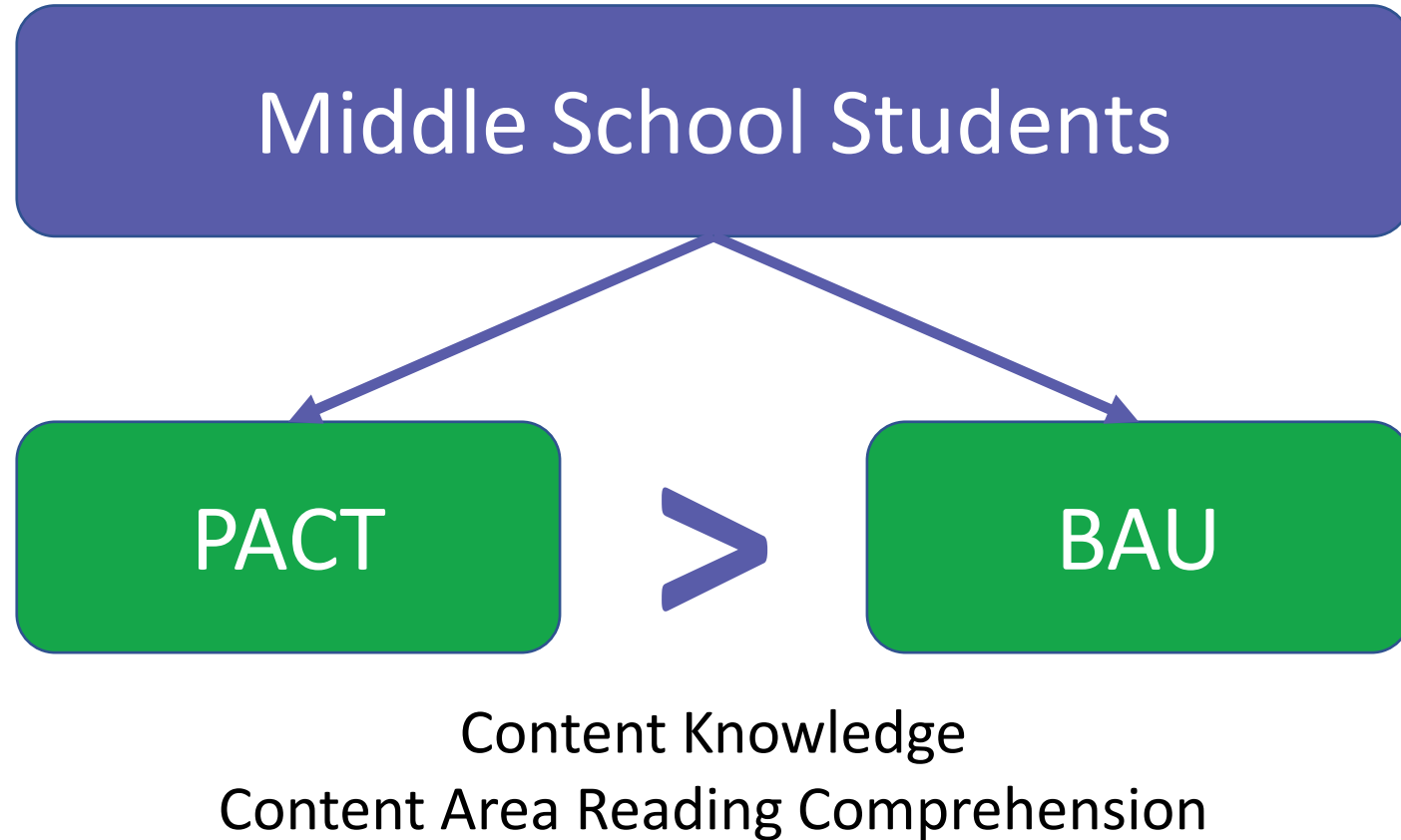


# PACT Efficacy

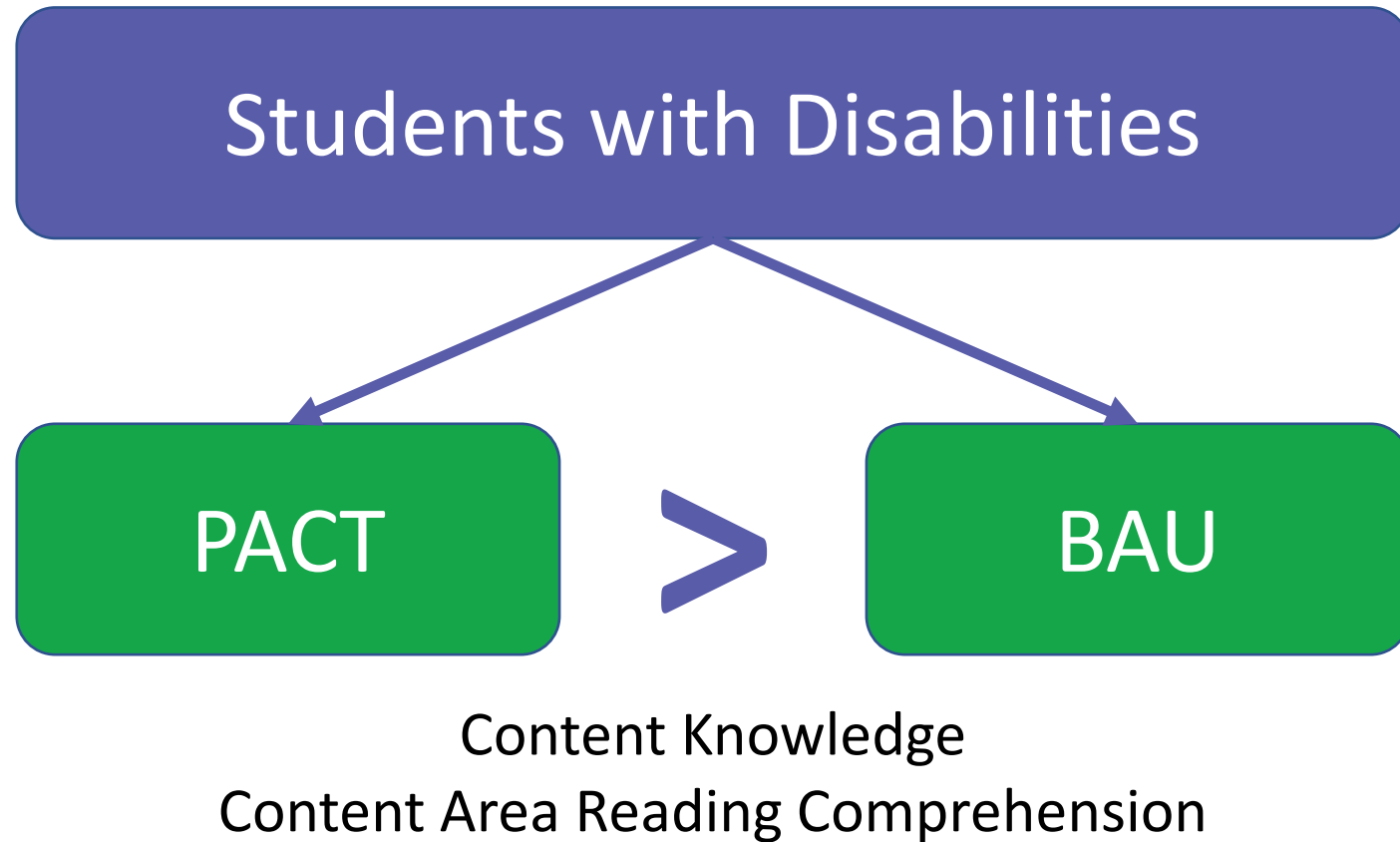


Content Knowledge  
Content Area Reading Comprehension  
General Reading Comprehension

# PACT Efficacy

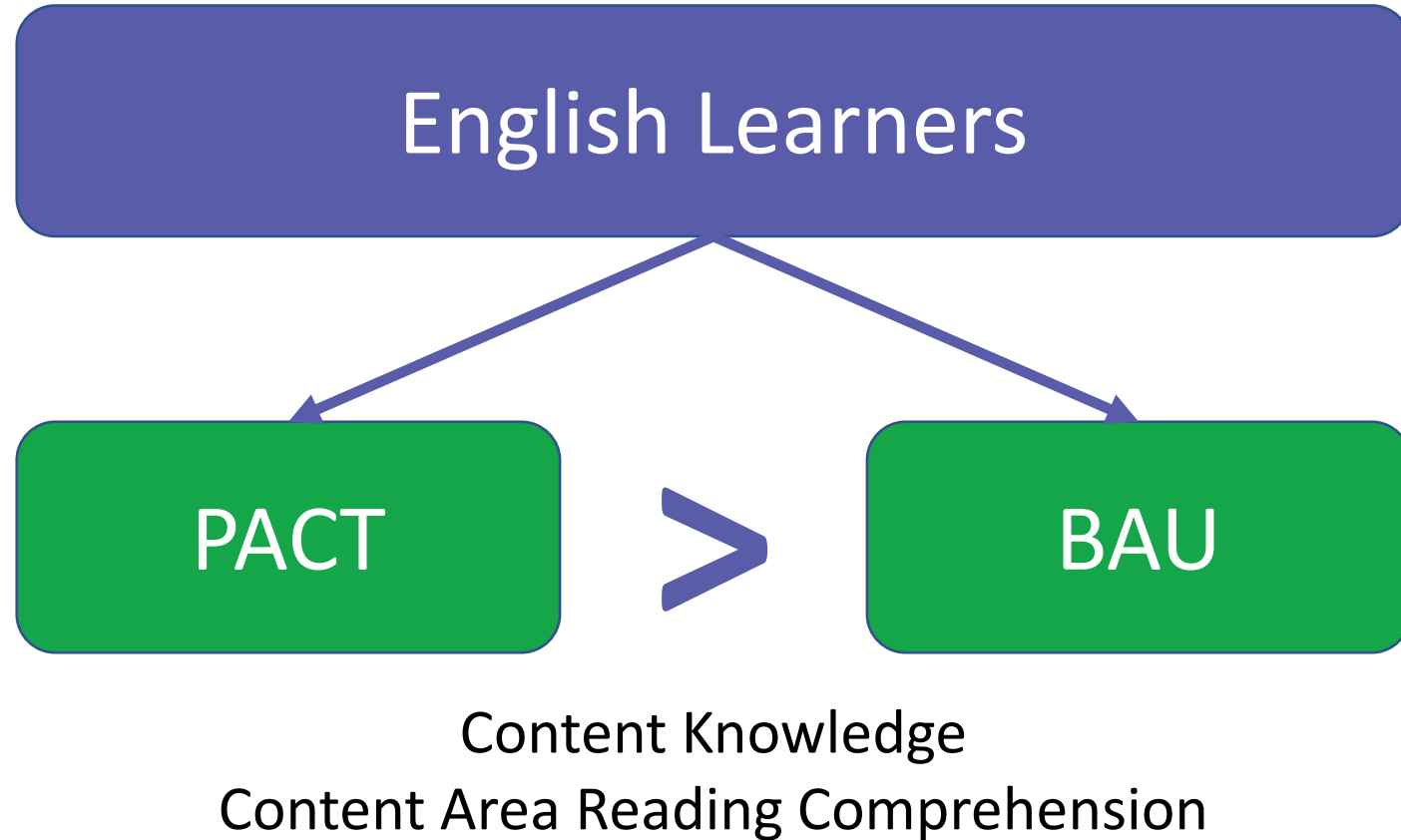


# PACT Efficacy



Swanson et al., 2015

# PACT Efficacy



# PACT Efficacy

English Learners with Disabilities

PACT

>

BAU

Content Knowledge  
Content Area Reading Comprehension

Wanzek et al., 2016

# Phase II Transition to PACT Plus: SW-PACT



- 1 Science 
- 1 Social Studies 
- 1 ELA 
- 5 Reading/SPED



# The PACT Plus School Wide Model

	<b>PACT</b>	<b>Plus</b>
Students	<b>Every student</b> in grades 6, 7, and 8 receives PACT instruction in: Science Social Studies English Language Arts	Every student assigned to a <b>reading intervention class</b> receives an additional dose of PACT
Teachers	All teachers receive <b>initial and follow up professional development</b>  All teachers receive <b>coaching support</b> to meet a goal of highest possible alignment with PACT.	

# SW-PACT Instructional Practices

Comprehension Canopy  
5 minutes

Essential Words  
5 minutes

Critical Reading  
30 minutes

**PACT is curriculum and text independent**

Covers key concepts

- ✓ Typically expository texts
- ✓ Supports lesson or unit objective
- ✓ Links to content standards

Is comprehensible

- ✓ Average instructional level
- ✓ Few unknown words
- ✓ Clearly organized

Promotes student engagement

- ✓ Manageable length (e.g., 4 sections)
- ✓ Worthy of a good discussion

# SW-PACT Instructional Practices

## Comprehension Canopy 5 minutes

- Introduce topic with motivational springboard
- Provide necessary background information

## Essential Words 5 minutes

- Select 1-2 words essential to understanding text
- Use a routine to teach the essential word

## Critical Reading 30 minutes

- Introduce purpose for reading
- Facilitate partner reading + discussion questions for each section of text
- Discuss culminating question

# IES Recommendations Based on Strong or Moderate Scientific Evidence

Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.

Strong

Provide explicit comprehension strategy instruction

Strong

Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation

Moderate

Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.

Moderate

Make available intensive interventions for struggling readers.

Strong

Explicit Instruction

Opportunities to Respond and Practice

Corrective Feedback

## Building Background Knowledge: Diverse Student Population

“Some students have had experience with snow and winter storms; others have not. Some students have seen governments collapse; others have not. Some students have been taught multiplication facts; others have not. Some students have been to every museum in the community; others have not. Some students have access at home to new media texts, while others must depend on schools and libraries for internet access.”

— Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2012

# Turn and Talk

Think about a typical classroom of students in your school.

What is the background knowledge of the kids in that classroom? How does it vary? Why?

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# The Importance of Essential Words

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# What are essential words?

Words, terms, or concepts that:

- are critical for understanding the content
- connect to other important ideas

Understanding essential words supports reading comprehension and content knowledge.

# Essential Words Introductory Routine

## Science

### Nutrients

A substance that plants, animals, and people need to live and grow.



**Related Words:** foods, nutrition

**Example Usage:**  
Some soil is low in nutrients.

**Example:**  
Soil can provide nitrogen, oxygen, and iron.

**Nonexample:**  
Red dye #5 is in foods, but it is not a nutrient.

**Turn and Talk:** What are your favorite things to eat? What nutrients are in your favorite things to eat?

Photo by Klaus Nielsen from Pexels; Photo by pixabay from Pexels.

## Social Studies

### Activist

A person who works to bring about social or political change



**Related Words:** advocate, promoter

**Example Usage:** The activist went to the City Council meeting.

**Example:**  
The school principal met with a group of student activists about the canned food drive that they organized.

**Nonexample:**  
A person's job is to organize a fundraiser.

**Turn and Talk:** What cause do you support that tries to bring about social or political change? Do you consider yourself to be an activist? Why or why not?

Photo by Zackery Irving from Shutterstock; Photo by Gino Santa Maria from Shutterstock

## English Language Arts

### Cope

The act of managing something difficult



**Related Words:** handle, survive

**Example Usage:**  
The student was able to cope with their challenges in math by using a calculator.

**Example:**  
Hobbies, breathing exercises, or asking for help are ways that we cope.

**Nonexample:**  
Humans need food to survive, but eating each day is not a way that humans cope.

**Turn and Talk:**  
When was a time where you had to cope with a difficult situation? What did you do in order to cope?

Photo by flakes for Shutterstock; photo by Andriy Blokhin for Shutterstock

# Essential Word Components

## Nutrients

A substance that plants, animals, and people need to

**Images** should only be used when they clearly represent the essential word.

**Examples and non-examples** should only be used when they clarify the boundaries of a word (i.e., what an essential word does and does not mean).

**Related Words:** foods, nutrition

**Example Usage:**  
Some soil is low in nutrients.

**Example:**  
Soil can provide nitrogen, oxygen, and iron.

**Nonexample:**  
Red dye #5 is in foods, but it is not a nutrient.

**Turn and Talk:** What are your favorite things to eat? What nutrients are in your favorite things to eat?

Photo by Klaus Nielsen from Pexels; Photo by pixabay from Pexels

# Why One Word at a Time?



## Activist

A person who works to bring about social or political change



**Related Words:** advocate, promoter

### Example Usage:

The activist went to the City Council meeting to discuss an unjust rule.

### Example:

The school principal met with a group of student activists about the canned food drive that they organized.

### Nonexample:

A person's job is to organize a fundraiser.

### Turn and Talk:

What cause do you support that tries to bring about social or political change? Do you consider yourself to be an activist? Why or why not?

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# Critical Reading of Text

- Engage students in reading text
- Reading routine to facilitate comprehension
- Student discussion about text

1 of 3

Ecology • Lesson 3

## Ask an Amazon Expert: Why Can't We Afford to Lose the Rainforest?



www.wikimedia.org

(1)

**You've worked in the Amazon for more than 50 years. How have you seen the region change?**

Fifty years ago, there were 3 million people and one highway in the entire Amazon basin. That's an area as large as the United States! Today, there are between 30 million and 40 million people, countless roads, and it's about 20% deforested. The combination of new roads and deforestation has fragmented the rainforest and affected the region's **biodiversity**. **Species** lose their habitat or

can no longer subsist in the small fragments of forests that are left. We know that **ecosystems** with a lot of **biodiversity** are generally stronger and more able to adapt than those with fewer **species**.

But on the plus side, 50 years ago there was only one national park—in Venezuela—and one national forest and one reserve in Brazil. Today, more than 50% of the Amazon is under the protection of national parks and reserves. The real challenge is to move toward a much more unified approach to managing the Amazon.

What changes have humans made in the Amazon region over the past 50 years?

What effects have those interactions had on the region's biodiversity?

"Ask an Amazon Expert" • 2 of 3

Ecology • Lesson 3

(2)

**When we talk about protecting the Amazon, it's hard for many people to relate because they don't feel connected to the region. How can we change that?**

There are actually a lot of **interactions** between our lives and the Amazon, no matter how far away we are.

For example, there's a big, nasty viper called the bushmaster that lives in the Amazon. This snake kills its prey with venom that causes the prey's blood pressure to drop to zero. Scientists in Brazil discovered how this venom affects a human body system called the angiotensin (AN GEE OH TEN SIN) system. This discovery then allowed pharmaceutical scientists to design medicines to treat high blood pressure. Today, millions of people use these medicines. They now have longer, fuller, and more productive lives and they have the venom of a nasty snake far away in the Amazon to thank for it.

An **interaction** that affects everyone on the planet is climate change. Trees absorb carbon dioxide through photosynthesis. When deforestation occurs, there are far fewer trees to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Reforestation—replanting a forest—is an important way of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Amazon is a carbon sink, meaning it stores carbon dioxide that would otherwise contribute to climate change. If the Amazon were destroyed, climate change would dramatically increase.

Why would a person living in Washington, D.C., care about what happens in the Amazon?

How is climate change connected to the health of the Amazon rainforest?



# Implementation Summary

- Not enough supplemental intervention classes; the ones that did exist were using a program so we were limited with what support we could provide in these classes
- Focused on Tier 1 content-area classes
- Poor implementation overall
- If implementing, it wasn't always with high levels of fidelity...teacher levels of skill and will varied

BUT one school had some high implementers....



# Lessons Learned: A Model of Sustainability of Evidence-Based Tier 1 Literacy Practices

School-Level Supports: Prioritization of Practices and Ensuring Effectiveness



## PACT Plus

Wexler et al. (2022)



# Phase III: AIM Coaching



## IES:

To evaluate SW-PACT + AIM Coaching under *rigorous research conditions*—with a focus on promise of effectiveness

*(Wexler, Swanson, & Roberts)*

## OSEP:

To implement SW-PACT+AIM Coaching with scaffolded research team support and evaluate SW-PACT + AIM Coaching *under routine conditions*—with a focus on feasibility + social validity

*(Wexler, Reutebuch, & Scammacca)*

2020

The SW-PACT Practices: How Did We Make Adaptations Based on Lessons Learned from PACT Plus?

# 1. We added Get the Gist Routine

Comprehension  
Canopy  
5 minutes

- Introduce topic with motivational springboard
- Provide necessary background information

Essential Words  
5 minutes

- Select 1-2 words essential to understanding text
- Use a routine to teach the essential word

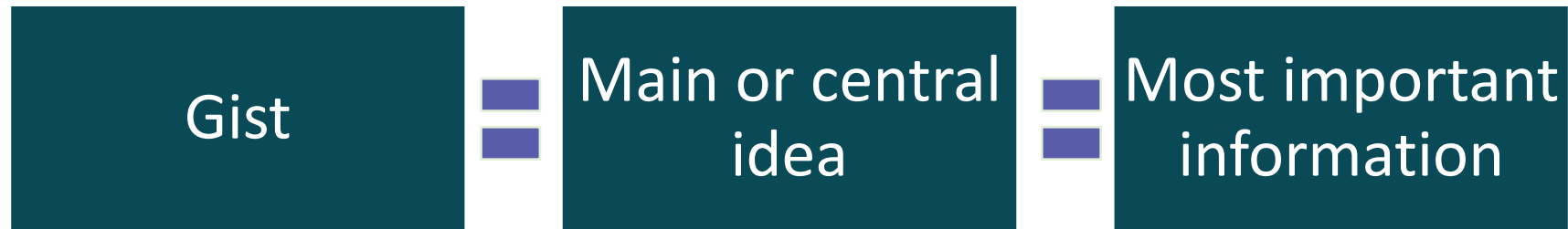
Critical Reading  
30 minutes

- Introduce purpose for reading
- Facilitate Partner Reading + Get the Gist
- Discuss culminating question

# Get the Gist

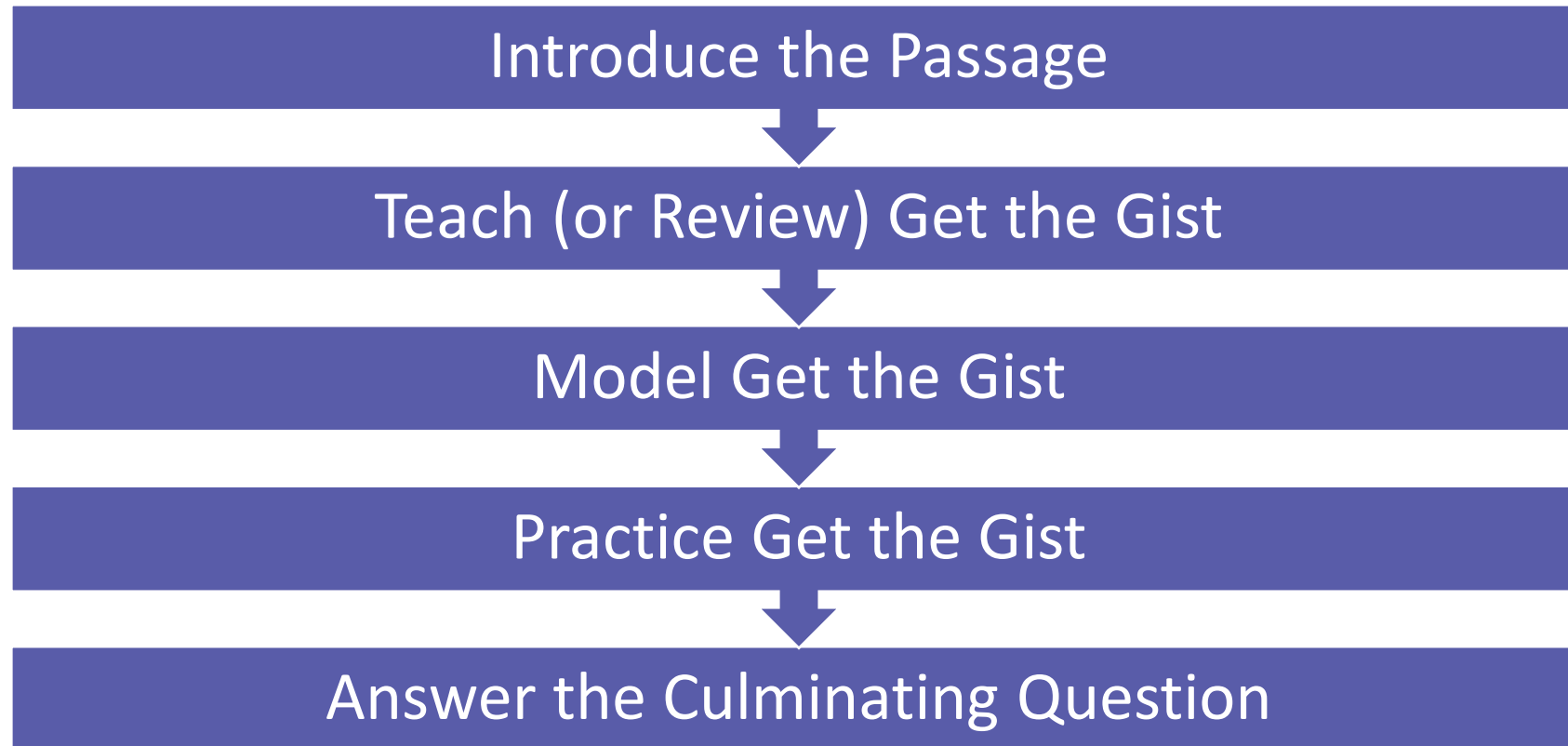
Collaborative Strategic Reading (Vaughn et al., 2011)

Strategy to identify the **gist** of a section of text



Strategy to identify the **most important information** about a section of text

# Critical Reading Structure



## Teach (or Review) Get the Gist

1. Answer: *Who or what is this section mostly about?*

2. Answer: *What is the most important information about the who or what?*

3. Write a gist statement.

# Gist Pointers

## Get the Gist Cue Card

**Step 1 – Answer: Who or what is this section mostly about?**

- Is anyone or anything mentioned most frequently?
- Be sure to check pronouns, pictures, captions, and headings.

**Step 2 – Answer: What is the most important information about the who or what?**

- What information relates to the:
  - who or what,
  - culminating question, and/or
  - essential word(s)?
- Be sure to check pictures, captions, and headings.

**Step 3 – Write a gist statement.**

- Be sure your statement identifies:
  - the most important who or what and
  - the most important information about the who or what.
- Be sure your statement is short but complete with:
  - a capital letter,
  - a period, and
  - approximately 10 words.



# Model Get the Gist

The Venus flytrap is an insect-eating plant that lives mostly on the East Coast. Found primarily in swampy parts of the United States, like North and South Carolina, the Venus flytrap has colorful pink and green hues. Like most other plants, Venus flytraps get some nutrients from the soil, but since swampy areas tend to have soil that is nutrient-poor, it is hard for the plant to get nutrients from there. As a result, the flytrap has evolved to not only rely on the soil to survive. The Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant because it catches insects.

Section 1	
Who/What?	Most Important Information
Venus flytrap	
Gist Statement	

## 2. We Added Weekly Implementation Options

Minute	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5		Comprehension Canopy	Essential Words		
10		Essential Words			
15		CR Sections 1-4 + Culminating Question			
20					
25					
30					
35					
40					
45					

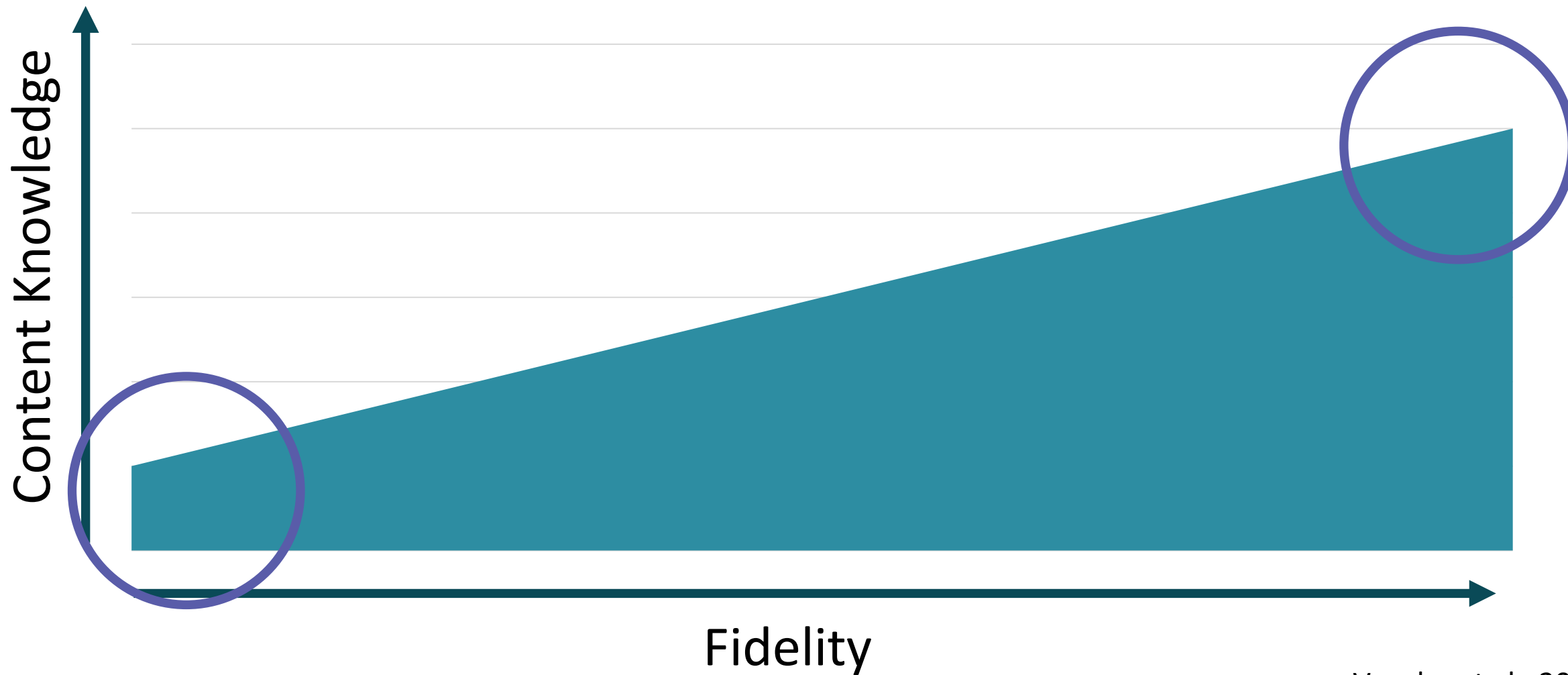
# PACT Implementation Across the Week

Minute	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5	Comprehension Canopy	CR Section 2	CR Section 3	CR Section 4 + Culminating Question	
10	Essential Words				
15	CR Section 1				
20					
25					
30					
35					
40					
45					

## 3. We Acknowledged a Need for Customization

- We want teachers to implement these practices, but we want the practices themselves to still be perceived as ‘adaptable’.
  - What are the active ingredients (non-negotiables)? What are negotiables?

# Fidelity Matters: PACT Study



# Tension Between Fidelity and Students' Needs



**Fidelity**



**Students'  
Needs**

EDUCATION OPINION

# Why Is Fidelity Always Seen as the New Four-Letter Word?

By George Toman — January 05, 2020 ⌚ 6 min read



## Fidelity in Teaching Young Children: Two Stories of Professional Integrity

Daniel J. Castner 2021

# Fidelity Accounting for Students' Needs

Fidelity

Fidelity  
and  
Students'  
Needs

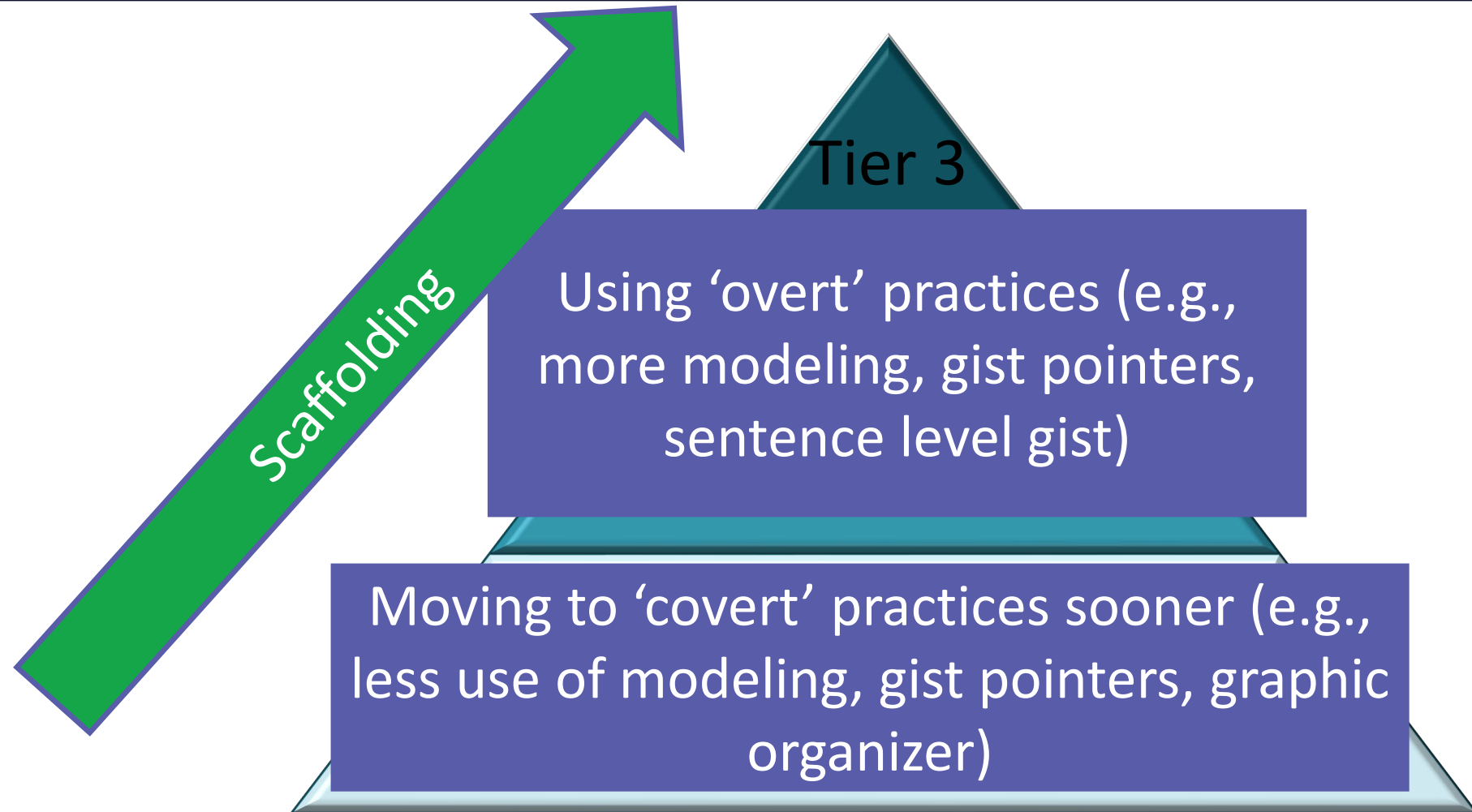
Students'  
Needs



# SW-PACT Flexibility

Practice	Non-Negotiables	Negotiables – when appropriate
Comprehension Canopy	Provides background information necessary to comprehend the text	Uses springboard format other than visual; Facilitates turn and talk with small groups vs pairs
Essential Words	Teaches 1-2 words	Does not use EW organizer; Does not include non-example (if appropriate)
Critical Reading	Facilitates Get the Gist for each section of text	Does not use graphic organizer and/or gist pointers

# Negotiables/Non-Negotiables Encourage Differentiation



How Were We Responsive Based  
on Lessons Learned about  
School-Level Supports?

# A Model of Sustainability of Evidence-Based Tier 1 Literacy Practices

School-Level Supports: Prioritization of Practices and Ensuring Effectiveness

Perception that practices have a simple, routine-like format that allows for customization



Routine Implementation



Multiple opportunities for teachers to observe student success



Continued implementation



Sustainability within classrooms

## PACT Plus

Wexler et al. (2022)



# Aim Coaching



# Identifying a Need

Teachers  
Need Ongoing  
PD



Lack of  
Coaches  
  
Stretched  
Thin  
  
Lack of  
Guidance



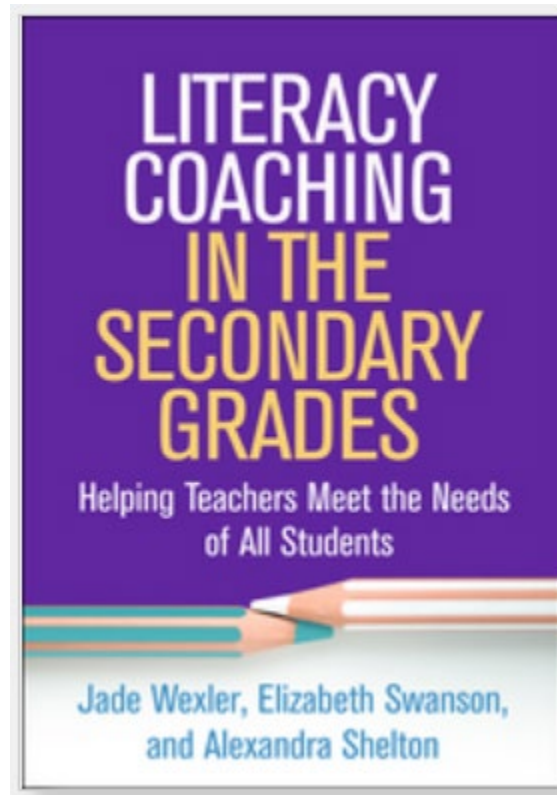
Coaching model that  
tailors activities to  
teachers' needs in a  
way that maximizes  
coaching time and  
allows for  
customization of the  
coaching model

# Premise Supporting AIM Coaching

- Teachers have differing:
  - pre-service experiences
  - in-service experiences
  - instructional strengths
  - instructional needs
- We use Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports to address student needs.
  - individualized
  - time efficient
- Can we apply this idea to literacy coaching?

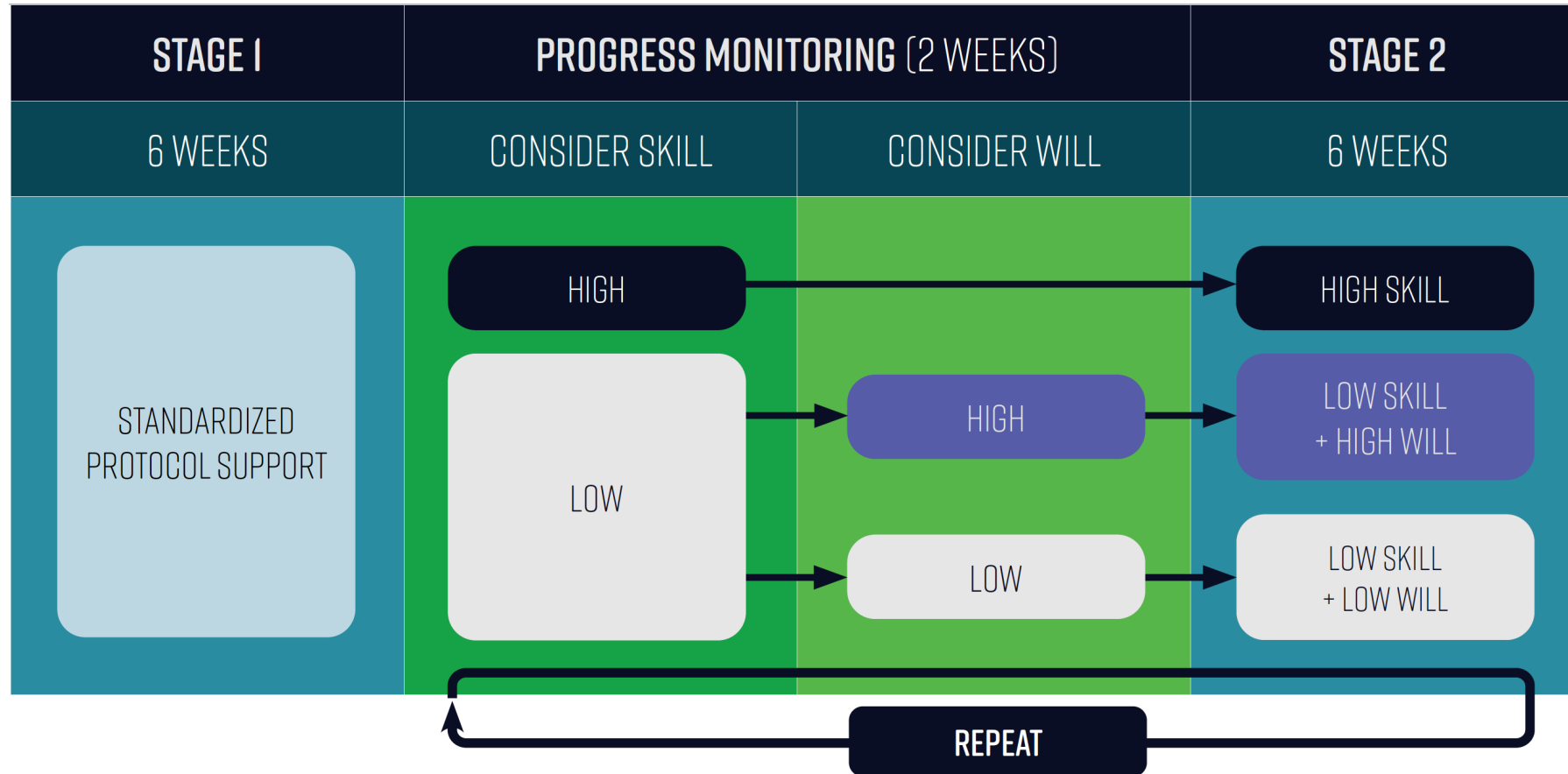
# AIM Coaching

Coaching model that school-based instructional leaders can use to provide teachers with differentiated coaching support





# AIM Coaching Model



# Stage 1



Plan

Support

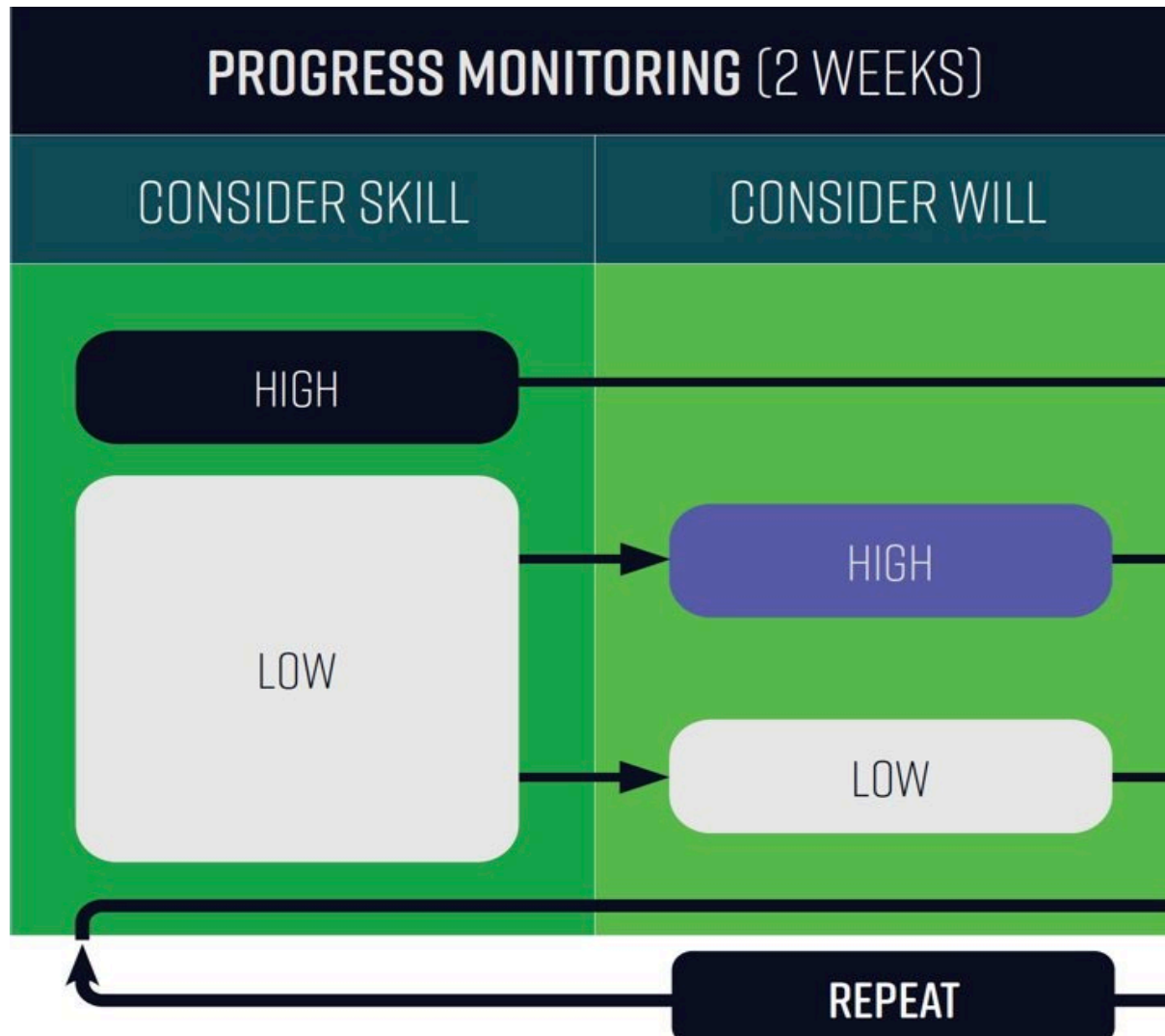
Reflect

Check In

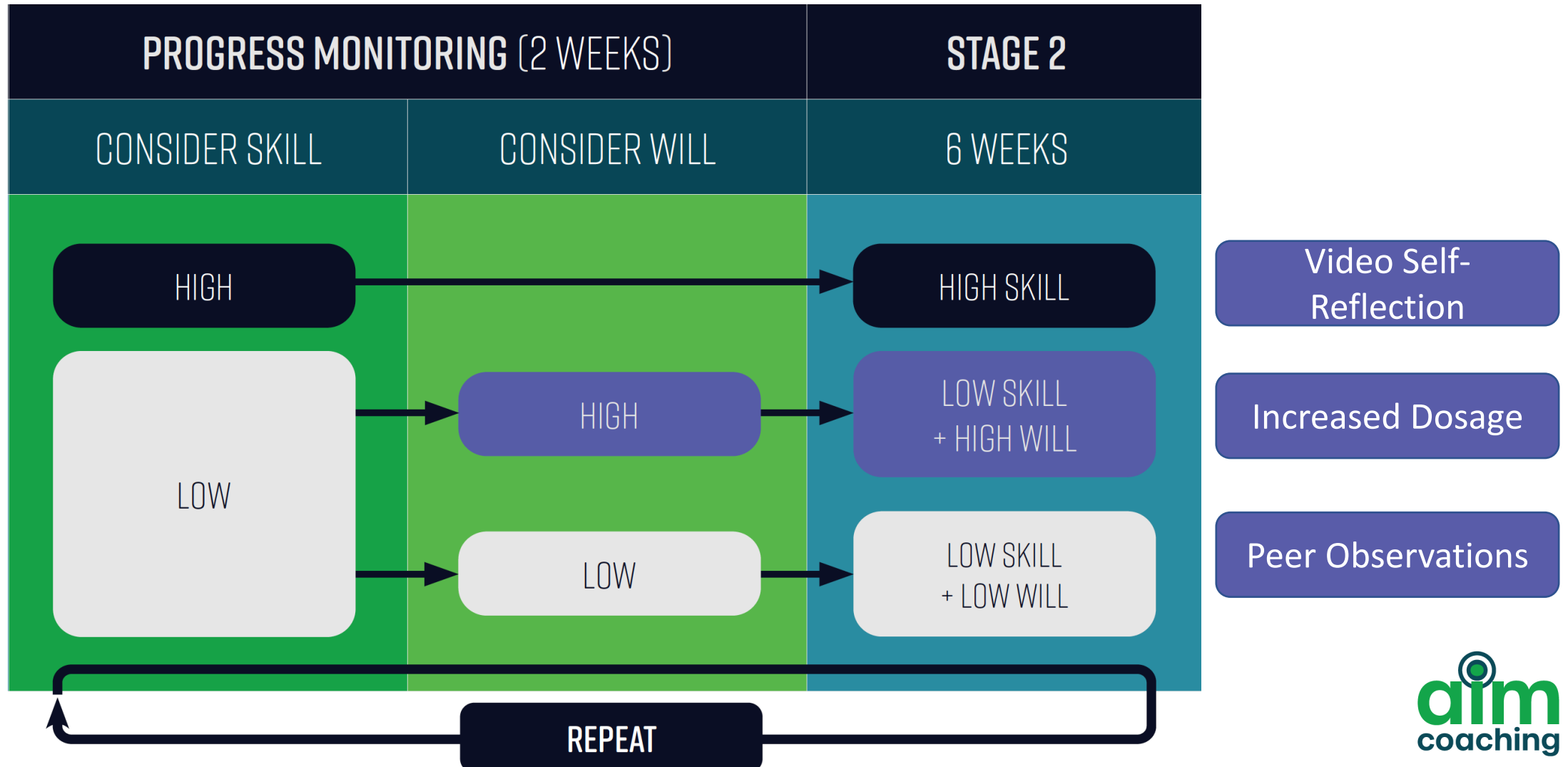
Collaborative  
Effort

Fidelity

# Progress Monitoring



# Stage 2



# Allowable Customization

- Team of coaches vs one coach
- Fidelity
  - Overriding skill/will levels
- Stage 2
  - Menu of activities
  - Group vs individual sessions
  - Virtual options
  - Allow for variation in SW-PACT implementation to avoid saturation

# Resources to Support Implementation

# Website and Sample Lessons

[aimcoaching.org](http://aimcoaching.org)

Model Lessons

online modules

\*\*More coming soon!



The graphic features the AIM Coaching logo at the top, followed by the text "AIM SCHOOLWIDE PACT LESSONS" in large, bold, black letters. Below this is a silhouette of three students sitting at a desk, with the middle student highlighted in green. Underneath the silhouettes, the text "LESSONS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION IN" is displayed. Below this text are three icons: a science atom, a globe for social studies, and an open book for English Language Arts.



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# Pronoun Scaffolds

## Mini-Lesson

- 10-15 minutes to review pronouns
- Contains the following:
  - Teach and Model
  - Guided Practice
  - Independent Practice
  - Worksheet with practice sentences and paragraphs

Complete a think aloud. A think aloud might sound like:

I need to find the noun that “she” replaces. This means I need to find out who “she” is, so I should look before “she” is mentioned. “She” is mentioned in the second sentence so I am going to look in the first sentence. In the first sentence, I see a girl named Kiana is mentioned, so “she” in the second sentence is likely replacing the proper noun “Kiana” (draw arrow to Kiana, and have students do the same).

I know that pronouns replace nouns. There are other nouns I see—“guitar lessons” is one but that’s not a girl, so “she” doesn’t refer to the guitar lessons. Another noun is “school,” but again, school is not a girl, so “she” doesn’t refer to school. Therefore, I know that “she” is replacing the proper noun “Kiana”.

Here’s another pronoun “she,” in the second sentence and again, it’s replacing the proper noun “Kiana” (draw arrow to Kiana, and have students do the same).

Kiana takes guitar lessons every day after school. She has enjoyed lessons since she was 6 years old.



# Criteria for Success Checklists

Comprehension Canopy

Essential Words

Critical Reading

<b>Critical Reading Criteria for Success Checklist</b>	
<b>Planning</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selects a text that adheres to the following text selection guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text is within the appropriate Lexile band for students</li> <li>• Text has appropriate level of purpose</li> <li>• Text has appropriate structure and language conventionality and clarity</li> </ul> Text is appropriate given students' reading skills and background knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Divides the text into appropriate sections and includes at least 2 sections of text
<b>Implementation</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduces the text and topic to students
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents the culminating question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establishes pairs (when using partner reading)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reads at least one section of the text to students
<input type="checkbox"/>	Models Get the Gist with at least one section (when appropriate)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilitate students' use of Get the Gist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engages students in text-based discussion to answer the culminating question
<input type="checkbox"/>	5-10 minutes per section of text
<b>Quality Indicators</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clarifies vocabulary and/or makes connections to essential words when applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitors students in pairs (when using partner reading)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provides immediate corrective feedback and reteaches as necessary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotes student engagement with multiple opportunities for students to practice and respond (e.g., uses turn and talks)

# Final Reflection

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1. Is there an **expectation that all teachers are literacy teachers** in your school(s)?
2. Do you have an **adopted set of evidence-based vocabulary and comprehension practices** teachers can implement across content areas? Have you thought about the **active ingredients** of these practices?
3. Do some students receive **more intensive, supplemental support**? [If you can't provide supplemental intervention to all the students who need it, return to #2: **Strengthen Tier 1**]
4. Is there a **close connection between practices/content used in Tiers 1-3**?
5. Do you have a **school-level supports** in place for your teachers? **Ongoing coaching** using a **systematic approach** that maximizes coach time?

Thank you!  
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