Promoting Adolescent Multilingual Learners' Success in Content Area Classrooms: Matching the Learning Environment to Developmental Stage

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HARVARD
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

What kinds of learning opportunities and environments do today's growing and diverse population of adolescent multilingual learners need? How can we design classrooms and curriculum to drive their academic success while supporting them to thrive as individuals?

Spotlight: a content-based, comprehensive approach to instruction to promote students' literacy, social-emotional and critical thinking skills.

Today's Session

01

2. What are the Core Elements of Effective Literacy Instruction?

Building Literacy for Today & Tomorrow in all Classrooms

03

4. What are Key Design Shifts to Drive Improvement?

A Snapshot of Important Directions + Next Steps for Serving Multilingual Learners

1. What is Literacy for Today and Tomorrow?

Knowledge, Skills + Competencies for Multilingual Learners and their Peers

02

3. How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Youth Development?

What We're Learning from Brain Science & Social-Emotional Research

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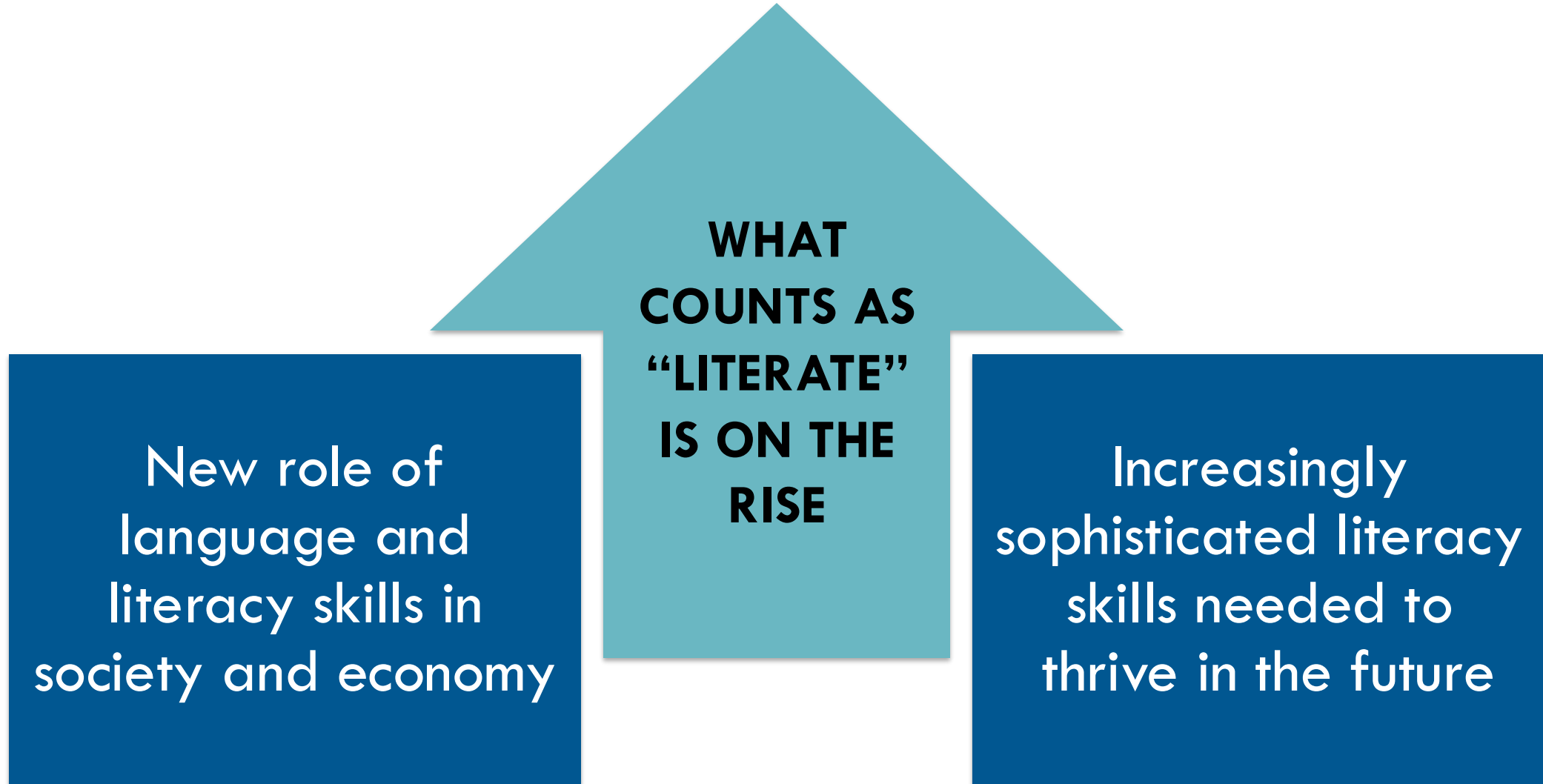Knowledge, Skills + Competencies for Multilingual Learners and their Peers

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Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

WHAT COUNTS AS "LITERATE" IS ON THE RISE

New role of language and literacy skills in society and economy

Increasingly sophisticated literacy skills needed to thrive in the future

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

Changing Demands of Workforce Participation in the 21st Century

Through technological advancements, the literacy skills necessary for students' success in work and life have been redefined
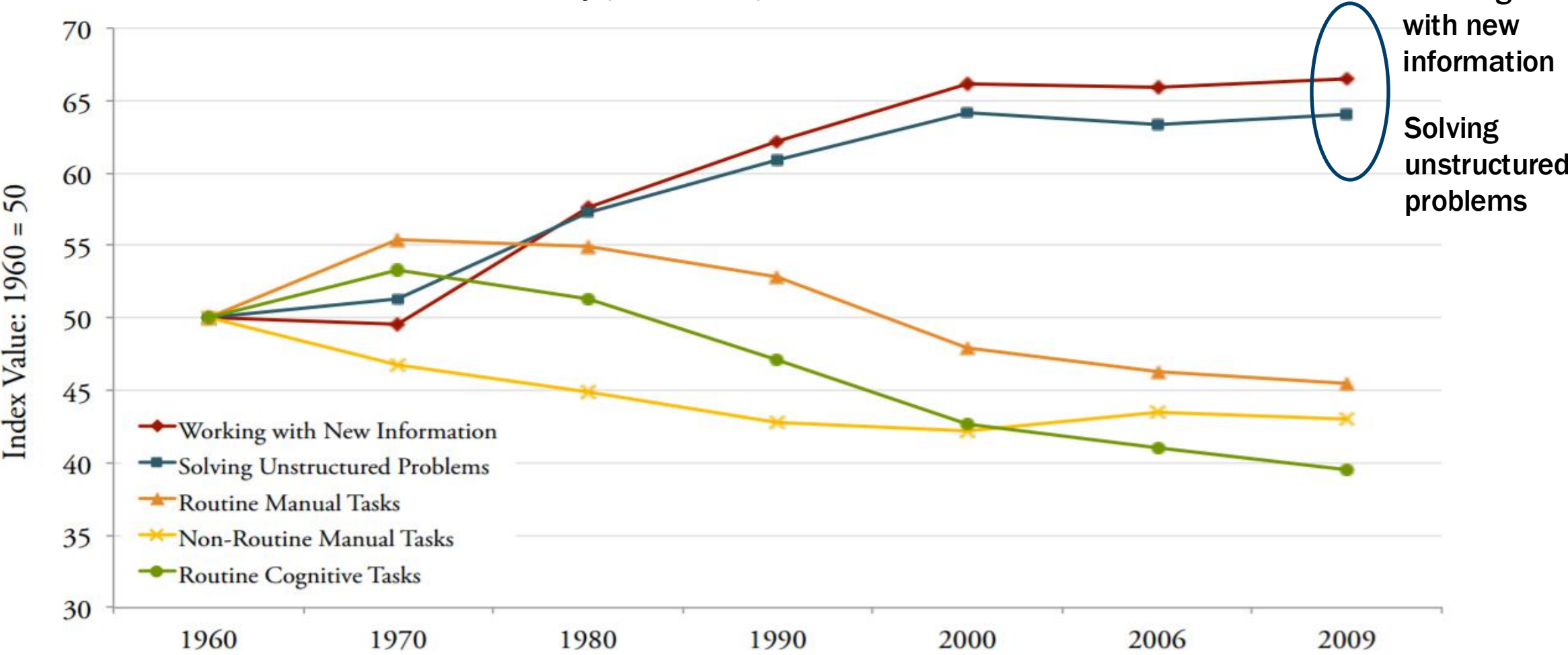
"In order to prepare young people to do the jobs computers and technology cannot do, we must re-focus our education system around one objective:

Giving students the foundational skills in problem-solving and communication that computers don't have."

Lewandowski, 2022; Murnane & Levy, 2013; White House, 2022

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

Work tasks in the U.S. economy (1960-2009)

Working with new information

Solving unstructured problems

Index Value: 1960 = 50

- Working with New Information
- Solving Unstructured Problems
- Routine Manual Tasks
- Non-Routine Manual Tasks
- Routine Cognitive Tasks

Murnane & Levy, 2013

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

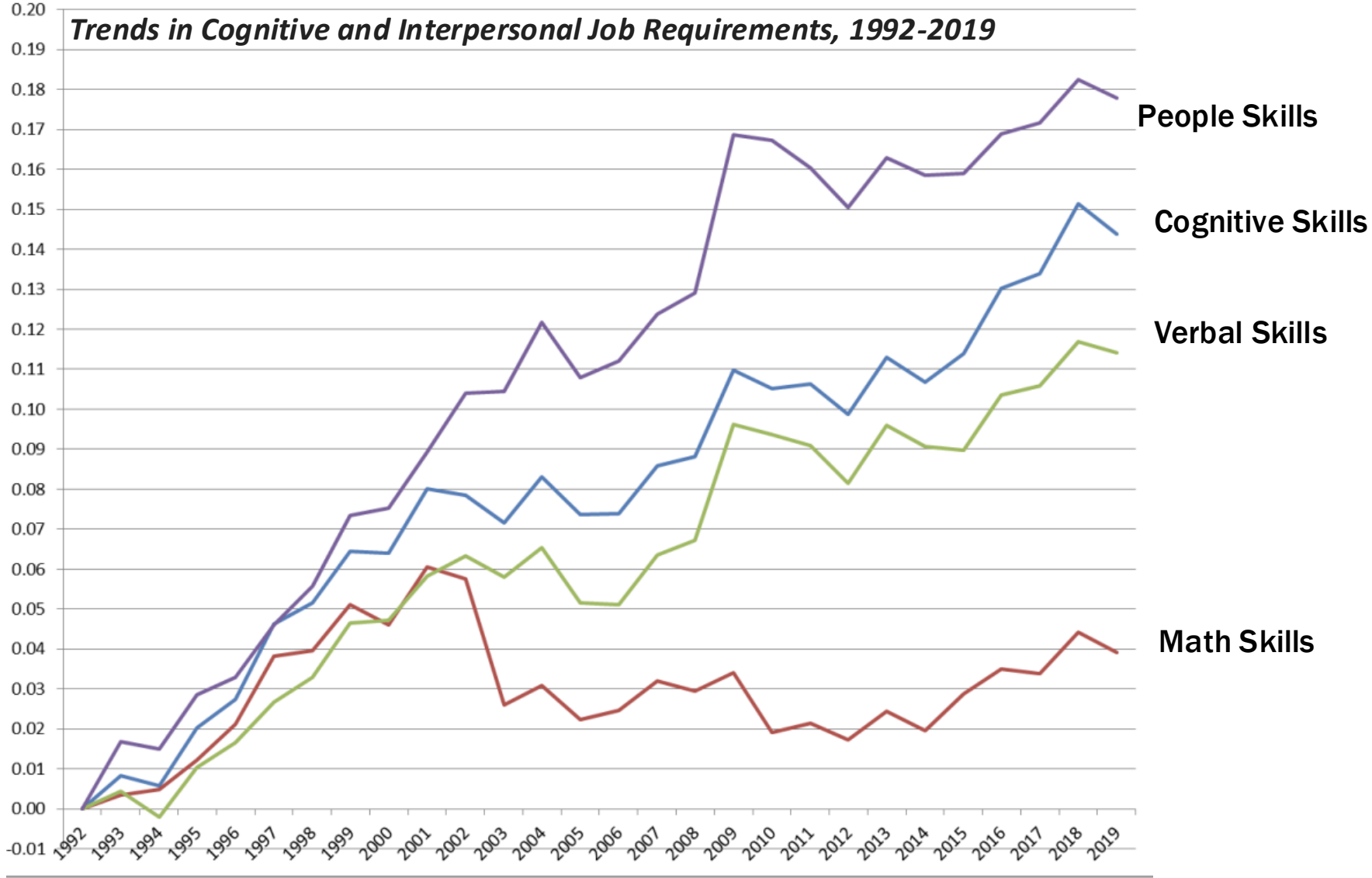*Trends in Craft and Gross Physical Job Requirements, 1992-2019*

Scaled to the mean in 1992

Handel, 2020, Figure III.9

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

Trends in Cognitive and Interpersonal Job Requirements, 1992-2019

People Skills
Cognitive Skills
Verbal Skills
Math Skills

*Scaled to the mean in 1992

Handel, 2020, Figure III.8

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

Large-Scale Analysis of U.S. Job Descriptions

EdWeek Survey of What Top Executives Want from Today's K-12 Students

Oral and Written Communication Skills

Develop + Refine Skills to Communicate Clearly, w/ Intention (work, client, and personal relationships)

Collaboration Skills

Presentation Skills

Problem Solving Skills

Effective Writing

Rios et al., 2020

Lieberman, 2021

What about the Global Context?

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

METHODOLOGY:

- 18,000 people
- 15 countries

GOAL: to define foundational skills for citizens and to identify priority skills to inform learning and teaching.

McKinsey & Company (2021). Defining the skills citizens will need in the future world of work.

METHODOLOGY:

- 803 global companies, around the world

GOAL: to identify the top 5 skills in demand and on the rise for workers in 2023.

World Economic Forum. (2023). Future of Jobs Report: Insight Report.

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

COGNITIVE

Critical Thinking, Planning and Ways of Working, Communication, Mental Flexibility

INTERPERSONAL

Mobilizing Systems, Developing Relationships, Teamwork Effectiveness

SELF-LEADERSHIP

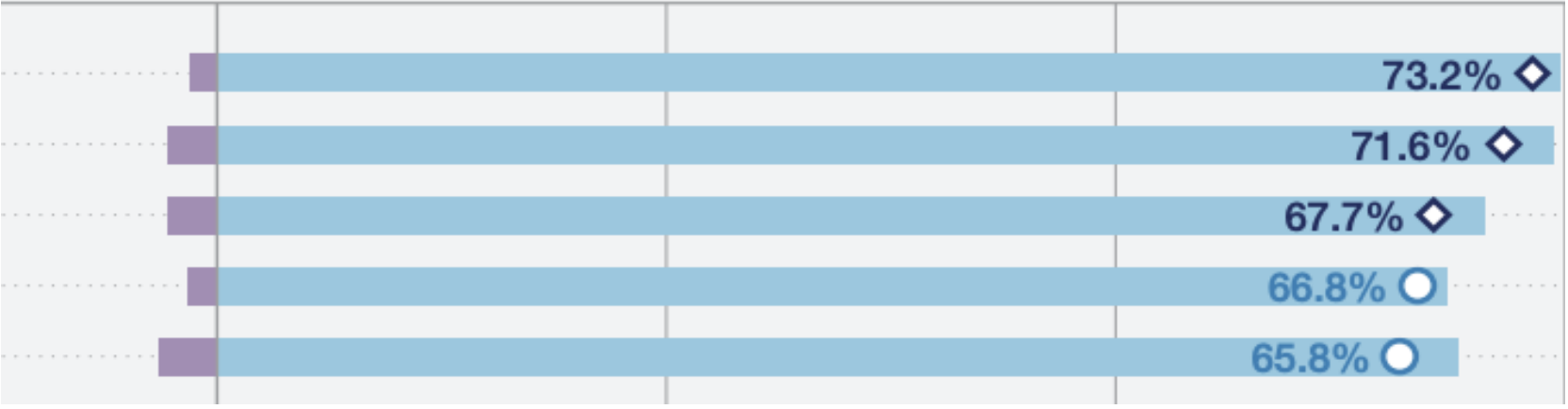Self-Awareness and Self-Management, Entrepreneurship, Goals Achievement

DIGITAL

Digital Fluency and Citizenship, Software Use and Development, Understanding Digital Systems

McKinsey & Company

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

73.2% ◇	**Creative Thinking**
71.6% ◇	**Analytical Thinking**
67.7% ◇	**Technological Literacy**
66.8% ○	**Curiosity + Lifelong Learning**
65.8% ○	**Resilience, Flexibility + Agility**

Legend:
- ▬ Increasing importance
- ▬ Declining importance
- ◇ Skills, knowledge and abilities
- ○ Attitudes

World Economic Forum, 2023

Literacy for Today & Tomorrow
Knowledge, Skills & Competencies for A New Era

Inter-personal Skills

- Teamwork and the ability to collaborate in pursuit of a common objective.
- Effective communication with peers, partners, and colleagues.
- Leadership capabilities

Intra-personal Skills

- Motivation and attitude
- The ability to learn
- Problem-solving skills
- Analytical skills

OECD, 2001

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What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

**CHALLENGE
(& OPPORTUNITY):**

To design learning environments and curricular materials that create a tight match between the skill and competency demands of today's context and students' needs and developmental stage
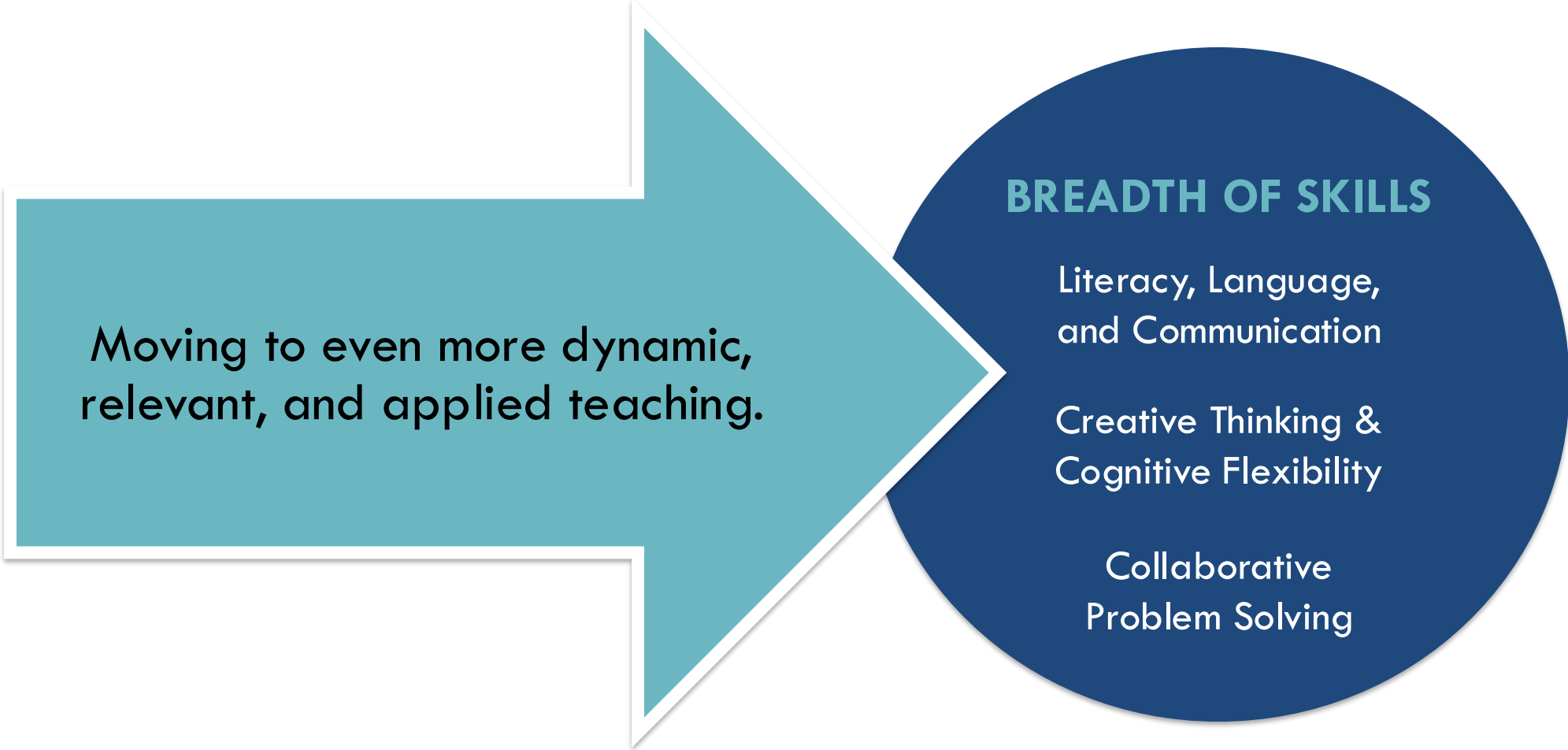
**LET'S LOOK AT
THIS IN TWO WAYS:**

1 What does this learning environment look and feel like?

2 What does this mean for the approach to classroom learning and curriculum design?

WHAT DOES THIS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

Moving to even more dynamic, relevant, and applied teaching.

BREADTH OF SKILLS

Literacy, Language, and Communication

Creative Thinking & Cognitive Flexibility

Collaborative Problem Solving

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

LEARNERS ARE:

COGNITIVE
Critical Thinking, Planning and Ways of Working, Communication, Mental Flexibility

INTERPERSONAL
Mobilizing Systems, Developing Relationships, Teamwork Effectiveness

SELF-LEADERSHIP
Self-Awareness and Self-Management, Entrepreneurship, Goals Achievement

DIGITAL
Digital Fluency and Citizenship, Software Use and Development, Understanding Digital Systems

studying unstructured problems in the context of a content-rich approach to knowledge-building

building up conceptual reasoning skills and the ability to work with new information

engaging in oral and written communications meant to convey knowledge and reasoning to others

working in collaborative, culturally competent ways through team-based, project-based approaches

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
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ENVIRONMENTS WHERE LEARNERS ARE:

Mentally active

Engaged

Socially interactive

Building meaningful connections to their lives
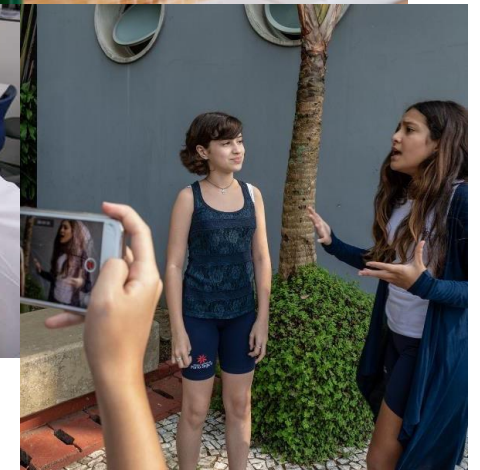
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DESIGN + CLASSROOM LEARNING?

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Organizes learning around units of study with content-rich themes and texts	Provides rigor and challenge in a supportive context	Combines explicit instruction with inquiry-based learning
Promotes culturally responsive learning environments	Uses consistent routines and language	Supports peer-to-peer interaction

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

| Code-Based Skills	Phonological Awareness	Phonics and Word Recognition	Spelling	Fluency

Meaning-Based Skills	Conceptual knowledge about the world	Understand abstract, complex ideas when reading
	Produce written language about abstract and complex ideas	Produce academic language in speech

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What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
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What makes a strong friendship?	What shapes our identity?
What qualities to leaders need to succeed?	How can innovation improve society?
Why do people take risks?	How does adversity make us stronger?
How can we achieve happiness?	How can we become citizens of the world?

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LEARNING

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
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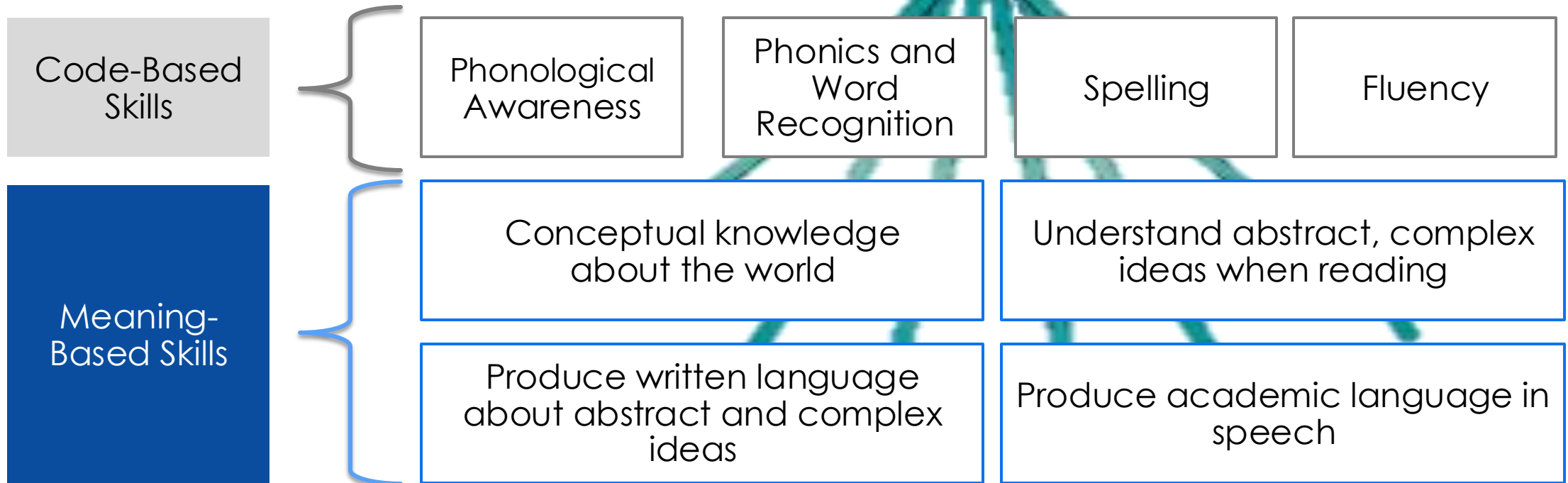Promotes culturally responsive learning environments

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Supports peer-to-peer interaction

A Learning Cycle for Today's Context

Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms
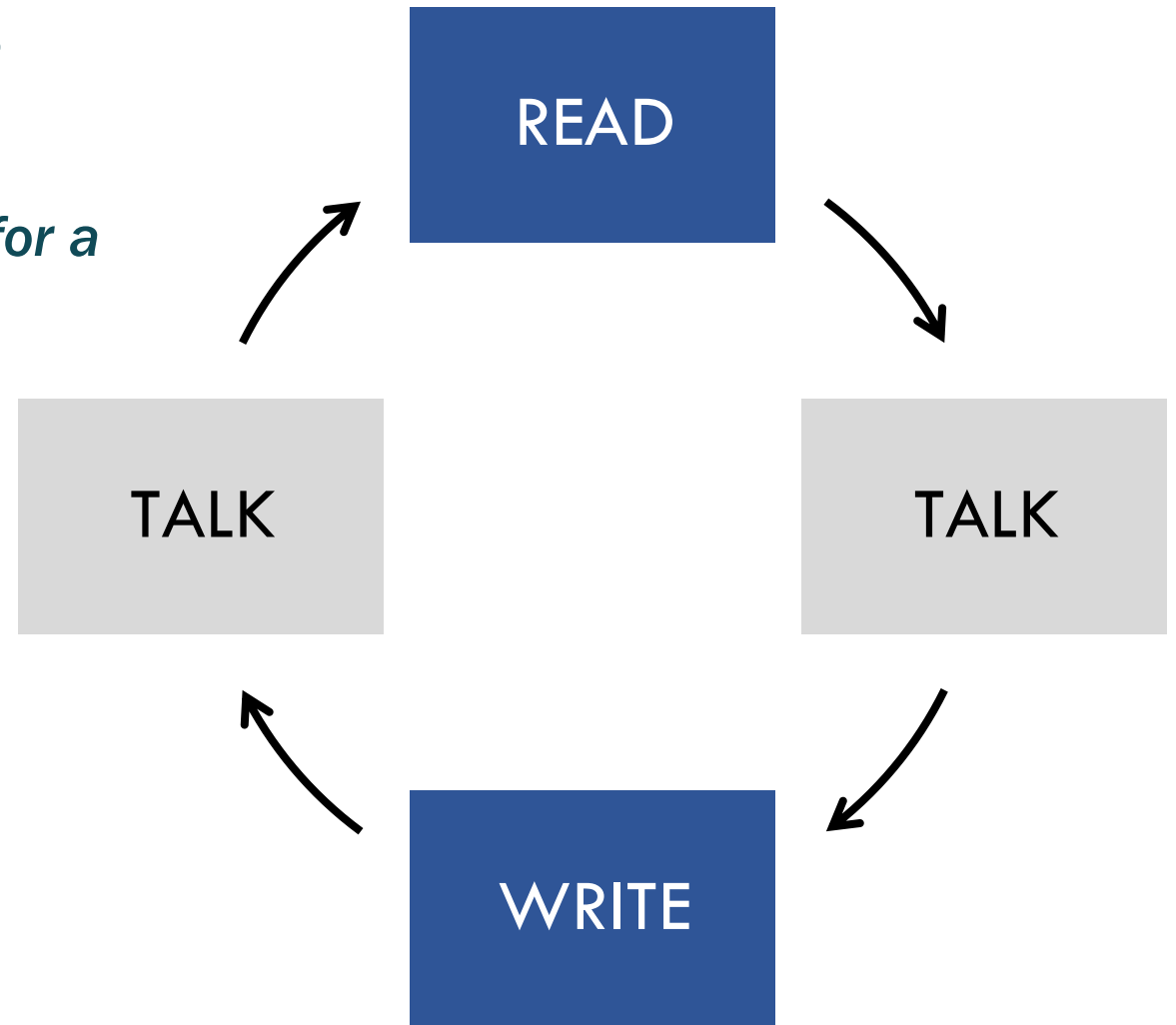
LESAUX, PHILLIPS GALLOWAY & MARIETTA, 2016; LESAUX & HARRIS, 2015

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?
Mapping Knowledge, Skills, & Competencies for a New Era to Today's Classrooms

HALLMARKS OF ADVANCED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Read a variety of short pieces of text that feature big ideas and rich content

Use protocols to support reading, writing, speaking, and listening

Use writing as a platform to build language and knowledge

Talk/discuss to build language and knowledge

Study a small set of high-utility academic language needed for language and content

What are the Core Elements of Literacy Instruction?

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What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Focus thinking

Understand and deal with feelings

Manage behavior

Build positive relationships

Jones et al., 2021

How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Development?
Making Connections to Brain Science + Social-Emotional Research

Language

Social-emotional

Cognition

Language

Social-emotional

Cognition

Early Childhood　　Middle Childhood　　Late Childhood　　Adolescence

Children are not born with these skills…they need to be cultivated for proficiency, beginning at birth and esp. between ages 3 and 8.

Another sensitive period occurs in late childhood and through adolescence.

Knudsen, 2004

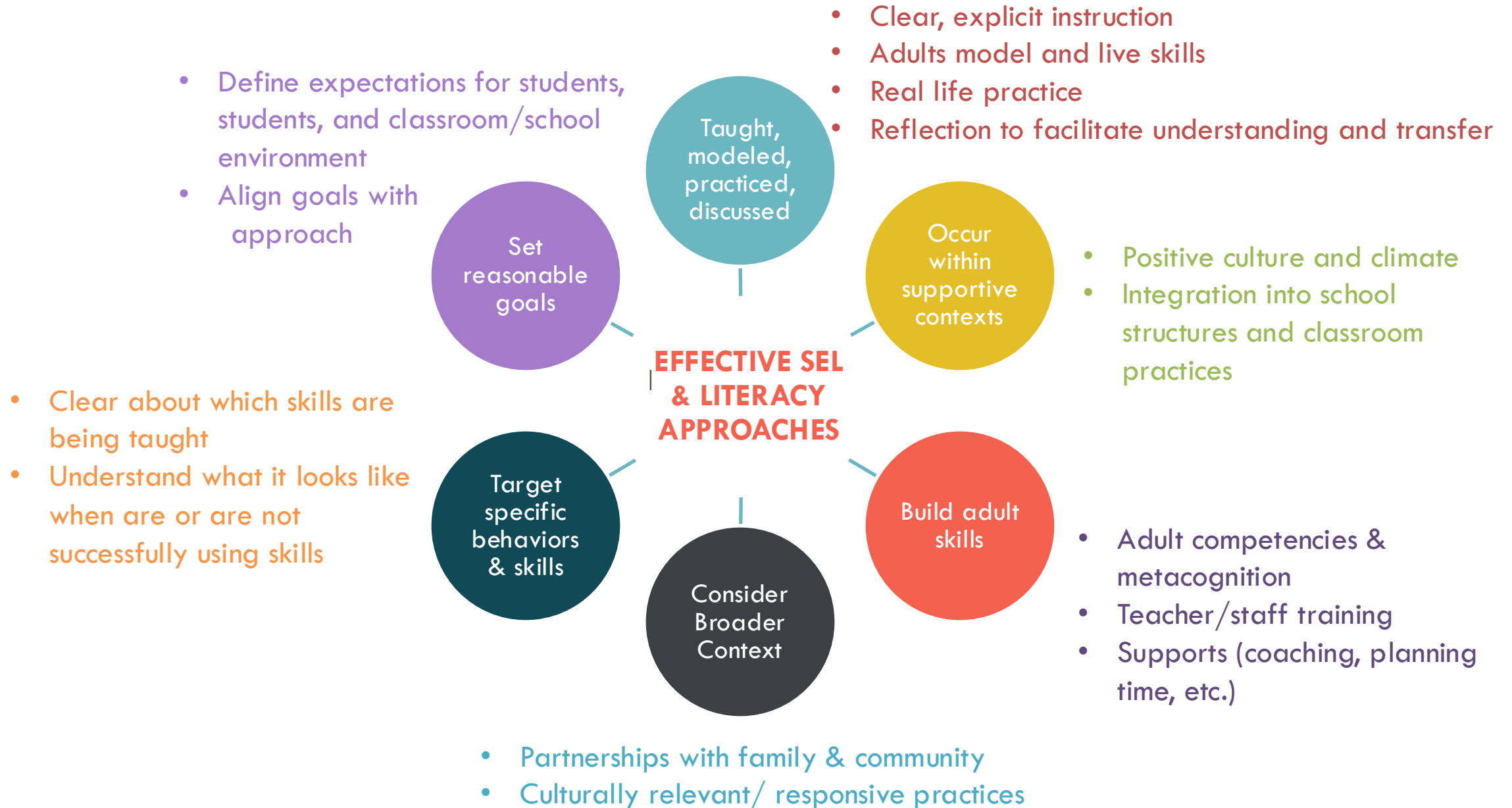# How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Child Development?
Making Connections to Brain Science + Social-Emotional Research

The brain…

| Develops cognitive, language, emotional, and social skills together | Builds connections throughout a lifetime |

Is Very, Very Sensitive to its Environment(s)

Center for Developing Child, 2007; Jones, 2021

- Clear, explicit instruction
- Adults model and live skills
- Real life practice
- Reflection to facilitate understanding and transfer

- Define expectations for students, students, and classroom/school environment
- Align goals with approach

Taught, modeled, practiced, discussed

Set reasonable goals

Occur within supportive contexts

- Positive culture and climate
- Integration into school structures and classroom practices

EFFECTIVE SEL & LITERACY APPROACHES

- Clear about which skills are being taught
- Understand what it looks like when are or are not successfully using skills

Target specific behaviors & skills

Build adult skills

Consider Broader Context

- Adult competencies & metacognition
- Teacher/staff training
- Supports (coaching, planning time, etc.)

- Partnerships with family & community
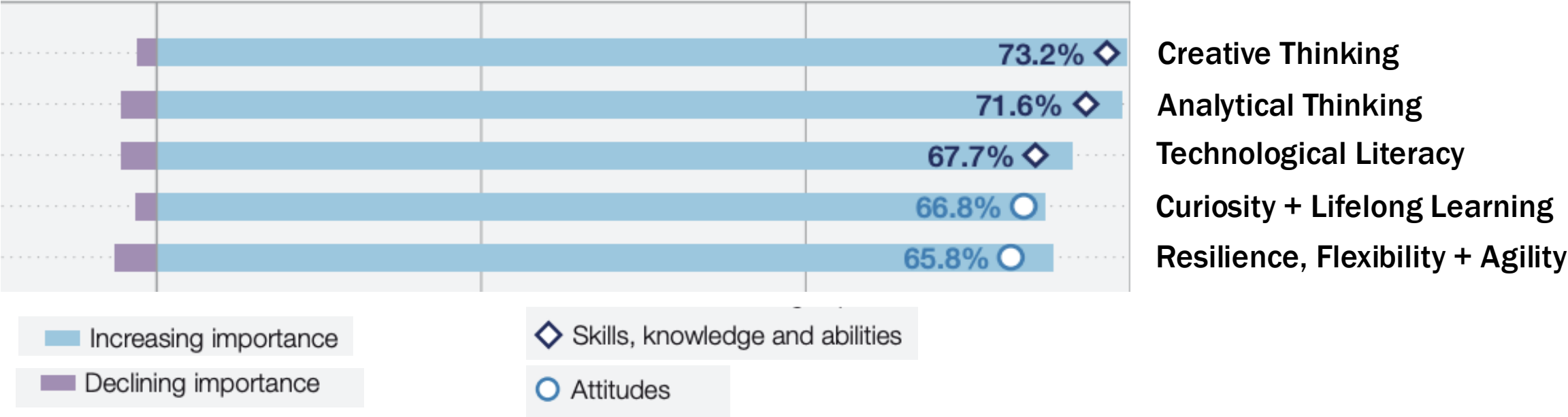- Culturally relevant/ responsive practices

Jones et al., 2021

How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Youth Development?

Making Connections to Brain Science + Social-Emotional Research

Literacy Instruction	PRINCIPLES	Social-Emotional Instruction
…knowledge & skills	**Provide direct instruction…**	…in emotion management, social skills, and attention
… for discussing academic concepts and questions	**Use rich texts as a platform…**	… for promoting emotional language development, self reflection, and empathy
…of words and how they work	**Cultivate consciousness…**	…of our own feelings and the feelings of others
…to build language and reading skills	**Increase classroom talk…**	…to build emotional cooperation and conflict resolution skills
…to support instructional cohesion across classrooms and grades	**Use consistent routines and language…**	…to reduce chaos and minimize anxiety, create common social norms

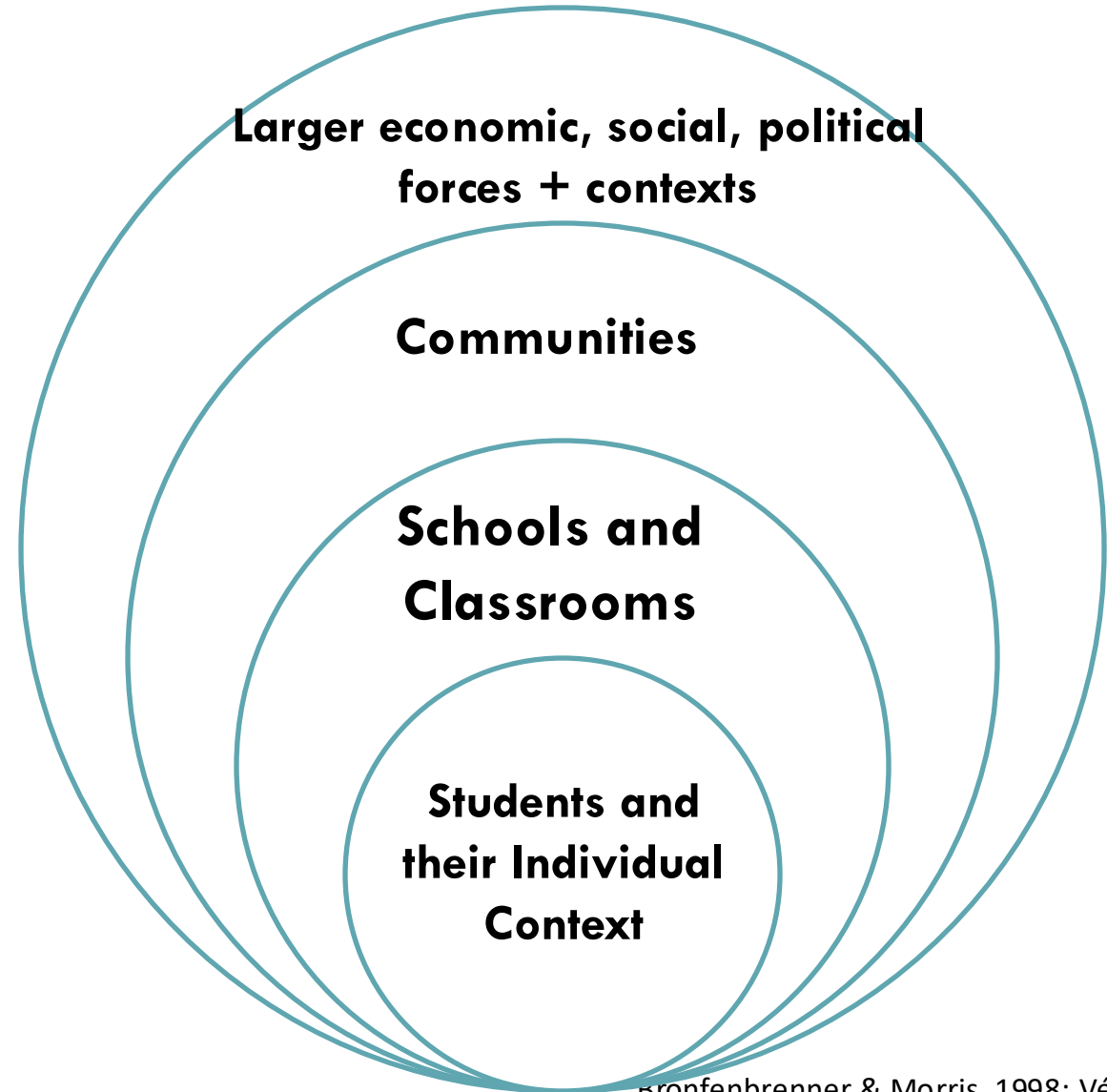# How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Youth Development?
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Increasing importance
Declining importance

◇ Skills, knowledge and abilities
○ Attitudes

World Economic Forum, 2023

How does Effective Literacy Instruction Promote Youth Development?

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An Ecological Perspective

Larger economic, social, political forces + contexts

Communities

Schools and Classrooms

Students and their Individual Context

Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Vélez-Agosto, 2017

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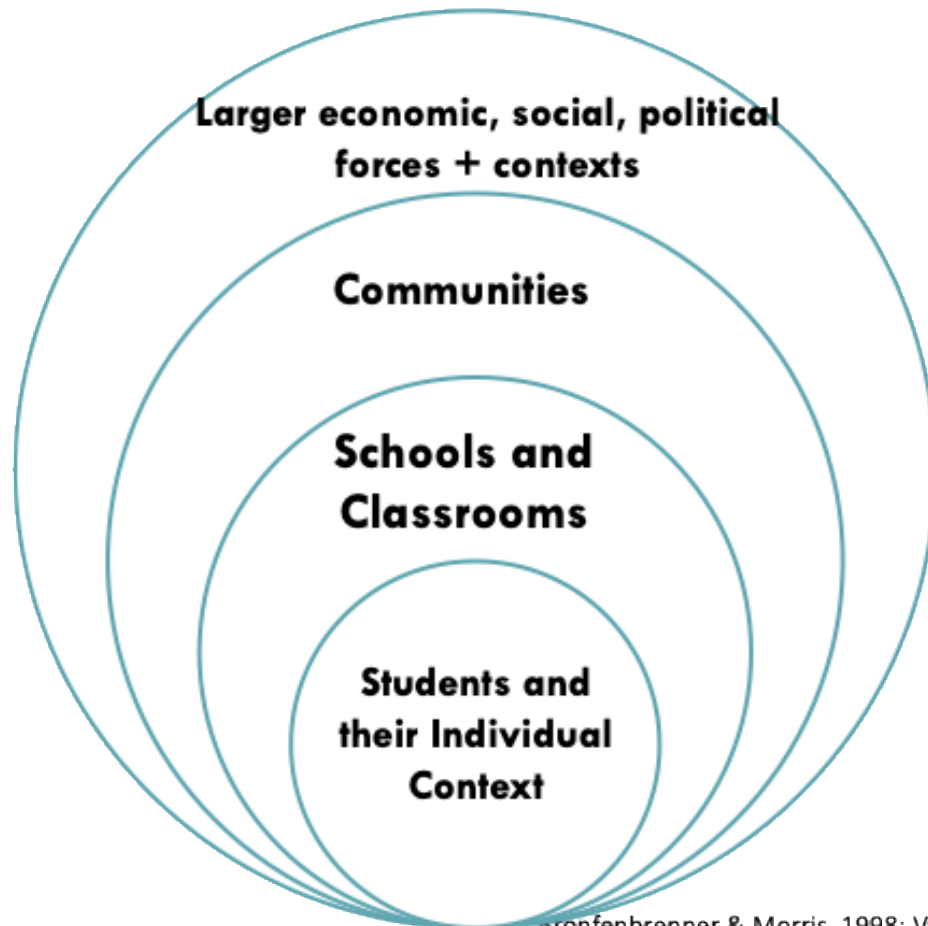
Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Vélez-Agosto, 2017

Process Features

- Safe, caring environments
- Warm climate, tone/tenor
- Consistent, effective routines, behavior + classroom management practices
- Opportunities to develop strong relationships

Developmentally Appropriate Instruction

- Rigorous and supportive
- Units of study w/ rich content
- Frequent opportunities to respond (oral, written, small + whole group)
- Collaborative learning, peer-to-peer learning interactions
- Opportunities to monitor growth

Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Vélez-Agosto, 2017

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What are Key Design Shifts to Drive Improvement?

Serving Today's Multilingual Learners

From...

To...

Basic ESL instruction	An advanced literacy learning environment
Wide variation in text levels	On-grade level text with scaffolds for differentiation
Coverage and volume	Deeper and active learning to increase engagement
Limited diversity of text, often U.S.-centric content	A global content-based approach with varied genres and media

From…

To…

Solely basic English language instruction for adolescent multilingual learners

Advanced communication and literacy learning in a collaborative environment

Design Shift #1

From...

To...

Materials and lessons often inaccessible to students
(too easy or too challenging)

"Covering" standards with units and readings that are too long

A modular approach to standards: shorter units w/dynamic learning cycles that revolve around authentic grade-level text

Design Shifts #2, 3

From...

To...

Limited diversity of text that doesn't capture today's global, diverse learners' lives and contexts.

A globally-focused approach with varied texts, genres, and digital literacy for meaningful study and exploration.

Design Shift #4

THANK YOU!

Promoting Adolescent Multilingual Learners' Success in Content Area Classrooms: Matching the Learning Environment to Developmental Stage