THE ROLE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARD 10 FOR READING IN NYSED BILINGUAL COMMON CORE PROGRESSIONS

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The New York State Education Department (NYSED) Bilingual Common Core Progressions (BCCP) describe content and language scaffolds for the ELA Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standards. Their purpose is to support bilingual and ESL teachers in implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)[1] with students who are in the process of learning a language as they learn through language. The focus of this article is to describe the role that background knowledge plays in reading comprehension, specifically domain-specific or specialized background knowledge that can act as a facilitator for reading complex texts; it includes an analysis of the principles that underlie Standard 10 for reading, as presented in the CCSS and the BCCP. The first principle states that reading in the students' new and home languages[2] will be a source for enriching background knowledge; the second principle posits that a strong knowledge base about a topic will allow a new language student[3] to read grade-appropriate texts. In the CCSS, grade appropriate is defined by lexiles, a measure that considers vocabulary and sentence length as the key factors determining text complexity, but disregards the student's previous knowledge. In contrast, the BCCP Standard 10 takes the view that background knowledge, specifically domain-specific background knowledge, plays a fundamental role when reading grade-appropriate texts. The article concludes with suggestions on how bilingual and ESL specialists can implement the BCCP Standard 10, followed by the presentation of the BCCP template RI.10.

Keywords: background knowledge, BCCP, CCSS, grade appropriate, lexiles, Lexile Framework, new language learners, Standard 10

Research on reading comprehension is based on the belief that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Anderson & Pearson, 1988, p. 88). Thus, readers develop a coherent interpretation of text through the interactive process of combining textual information with the information they bring to a text (Marzano, 2004). Readers form mental frames of reference known as "schemata" (Allington & Cunningham, 2007; Landry, 2002)—structures that hold clusters of information about events, concepts, and situations. The more accurate and elaborated knowledge readers already have about the concepts and situations described in a text, the better they will understand what they are reading.

Steffensen, Joag-Deve, and Anderson (1979) carried out one of the first studies that showed how reading ability depends on familiarity with schemata. In their study, American and Asian Indian participants read letters about an American wedding and an Indian wedding, and then were asked to recall details from both passages. When subjects read the passage about the wedding from their own culture ("the native passage"), Steffensen, Joag-Deve, and Anderson observed the following behaviors: participants read the passage more rapidly, recalled a larger amount of information, and produced more culturally appropriate elaborations of the content. When the participants read the "foreign passage" about the other culture's wedding, they read the passage more slowly, recalled much less information, and produced more culturally based distortions. The results indicated that cultural context influences

comprehension, and that this phenomenon occurs regardless of individual abilities. Even though this study is more than 30 years old, the findings have been replicated (Allington & Cunningham, 2007; Andersson & Barnitz, 1984; Lazar, 1993). At this point, no one questions that frames of reference, embedded within a familiar situation, will have an impact on reading comprehension.

Misconceptions and limited or fragmented information will influence comprehension as well. A common misconception, for instance, refers to the position of the Earth during summer. Many people believe that the warm weather is the result of the Earth's being closer to the Sun, but it is not; the Earth is actually closer to the Sun in winter. Seasons result from the tilt of the Earth's axis as the planet revolves around the Sun (http://newyorkscienceteacher.com). Misconceptions like this, however, are difficult to replace with new and accurate information that is presented within one interaction. Rectifying misconceptions can take many encounters with different reading materials and multiple conversations to be able to arrive at refined and distilled understandings.

Background Knowledge

What we know about background knowledge is that it affects reading ability. Readers encountering unfamiliar texts that depict new situations or information tend to read more slowly and remember less, constructing meanings that are inconsistent with the author's, and sometimes rejecting the text information outright. Researchers agree that there three different kinds of background knowledge:

- *Breadth of background knowledge.* Pressley (2009) states that "knowledge is not a singular entity, but consists of many diverse forms and dimensions . . . [and] what one knows is as likely to come from everyday out-of-school experiences as from formal learning" (p. 535). Field trips, social interactions with family and friends, and discussing and reading about familiar and unfamiliar topics, are all resources that lead to building a breadth of experiences that will allow interconnections and associations to be formed.
- *Depth or domain-specific background knowledge.* As children learn more about various fields of knowledge, they develop a specialized sense of particular areas of study. This awareness is known as domain knowledge, and it is related to the study of specific subject matter. Thus, students with domain knowledge of sharks, for example, are also more likely to understand how the particular discipline is organized and how experts think and write about them.
- *Knowledge of text structures and types.* Authors create written texts for many purposes and use a variety of text structures to support and enhance that purpose. For example, authors use a sequential ordering of events that relies on characters, settings, and action to organize what they want to say. Other times, they may use a cause-effect pattern that highlights the causal relationships between ideas and concepts. Genre also plays a role in how information is organized. Narrative texts, for instance, present information differently from the way it is done in a historical essay.

The CCSS embeds background knowledge of text structures and types in Standard 4 (Anchor Standard: *Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text* [e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza] *relate to each other and the whole*) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Text structure knowledge is not the focus of the present article, but rather it is how domain specific-knowledge can be developed and used to support new language students in reaching the demands presented in Standard 10 in the BCCP. This requires exploring two aspects: (a) delving into the challenges entailed in developing domain-specific background knowledge in new language learners; and (b) describing the instructional practices, currently implemented in many elementary schools, that ignore the importance of prior knowledge for reading to learn.

Developing Domain-Specific Background Knowledge in New Language Learners

In the context of schools, background knowledge includes what students have learned both formally in the classroom as well as informally through life experiences. In an academic setting, background knowledge includes content knowledge, the language associated with school settings (or academic language) which includes vocabulary knowledge and discourse styles. All these elements are necessary for comprehending content information.

New language students can come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and the kind and range of background knowledge related to a particular topic can vary. Some students may have reached a high level of academic schooling in their home language, but not have the words to express what they know in English. Other students may have had interrupted formal schooling, and their background knowledge may not match the perspective presented in the classroom or contain gaps in information that will jeopardize the overall comprehension of a topic. This view is embedded in the Application of Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011): "ELLs with high levels of schooling can often bring to bear conceptual knowledge developed in their first language when reading in English. However, ELLs with limited or interrupted schooling will need to acquire background knowledge prerequisite to educational tasks at hand" (para. 2). What this means is that bilingual and ESL specialists cannot assume that a new language student will have the background knowledge that is needed to understand a topic or subject area. This is an important point in the current educational landscape, where acquiring information has become a central requirement.

Instructional Practices in Elementary Classrooms

The CCLS place the acquisition of information at the center of the learning process. This is reflected in the progressive weight given to reading informational or nonfiction texts. By fourth grade, students should be reading an equal amount of fiction and nonfiction books, and as the students move into middle and high school, the proportion of nonfiction texts outweighs fiction. Reading in the CCSS classroom also demands mastering content area literacy. These demands signal an important shift in which the text and its content are placed at the center of instruction (Shanahan, 2013a).

Reading, especially in elementary classrooms, has focused on teachers modeling metacognitive strategies (e.g., predicting, visualizing, questioning, inferencing, monitoring, and summarizing), particularly when doing a read aloud. Students are subsequently encouraged to implement these strategies when reading silently and independently. This practice is undoubtedly advantageous, and students need specific instruction on how to apply these strategies in many different contexts. Pressley (2009) and Snow (2002) discuss how the implementation of reading strategies increases in effectiveness when it is accompanied by interpretive discussions of the texts in question. Reading comprehension instruction, however, has prioritized the implementation of strategies and disregarded the information that is embedded in these texts (Allington & Cunningham, 2007; Snow, 2002; Wineburg, 2003).

Learning about the Earth's rotation, the causes of the American Civil War, and that there are sea, terrestrial, and flying mammals are all facts that allow students to build and extend their mental frames of reference of the world around them. These frames of reference can be constructed when reading and by interacting with teachers and peers. In some schools where new language students prevail, the principals, fearing their students' performance in the exams will not be good, have demanded that teachers focus on ELA solely and ignore social studies and science, which are the subjects that provide students with information. For new language students, this is particularly worrisome because including these subjects allow ESL and classroom teachers to create a cohesive and aligned curriculum. The ESL specialist can support the new language student by reading and exploring word meanings and sentence patterns found in a particular text excerpt. By engaging in such a practice, new language students will be learning content

through language (Wong Fillmore & Fillmore, 2012) as they increase their background knowledge of the world.

Not only does the CCSS require that teachers and their students focus on informational texts, but also on the specific Anchor demand embedded in Standard 10 (*Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently*). The books and texts are expected to reflect "the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require all students in a given grade band to engage with" (Common Core State Standards ELA in History, Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Appendix B, p. 2). In order to fulfill this demand, we need to understand how text complexity is measured in the CCSS.

Determining Text Complexity

What the CCSS consider grade appropriate is determined by the Lexile Framework, which uses quantitative methods, based on the average word frequency found in the American Heritage Intermediate Corpus and on sentence length, to predict a score on a 0–2000 scale. A lexile text measure can be obtained by evaluating the readability of a piece of text, such as a book or an article. The Lexile Analyzer, a software program specially designed to evaluate reading demand, analyzes the text's semantic (word frequency) and syntactic (sentence length) characteristics and assigns it a lexile measure (https://lexile.com). Lexiles stress the quantitative rather than qualitative analysis of content to produce scores. A low lexile level will reflect the use of frequently used words and short sentences; higher lexile levels reflect the presence of uncommon vocabulary and longer sentences within a 100-word sample.

The purpose of the lexile classification is to be able to match a student's reading ability with texts that reflect what that student can understand. Lexiles are the result of a long line of research that started with readability formulas (e.g., Dale-Chall Readability Formula, 1948). Essentially, research in this area supports that sentence length and word difficulty provide a practicable mechanism for establishing text complexity, but they are imperfect.

Table 1 shows that fourth and fifth graders can read books with a lexile level between 770–980. As Shanahan (2013a) has pointed out, Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) is classified in the lexile website (https://lexile.com) as reaching a 940 lexile level. One of Hemingway's talents as a writer was to describe complex experiences and feelings using short sentences and accessible words, but his books require a level of experience that would be difficult to find in a fourth or fifth grader. The same applies to Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1978), classified as reaching a 630 lexile level and technically accessible for second and third graders. These are exceptions, however. In general terms, having a lexile classification is useful in predicting students' reading comprehension. The CCSS acknowledge that lexiles scores do not reflect factors such as multiple levels of meaning or maturity of themes, and hence they recommend the use of alternative qualitative methods for selecting books for students at Grade 6 and over (Common Core State Standards, Appendix A). Assigning a lexile level to a book goes hand in hand with assessing a student's reading level. This assessment is followed by the practice known as "matching books to readers."

Table 1
Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges (from Appendix A, Common Cause State Standards, p. 8)

Grade Level	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR expectations
K–1	NA
2–3	450–790
4–5	770–980
6–8	955–1155
9–10	1080–1305
11–CCR	1215–1355

Using lexiles to assign reading levels is helpful in deciding a student's reading level, but reading easier and harder books can be an enriching experience both to gain information and further the mastery of the new language. Background knowledge or familiarity with a given topic, motivation (which is very often linked to familiarity), and control over the language are all factors affecting reading comprehension. Standard 10 in the CCSS requires that students read grade-appropriate texts as determined by the lexile classification. All students, even if they do not independently read books that fall within the parameters of the lexile grade band, are expected to engage in reading texts that are considered grade appropriate. In 2010, when the CCSS were launched, teachers were bewildered by the demands embedded in Standard 10, and understandably so. In classrooms where the practice of matching books to readers was strictly followed, teachers wondered how could they move their students to read grade-appropriate texts. What many of us failed to see was that grade-level descriptors for Standard 10 embed scaffolds and supports.

Matching Books to Readers

The way a student is assigned a reading level is by having him or her read a text orally, usually a narrative, and by analyzing the miscues the student makes. For bilingual students, there are reading assessments that allow teachers to assess reading ability in two (or more) languages. The Reading A to Z program has leveled books for Spanish, English, and French new language learners. The Diagnostic Reading Assessment, 2nd. ed. (*Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura*) (2015), allows a teacher to obtain a reading level in Spanish and English languages, as does Fountas and Pinnell's *Sistema de Evaluación de la Lectura (SEL)* (2015). What is needed are assessment tools for languages other than English, Spanish, and French. Chinese, Bangla (Bengali), Haitian Creole, and Arabic are all languages present across New York State; many schools that have created bilingual, dual, and transitional programs also need to create informal and formal reading assessments to evaluate their students' reading ability with a bilingual approach.

Once a reading level has been assigned to a student, it technically represents a measure that covers all different genres and topics. In some cases, where schools don't have the assessment tools in two languages, the reading level achieved in English is taken as a valid measure of reading ability in the two languages. This practice, known as matching books to readers, has been pushed to an extreme in many classrooms by not allowing students to read books that represented a higher level of reading difficulty. Many teachers think that by constraining their students' exposure to books they can read with a minimum of challenge, they can protect their students from having a frustrating experience and thus boost the students' confidence as a reader. There is no research, however, confirming that matching students to texts improves the development of reading comprehension (Shanahan, 2013b, 2013c).

The Characteristics of Standard 10

The demand captured in Standard 10's Anchor Standard is: *Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.* Many teachers thought that Standard 10 demanded independent reading of grade-appropriate texts by all students. But what the authors of the CCSS, Coleman and Pimentel, intended was to give all students opportunities to engage in reading texts that reflect what the lexile classification estimates for each grade level. Table 2 presents Standard 10 by grade level for reading literature and reading for information. The words that convey scaffolding and support have been italicized for emphasis.

Table 2

Expectations for Reading Literature and Reading for Information in Standard 10

Reading Literature	Reading for Information
K: Actively engage in group reading with purpose and understanding.	K: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
1st: *With prompting and support,* read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for Grade 1.	1st: *With prompting and support,* read informational texts appropriately complex for Grade 1.
2nd: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in the Grades 2–3 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	2nd: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the Grades 2–3 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.
3rd: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the Grades 2–3 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.	3rd: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the Grades 2–3 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.
4th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the Grades 4–5 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	4th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the Grades 4–5 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.
5th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the Grades 4–5 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.	5th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the Grades 4–5 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.
6th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	6th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.
7th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	7th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.
8th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.	8th: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the Grades 6–8 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.
9th–10th: By the end of Grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the Grades 9–10 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	9th–10th: By the end of Grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the Grades 9-10 text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.
11th–12th: By the end of Grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the Grades 11 CCR text complexity band, proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.	11th–12th: By the end of Grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the Grades 11 CCR text complexity band proficiently, *with scaffolding as needed* at the high end of the range.

Thus, we find that the CCLS expects students in the third, fifth, and eighth grade to read, by the end of the year, grade-appropriate books independently. Students in all other grade levels can receive guidance and support.

Given that the nature of the CCSS is not to specify how and what to teach, the decision on what scaffolds, guidance, and support are to be offered ultimately falls on the teachers. Motivation and engagement are very often linked to the background knowledge a student has. Fostering an interest a new language student shows in a particular area is a valuable way of offering the guidance and support embedded in the grade-level descriptors of Standard 10.

Reading Engagement and Motivation

The practice of matching books to readers takes the viewpoint that reading is a cognitive endeavor. But reading also involves the integration of motivational goals that integrate social interactions and interests. For Verhoeven & Snow (2001), developing the cognitive aspects of reading—applying reading strategies or gaining orthographic knowledge—is just as important as transmitting enthusiasm about reading. Motivation is a central component in background knowledge, because domain-specific knowledge stems from the interests and motivation a student has about reading about a certain topic.

The surveys on students' reading interests show that there are clear differences that are age related. Young children read for entertainment; they gravitate toward animals and nature, fables, and folk and fairy tales. Students in the upper elementary grades and middle years show interest in adventures and real-life stories; their curiosity propels them to want to know about concepts, events, situations, and ideas that fall outside of their everyday life. Space and oceans are favorite topics, but so are topics that have a moral or ethical edge to them (Lawrence, White, & Snow, 2011). The impact of global warming, gun control, and the financing of presidential candidates are all topics on which middle and high school students have opinions they would love to share. As students grow older, they see reading as a way of extending their knowledge base. Informational books, biographies, and historical novels are preferred (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001).

For new language learners, the world outside of school, reflecting the cultural and linguistic characteristics that surround them, has to be brought into the classroom. A central aspect of fostering motivation in new language students is the ESL and/or bilingual specialist, who uses a student-centered approach. Teachers who share the responsibility of creating meaningful small- and whole-group conversations that integrate information acquired from different books written in languages other than English, or for discussing textual inferences found in shared texts, will create spaces for reflecting and deepening their students' understanding and motivation. Thematic units of study that develop a central topic from multiple perspectives open the door for recognizing the various interests that individual students will exhibit. The key ingredients in motivating students are (a) allowing them to reflect and to think; and (b) to gain confidence about their own learning and capability for expressing their thoughts, both in oral and written form, in the home and new language. More often than not, however, ESL and classroom bilingual teachers are trapped in a cycle of testing and assessment that leaves little time to reflect and think about what is being learned. Arguably, the most problematic result of all is that new language students are not given time to integrate the new information into their own frames of reference.

Standard 10, as presented in the BCCP, offers the opportunity of using the linguistic resources that new language students bring to the task of learning. It also incorporates the notion that new language students can reach the demands embedded in Standard 10 by engaging students in reading books that support them in acquiring specific knowledge about a topic. This doesn't mean that new language learners can read only one kind of content books; on the contrary, they are also able to read a wide range of books that will allow them to extend their background knowledge, and also read a wide variety of books that portray specific interests.

Standard 10 in the BCCP

The BCCP describe content and language scaffolds for most every ELA reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards. The development of the BCCP has been discussed elsewhere (Velasco & Johnson, 2015) and falls outside of the scope and purpose of this article.

In the BCCP, Standards 1 to 9 for reading and writing and all of the Speaking and Listening Standards are presented twice. The Home Language Arts Progressions (HLAP) present scaffolds for developing the students' home language. The New Language Arts Progressions (NLAP) present scaffolds for developing a new language (Velasco & Johnson, 2015). Taken together, they represent a dynamic view of bilingualism where both languages interact and influence each other (García, 2009). One of the exceptions is reading Standard 10,[4] presented at the end of this paper, where the new (in blue) and home language (in orange) descriptors are presented in one template. The principles that guided the creation of BCCP Standard 10 are:

- *Principle 1: Reading in both the home and new language builds extended background knowledge*. Principle 1 presents both NLAP and HLAP in one template to underline that extended or breadth of background knowledge can be built from two or more linguistic sources. Communicating these understandings can present difficulties in the new language, but the frames of reference or background knowledge can keep growing and expanding when reading in the language in which a student is more proficient. A newly arrived student (emerging) might exhibit higher levels of reading ability in the home language than in English. This new language learner can continue reading complex texts that reflect his or her reading ability in the home language while mastering how to read English. Students rated as Expanding and Commanding on the New Language Arts Progressions (NLAP) can read books that represent complexity levels that fall within the higher spectrum of the lexile classification. The CCSS do not state that reading grade-appropriate texts has to be achieved in English. Given that the CCSS are centered on engaging students' thinking and reasoning processes, reading complex texts in the home language is a valid practice.
- *Principle 2: Reaching grade-appropriate texts can be achieved by developing domain-specific background knowledge*. The scaffolds that are presented across the five levels of language proficiency in the new and home language emphasize the contextualization of new information and the analyses of new words and sentences. These language scaffolds are intended to provide support for all new and home language students. For entering students, the expectation is that at least one book representing a grade-appropriate text can be read at the demanded complexity spectrum in the new and/or home language. Pages 3, 4, and 5 in the BCCP Standard 10 presents book titles, in English, Spanish, and Chinese, that focus on the human body. The template presented corresponds to the ninth- to twelfth-grade grade band, but it also presents books that range from the second and third grades up to Grade 12.[5] Students whose reading ability falls short of reading grade-appropriate books can read books that represent a less challenging reading classification and still build their content and language knowledge. Likewise, students who are able to read more complex texts can continue to build their domain-specific knowledge. The purpose of presenting a wide range of reading levels around the same topic is to support the belief that new language students who develop domain-specific knowledge around a topic will increase their reading ability, gain knowledge of how a specific discipline is organized, and learn how experts think and write about the topic. Even though the book titles, presented in the three languages, center on the human body, they should be taken as an example of a continuum of books around a topic.

Recommendations and Conclusions

ESL teachers need to be informed about the specific topic that classroom teachers (in many instances a bilingual teacher) will cover so that both can work in synchrony and support each other. This requires that principals and literacy coaches support ESL and classroom teachers by having common planning periods that can lead to establishing co-teaching routines (Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014).

Science and social studies are particularly useful for building domain-specific background knowledge, because these content areas will embed information that has the potential of capturing the new language students' attention and viewpoint. Building background knowledge around these topics can take the form of engaging with the students by reading side by side, presenting a text excerpt within shared reading, or engaging in guided reading. Talking and discussing within partnerships, small groups, and whole classes that center on the information a text is conveying will build language and content knowledge. These interactions can point to the areas in which there are gaps in information (or even misconceptions) and that can be bridged by either discussing or reading.

The main point this article makes is that the BCCP Standard 10 for Reading for Information: Grade Band 9–12, presented on the next three pages, asserts the importance of building students' domain-specific knowledge through reading, talking, and discussing multiple books in the new and home language. It acknowledges the role that lexiles have in describing text complexity and what a student can comfortably read, but outside of the boundaries that assessments impose lie the interests and previous knowledge a student has developed and is eager to know more. New language students can read complex books about a specific topic in their home language as they master the intricacies of English; they can be exposed to books in the home and new language that reflect a higher or lower level of reading than is acknowledged in their reading assessment. Standard 10 in the BCCP allows students to follow what Verhoeven & Snow (2001) have termed a "rich diet of books" (p. 219). Embedded in these practices are the curiosity and interest that an ESL and/or bilingual teacher can spark and elicit in her new language students as they learn, reflect, and talk in their multilingual voices about the world around them.

Common Core Anchor Standard (RI.10): Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.						MAIN ACADEMIC DEMAND: *Build Comprehension of Grade Level Texts*
Common Core Reading for Information Standard 10: ***Grades 9-10***— By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. ***Grade 11-12***— By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.						
5 Levels of New Language Development		**Entering**	**Emerging**	**Transitioning**	**Expanding**	**Commanding**
When acquiring a new language, using grade level texts and appropriate supports, students are able to:						
RECEPTIVE	**Oracy and Literacy Links**	Comprehend *at least one* high interest, grade-appropriate text when teacher has built background knowledge, pre-taught vocabulary, provided a context for the text, and read aloud in class *in the new and/or home language.*	Comprehend *two or more* high interest, grade-appropriate texts when teacher has built background knowledge, provided pre-identified words and phrases, provided a context for the text, and read the text aloud in class *in the new and/or home language.*	Comprehend *multiple* high-interest, grade-appropriate texts when teacher has built background knowledge, provided a bank of phrases and sentences, and provided a context for the text *in the new and, occasionally, in the home language.*	Comprehend *multiple* grade or above grade-level texts when teacher has provided a glossary of new vocabulary, and provided a context for the text *in the new language.*	Comprehend *multiple* grade or above grade-level texts when teacher has glossed new vocabulary *in the new language.*
5 Levels of Home Language Development		**Entering**	**Emerging**	**Transitioning**	**Expanding**	**Commanding**
When developing home language literacy, using grade level texts and appropriate supports, students are able to:						
RECEPTIVE	**Oracy and Literacy Links**	Comprehend *at least one* high interest, grade-appropriate text when teacher has built background knowledge, provided pre-identified vocabulary and a context for the text, and read aloud in class.	Comprehend *two or more* high interest, grade-appropriate texts when teacher has provided background knowledge, provided pre-identified phrases and sentences and a context for the text, and read the text aloud in class.	Comprehend *multiple* grade-appropriate texts when teacher has glossed new vocabulary, and provided a context for the text.	Comprehend *multiple* grade or above grade-level texts when teacher has glossed new vocabulary, and provided a context for the text.	Comprehend *multiple* grade or above grade-level texts when teacher has glossed new vocabulary.
Common Core Reading for Information Standard 10: ***Grades 9-10***— By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. ***Grade 11-12***— By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.						
Building Background Knowledge: Background knowledge (or prior knowledge) is a frame of reference that encompasses the information and concepts that the learner brings to the learning task. Background knowledge reflects the learner's prior experiences and both formal and informal learning. It provides the foundation for approaching, processing, interpreting, and retaining new learning, and is indispensable to the learner's making sense and understanding how the world works. When children are reading nonfiction they need to have some background knowledge in order to understand the text. The more a student knows about a topic, the more difficult the texts a student can approach. Students' background knowledge, including developmental, experiential, and cognitive factors, influences their ability to understand the explicit and inferential qualities of a text. The following are some strategies to build background knowledge: • Developing background knowledge in the high school years can be achieved by reviewing or introducing concepts that form the baseline for understanding more complex ones. Conversations around topics that the student knows little about can be supported by carefully selected short video clips and illustrations that are connected to the background knowledge and content need to enrich reading comprehension. • Background knowledge can be enriched by providing students with texts they can read independently that match their reading level and that are aligned with the grade-level text/topic being developed in class. • Students who are developing a new language and can read and comprehend grade level text in their home language can build background knowledge by independently reading higher level text aligned with the text/topic being developed in class. • Pairing fiction and nonfiction books that address the same topic.						

Note: Text structures and oral language development also play an important role in building a student's ability to comprehend grade appropriate texts. *See* RI Standards 5, 6 and 7 for standards that target text structures and Standards 1 and 2, which addresses comprehension strategies. Also, in order to engage in grade appropriate texts students must have mastered the phonemic and phonological characteristics of the home and/or new language as well as fluency. *See* Foundations of Reading, which address the development of these skills.

Examples of Text to Build Background Knowledge in P-2 Informational Text: *The following books develop and expand knowledge of the human body. The sequence from K to 5th grade is recommended in the Common Core State Standards (p.33).*

English Texts

2nd and 3rd Grade	4th and 5th Grade	6th to 8th Grade	9th to 12th Grade
The digestive and excretory systems • *What Happens to a Hamburger* by Paul Showers (1985) • *The Digestive System* by Christine Taylor-Butler (2008) • *The Digestive System* by Rebecca L. Johnson (2006) • *The Digestive System* by Kristin Petrie (2007) Taking care of your body: Healthy eating and nutrition • *Good Enough to Eat* by Lizzy Rockwell (1999) • *Showdown at the Food Pyramid* by Rex Barron (2004) Muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems • *The Mighty Muscular and Skeletal Systems* Crabtree Publishing (2009) • *Muscles* by Seymour Simon (1998) • *Bones* by Seymour Simon (1998) • *The Astounding Nervous System* Crabtree Publishing (2009) • *The Nervous System* by Joelle Riley (2004)	The Respiratory system • *The Lungs* by Seymour Simon (2007) • *The Respiratory System* by Susan Glass (2004) • *The Respiratory System* by Kristin Petrie (2007) • *The Remarkable Respiratory System* by John Burstein (2009)	• *Middle Grade Science. Human Body Systems*. Student Edition (2006) • *Middle School Healthy Hearts in the Zone. A heart rate monitoring program for lifelong fitness* by Swain and Edwards (2008) • *The Muscular and Skeletal Systems*. Creative Media Applications (2007)	• *The Human Body*. Fogware Publishing (with DVD Rom) (2010) • *The Human Body: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* by Wile and Shannon (2011)

Spanish Texts

2nd and 3rd Grade	4th and 5th Grade	6th to 8th Grade	9th to 12th Grade
Introducción a los sistemas del cuerpo humano • *El autobús mágico en el cuerpo humano* por Joanna Cole y Bruce Degan (1994) • *El Cuerpo Humano* por Richard Ferguson y Peter Hall • *El Cuerpo Humano* por Andrew Haslam (2011) Cuidando tu cuerpo: Gérmenes y prevención de enfermedades • *Germs are not for sharing/Los gérmenes no son para compartir* por Elizabeth Verdick y Marieka Henlen (2011) • *Matar a los gérmenes* por Melanie Mitchell (2005)	El Cuerpo Humano y el sistema respiratorio • *El aparato respiratorio* por Judith Jango Cohen (2006) • *El sistema respiratorio ¿Por qué me quedo sin aliento?* por Sue Barraclough (2006)	• *El Cuerpo Humano* por Steve Parker (2004) • *Al Descubierto: Cuerpo Humano* por Luann Colombo (2003) • *El Cuerpo* Humano por Linda Calabresi (2008) • *Cuido mi cuerpo / I take care of my body* por Verónica Podesta (2007)	• *Estructura y función del cuerpo humano* por Gary Thibodeau y Kevin Patton (2012) • *Atlas de Anatomía Humana: Estudio fotográfico del cuerpo humano* por Agapea (2011) • *El cuerpo humano* por Richard Walker • *Guía topográfica del cuerpo humano* por Andrew Biel (2009)

Chinese Texts

- **Note:** In general, non-fiction books in Chinese are comprehensive and are not available by sub-topic (e.g. the respiratory system or the digestive system exclusively) as presented in the grade sequence for English and Spanish samples. Below are sample texts about the human body that are inclusive of sub-topics.

2nd and 3rd Grade	4th and 5th Grade	6th to 8th Grade	9th to 12th Grade
• 人體的一天：參觀你的身體	• 人體與生活：新版兒童十萬個	• 人體解碼 [Decoding the human	• 人體疾病學習大百科 [The

每天24小時的工作實況 [A Day in the Life of your Body: An Around the Clock Guide to how your body works] by Beverly McMillan, translated by Lin Jiéying (2012) • *驚奇人體 [The Surprises of the Human Body]* by Zhu Jiaxing (2013) • *十萬個為什麼：身體奧秘 [10,000 Whys: The mystery of the body]* by Wáng Yǒnghuì (2014)	*為什麼 [The human body and life: A new book of 10,000 whys]* edited by the Windmill group (2013) • *奇妙的身體：不一樣的人體百科 [The Wonderful Body: Every body is different encyclopedia]* by The Institute of the Human Body, translated by Lin Meihui (2013) • *人體結構圖解事典 [The illustrated encyclopedia of human anatomy]* by Yuán nèi yì hěng (2009)	*body]* by Cuī Dàxiù (2006) • *人體學習大百科 [Learn About the Human Body Encyclopedia]* by Qiānyè Wūláng (2004) • *3D人體解剖圖 [3D human anatomy]* by Sakai Tatuo (2013)	*Encyclopedia of Human Diseases]* by Kenjiro Ito (2011) • *人體解剖全書 [The Human Anatomy book]* by Andrew Biel, translated by Xiè Bóràng and Gāo Yìhán (2012) • *人體學習事典：肌肉・關節 運動與構造篇 [The Encyclopedia of the Human Body: On muscles, joints, exercise and skeletal structure]* edited by Kuriyama Setsuro (2013)
Multilingual book distributors in New York (in alphabetical order): **Attanasio Publishers** (www.attanasio-edu.com) **Hexagramm** (http://hexagrammbooks.com) **Lectorum** (http://www.librerialectorum.com) **Rosen Publishing** (http://www.rosenpublishing.com) **Scholastic** (http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/espanol.htm) Useful websites for books in Arabic and Haitian Creole: **Arabic** (http://www.alkitab.com) **Haitian Creole** (http://www.haitianbookcentre.com) Unite for Literacy (http://uniteforliteracy.com) is a website that presents nonfiction books written in English but read in 15 different languages.			

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Footnotes

[1]In New York State, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are known as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In this article, I use CCSS to refer to the different aspects appearing in the CCSS document.

[2]According to NYSED Commissioner Regulations Part 154, the term *new language* replaces *second language* and the term *home language* replaces *first language*.

[3]According to NYSED Commissioner Regulations Part 154, the term *new language student* replaces *English language learner*. The term *new language learner/student* is used throughout this article.

[4]Standard 10 for writing in the BCCP also joins the new and home language descriptors and scaffolds within one template.

[5]For suggested books on the same topic for Pre-K, K, and first grade, please consult the PK to Second Grade template found on www.engageny.org.

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