

# PISA Reading Literacy: An Insider's View

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# Overview

- Setting a context for large-scale assessments
- Establishing coherence and teaching to the test
- Measuring reading literacy in PISA
- Using PISA results at the classroom level

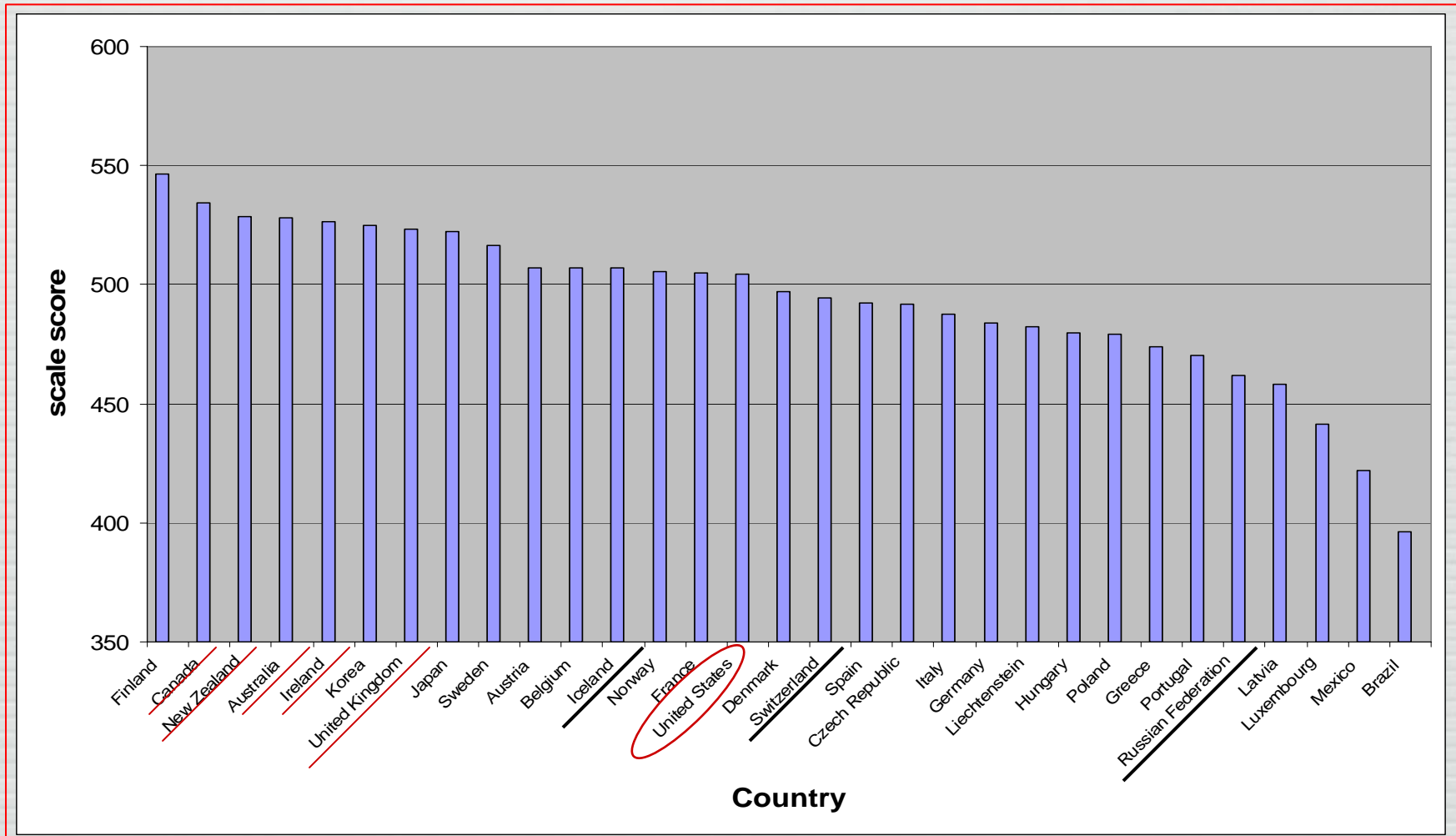


# Expanding Role of Large-Scale Assessments

- Countries have seen a rise in the popularity and attention paid to large-scale surveys
- In the United States, for example, we have seen the role of NAEP grow at both the state and national levels
- We have also seen a rise in the number of large-scale international surveys like PIRLS, TIMSS, and PISA
- This growth has been driven, in part, by the globalization of businesses and economies and the increased recognition of the importance of human capital



In PISA 2000, the U.S. ranked 15th out of the 31 participating countries



and below all other English-speaking countries





# Coherence and Teaching to the Test

- Frequent objections to reliance on large-scale assessments rest on the belief that they are too prescriptive and often lead to a narrowing of the curriculum
- Critics often point to the spectre of “teaching to the test” at the exclusion of more important educational content and processes
- My belief is that a coherent assessment system of the kind PISA attempts can be valuable at the national, state, and even classroom levels such that “teaching to the test” becomes a desirable activity
- This belief, however, relies on the development of a coherent assessment system that integrates the assessment framework, instruments, and reporting so that the results are interpretable in terms of the overall construct being assessed



# Characteristics of a Coherent Assessment System

- What claims do we wish to make about students' proficiencies?
- What kinds of evidence would we need to collect to support these claims?
- What kinds of tasks would we need to construct in order to provide this evidence?
- How do we connect this evidence to the claims we wish to make about students?



# Developing a Coherent Assessment System

- Reach consensus on a definition of reading that reflects current thinking in the field and that relates to what we want to say about student proficiencies
- Identify major task characteristics that developers can manipulate to provide the types of evidence that will support claims that will be made
- Identify and validate a set of variables that explain the difficulty of items and their placement along the proficiency scale(s)
- Develop an interpretive scheme that links these variables to the reading literacy tasks and to what it means to have varying levels of reading proficiency





# The definition of reading literacy in PISA embraces print and electronic reading:

Reading literacy is understanding, using, reflecting on, and engaging with written texts in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in one's society.



# PISA uses four task characteristics in the construction of all reading literacy tasks:

- Contexts
- Environments  
(added for 2009 assessment)
- Text formats
- Aspects

# Contexts

- Personal
- Public
- Occupational
- Educational



# Environments

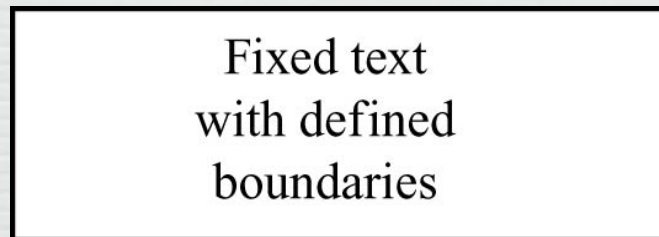
- Print medium
- Electronic medium
  - Authoring
  - Message based



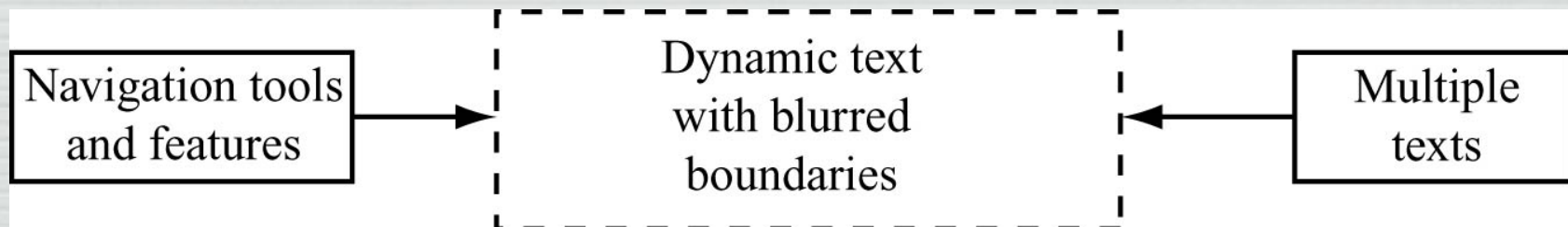


# Print and Electronic Texts in PISA

## Print reading texts in PISA



## Electronic reading texts in PISA



# Text Formats

- Continuous
- Noncontinuous
- Mixed
- Multiple



# Aspects

- Access and retrieve
- Integrate and interpret
- Reflect and evaluate

# Item Map

- **HYPOTHESIZE** about an unexpected phenomenon by taking account of outside knowledge, along with all relevant information in a **COMPLEX TABLE** on a relatively unfamiliar topic (score 2)
- **LOCATE** information in a **TREE DIAGRAM** using information in a footnote (score 2)
- **EXPLAIN** a character's motivation by linking events in a **LONG NARRATIVE**
- **EVALUATE** the suitability of a **TREE DIAGRAM** for particular purposes
- **INFER THE RELATIONSHIP** between **TWO GRAPHIC DISPLAYS** with different conventions
- **UNDERSTAND** the structure of a **TREE DIAGRAM**
- **INTERPRET** information in a single paragraph to understand the setting of a **NARRATIVE**
- Infer the **MAIN IDEA** of a simple **BAR GRAPH** from its title
- **LOCATE** a literal piece of information in a **TEXT** with clear text structure

More  
difficult

Easier





# Item Map

Level 5

- HYPOTHEZIZE about an unexpected phenomenon by taking account of outside knowledge, along with all relevant information in a COMPLEX TABLE on a relatively unfamiliar topic (score 2)

Level 4

- LOCATE information in a TREE DIAGRAM using information in a footnote (score 2)
- EXPLAIN a character's motivation by linking events in a LONG NARRATIVE

Level 3

- EVALUATE the suitability of a TREE DIAGRAM for particular purposes
- INFER THE RELATIONSHIP between TWO GRAPHIC DISPLAYS with different conventions
- UNDERSTAND the structure of a TREE DIAGRAM

Level 2

- INTERPRET information in a single paragraph to understand the setting of a NARRATIVE
- Infer the MAIN IDEA of a simple BAR GRAPH from its title

Level 1

- LOCATE a literal piece of information in a TEXT with clear text structure



# Interpreting and using PISA at the classroom level

## Teaching reading in the light of PISA's framework and reporting:

- Support in understanding what constitutes difficulty within and across print and electronic texts
- Support in understanding how the kinds of questions and directives that are used to think about and discuss texts influence the difficulty of tasks for students
- Support in identifying where on the reading continuum a student is placed, and the next set of tasks that he or she can work toward
- Provision of models of good assessment tasks



**Thank You!**

