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## *Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers*

European Research Findings About  
Good Practice

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## Introduction

- From PISA-Shock to European Educational Benchmarks: Adolescent Struggling Readers in European Countries

## Research Findings from a European Project

- ADORE — Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers. A comparative study of Good Practices in European Countries



# I Introduction

**From the PISA-Shock 2000  
to the European Educational Benchmarks:  
Some Basic Informations about  
Adolescent Struggling Readers  
in European Countries**



## What is PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)?

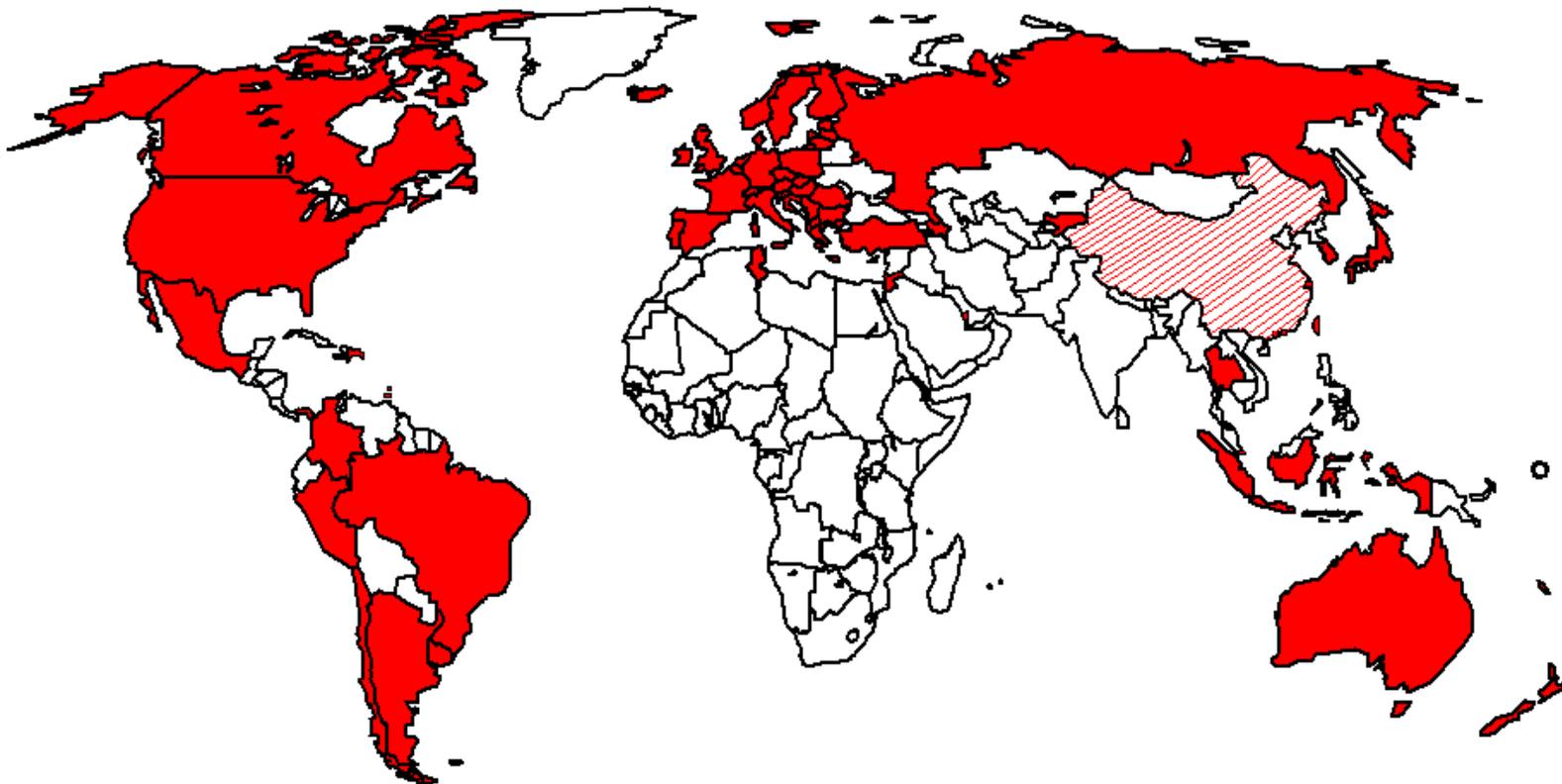
- an international comparative study of the OECD conducted in three-yearly cycles (2000-2009)
- assesses a) the performance of 15-year-old students in basic competences/subject domains (narrow focus) and b) further skills such as learning attitude, self-concept and learning-strategies (large focus)
- focuses on how students apply knowledge in new situations
- collects context data (school, parents and students)
- assesses and queries representative samples in all participating countries (4.500 - 10.000 students per country)



# Who takes part in PISA?

## Participating countries in PISA 2009

Share of global economy: 87%





## What does PISA assess?

„PISA assesses how far students near the **end of compulsory education** have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full **participation in society**. In all cycles, the domains of **reading, mathematical** and **scientific literacy** are covered not merely in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but in terms of important knowledge and skills **needed in adult life**.“

(OECD 2001:14)



## PISA's concept of reading literacy:

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

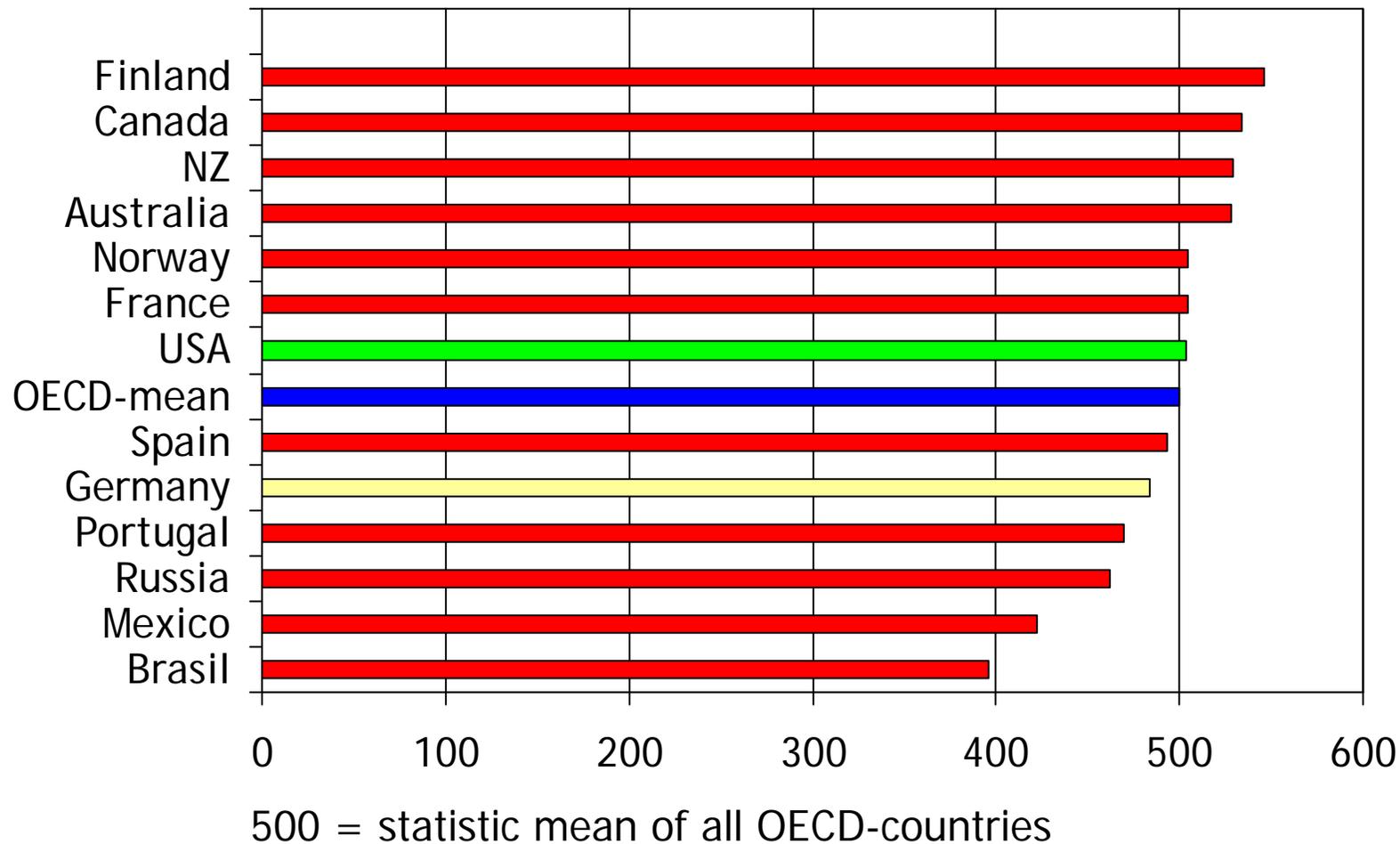
(OECD 2002: 25)

→ Functional and pragmatic approach to reading



# PISA-results: What caused the „PISA-shock“ in Germany / Europe in 2000?

Results of selected countries on the reading-literacy-scale:



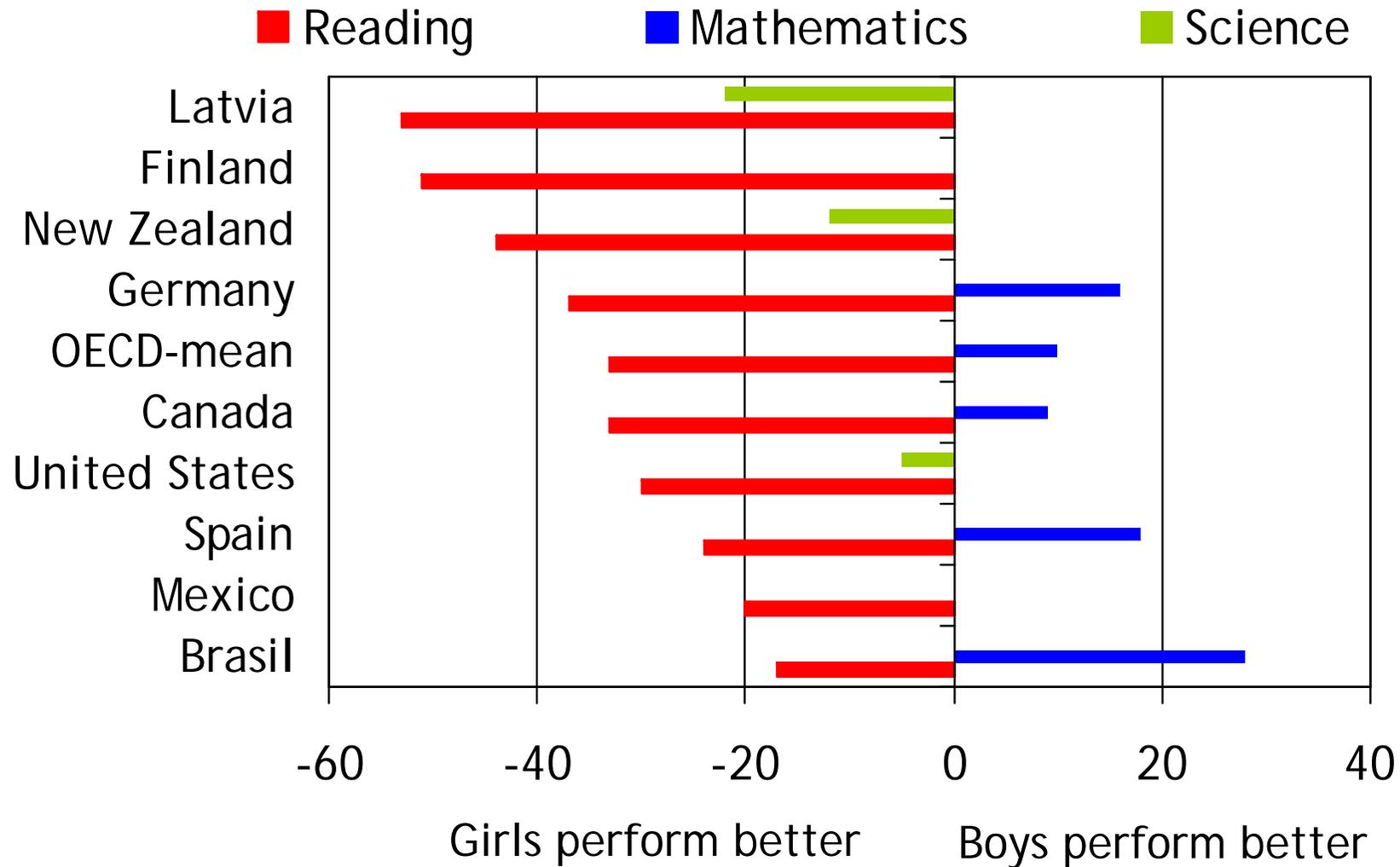


## PISA-results: Share of students at the five competence levels in reading literacy 2000

% of students	OECD Ø	Germany	US	Finland
At level V	9,5	8,8	12,2	18,5
At level IV	22,3	19,4	21,5	31,6
At level III	28,7	26,8	27,4	28,7
At level II	21,7	22,3	21,0	14,3
At level I	11,9	12,7	11,5	5,2
Below level I	6,0	9,9	6,4	1,7

- Almost 25% of the **German students** are struggling readers
- About 10% belong to the students at risk (performance below level I)...
  - ... 2/3 are male students
  - ... most of them attend middle- or special schools
  - ... 50% of the students have a migration background

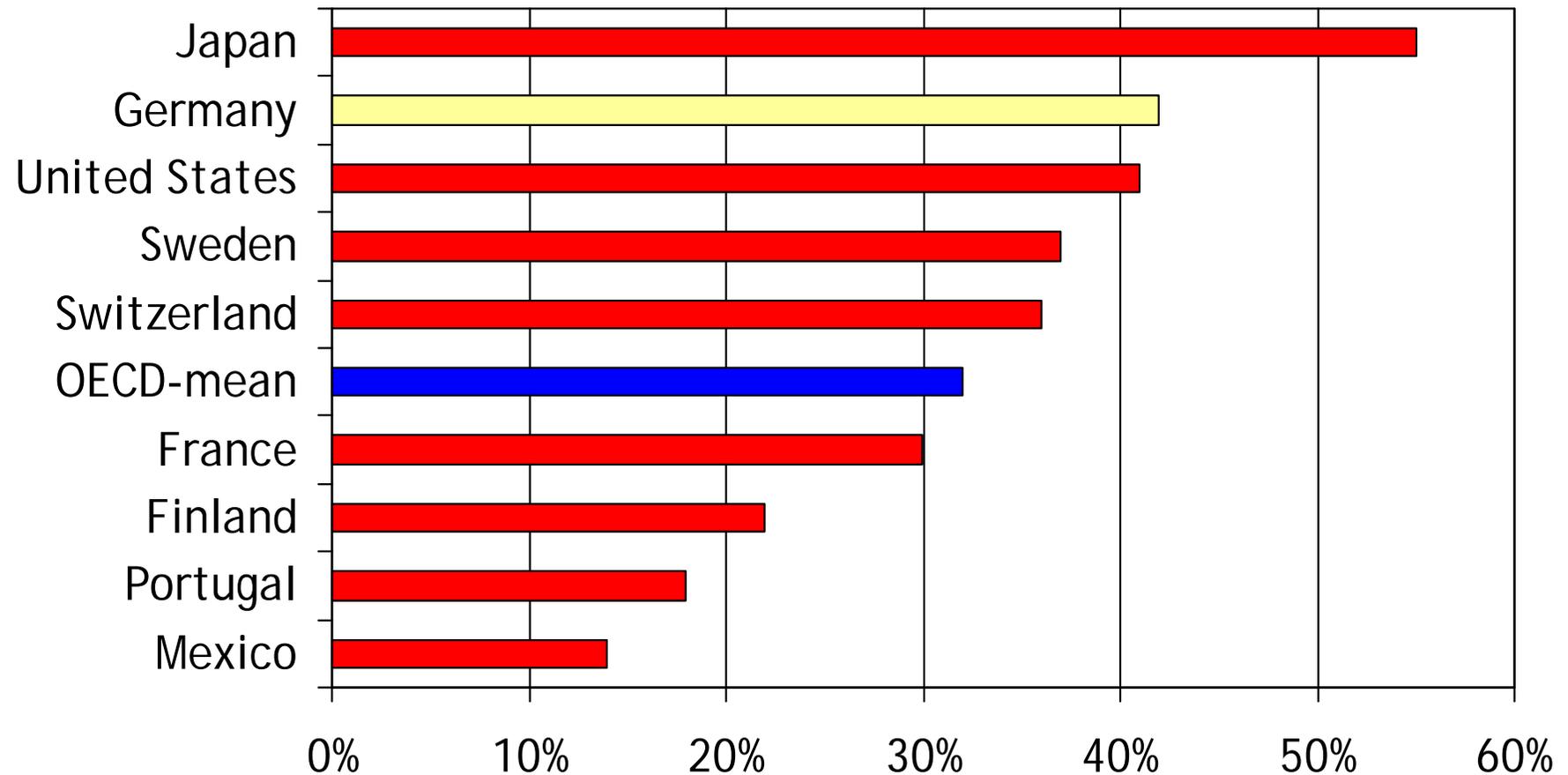
# PISA-results: Performance-gap between boys and girls 2000



(selection, PISA 2000, p. 107)



# PISA-results: 42 % of the German students do not read for fun / PISA 2000



(PISA 2000, p. 114)



## „Adolescent Struggling Readers“ according to PISA

- *„It is most likely that adolescents who fail to reach competence level II by completion of school, will experience their further opportunities in life as restricted.“ (OECD)*
- ADORE partner countries who have failed to reach **competence level II** ( according to **PISA 2006**):
  - FIN: 4.8%
  - EST: 13.7%
  - PL: 16.2%
  - CH: 16.4%
  - B: 19.4%
  - G: 20.1%
  - H: 20.6%
  - A: 21.5%
  - N: 22.4%
  - I: 26.4%
  - RO: 53.5%
  - Ø OECD: 20.1%
- In PISA 2000, **17,9%** of the students in the **United States** scored at or below **competence level 1**



# Five Education Benchmarks for Europe

## 1. Low achievers in reading

By 2010 the percentage of low achieving 15-year olds in reading literacy in the EU should decrease by at least 20% (compared to 2000).

## 2. Early school leavers

By 2010 a share of early school leavers of no more than 10% should be reached.

## 3. Upper secondary attainment

By 2010 at least 85% of 22-year olds in the EU should have completed upper secondary education.

## 4. Maths, science & technology graduates

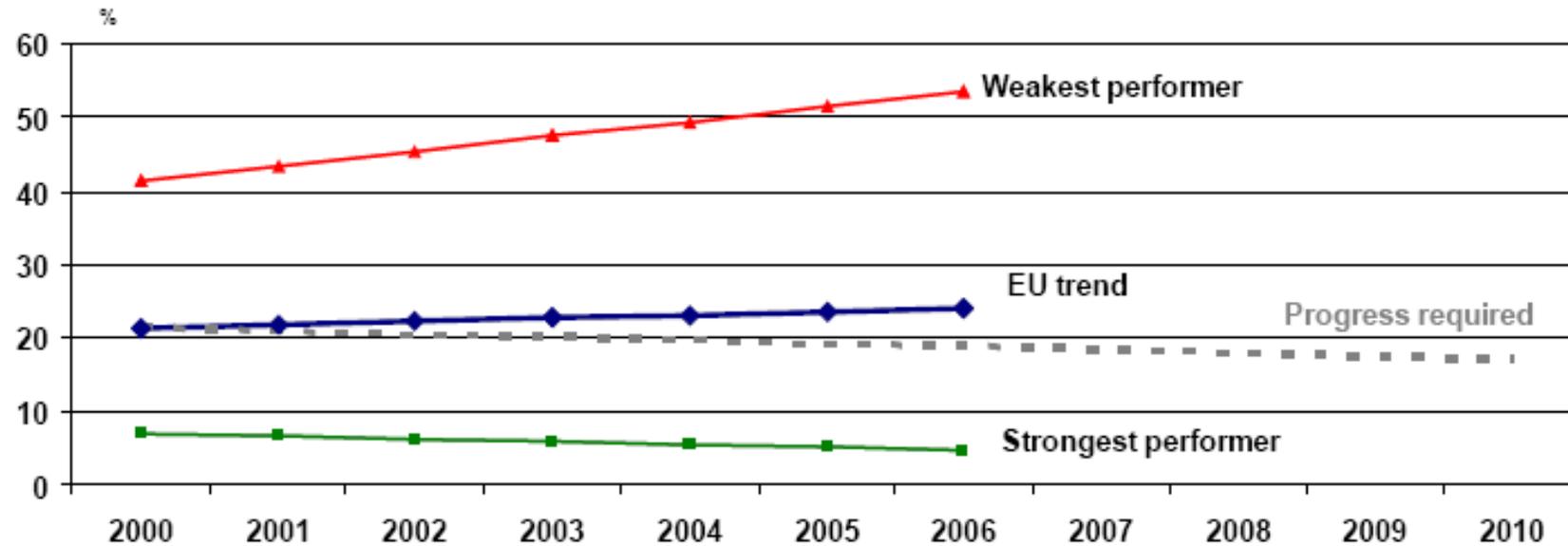
The total number of MST graduates in the EU should increase by at least 15%, gender imbalance should decrease.

## 5. Participation of adults in lifelong learning

The EU average level of participation in lifelong learning should at least reach 12,5% of the working age population (25-64 age group).



# Low achievers in reading



In the EU (comparable data available for 18 countries) performance deteriorated from 21,3% low performers in reading in 2000 to 24,1% (girls: 17,6%, boys: 30,4%) in 2006.



## II Research Findings from a Europ. Project: ADORE: Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers

- The idea behind the project
- Participating institutions and countries
- Project work-plan
- **First phase: What are the differences and commons between the participating countries?**
  - National Positionpapers about educational systems and discourses
- **Second phase: What is considered as “good practice” in the different countries?**
  - National research on examples for „good practices“
- **Third phase: Observations - What are key elements for a “good practice” in a transnational perspective?**
  - Transnational team visits, analysis, and evaluation
- **Fourth phase: Analysis of Findings - Dissemination of Conclusions**
  - Defining key elements and finding agreement in conclusions for teachers and politicians



# The idea behind the ADORE Project

## Socrates topic

Better understanding of the phenomenon of poor reading skills and poor readers in order better to combat the problem

- (a) Point out effective methods / exchange of findings concerning good practice
- (b) Identify objective criteria for establishing the quality of “good practice” cases

## Needs

Open a dialogue between European experts on reading and reading instruction (University / Schoolteachers)

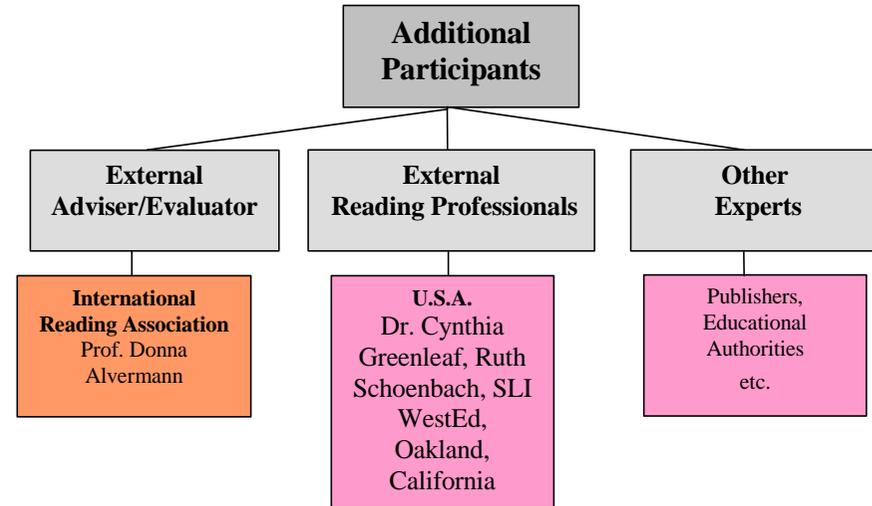
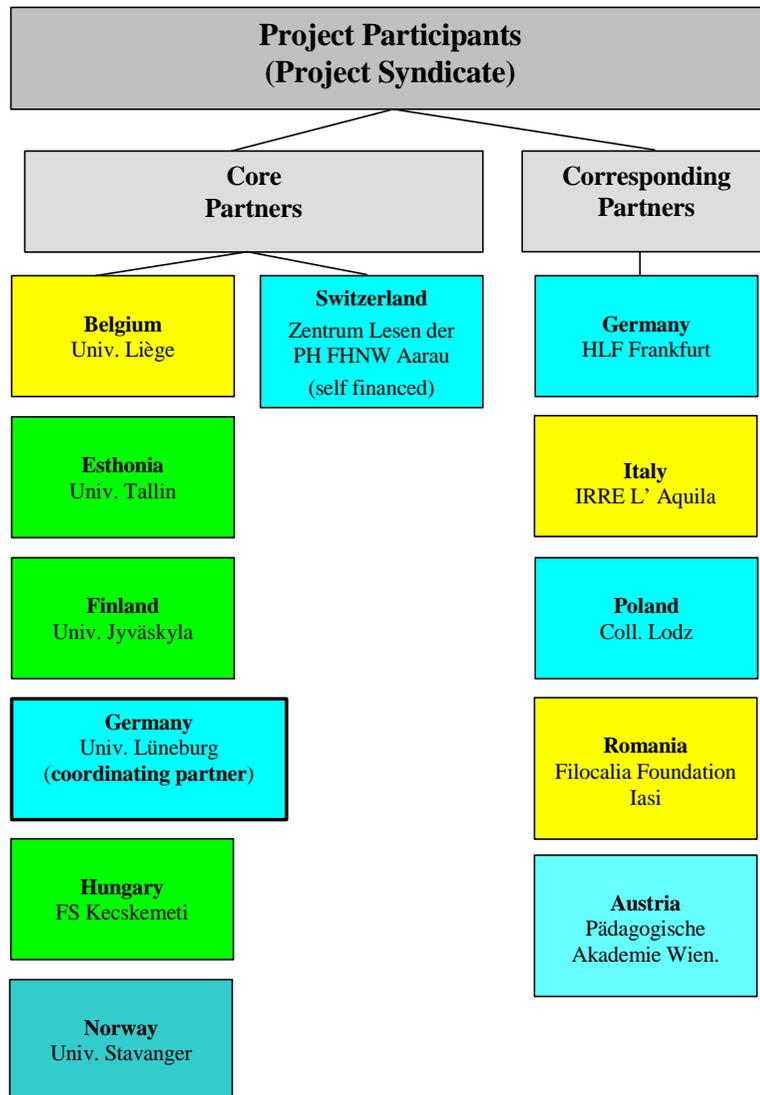
Evolve a common awareness of the types of manageable problems connected with encouraging reading

Ask questions such as:  
What kind of instructional approach proves effective?  
Which criteria and standards gain transnational consensus, which do not?

## Objectives

- Developing evaluation criteria for elements of good practice
- Identifying methods of good practice concerning struggling readers’ needs
- Establishing a network of reading researchers and practitioners in the field of adolescent literacy

# Participating institutions and countries





# ADORE Project Workplan

Steps	Activities
1. Identification of consensus or dissent governing central concepts and reference systems on reading	Workshop I (3 days, March 2007)
2. Presentation of national models of good practice	Workshop II (3 days, September 2007)
3. Carrying out the trans-national case studies	Research visits (March 2008 - June 2008)
4. Analysis report on the trans-national visits, planning of final publication ("Handbook of Methods/Models of Good Practice in European Countries")	Board-Meeting (2 days, end of June 2008)
5. Presentation, evaluation and reflection of the case studies	Final conference in Lueneburg (5 days, October 2008) Editorial meeting (2 days, Jan. or Feb. 09)
6. Dissemination of the findings	International Handbook, national publications



## First Phase: Position papers on reading literacy and national educational systems

- Compilation of papers on national positions concerning: “Reading Skills / Reading Literacy” - Central Concepts and Reference Systems / Educational Systems in all participating countries
- Discussion of the papers during the first workshop in L´Aquila (Italy) in March 2007
- Working definitions for „Adolescent Struggling Readers” (ASR) and for „good practice”



## Who are the „Adolescent Struggling Readers (ASR)“?

Adolescent struggling readers belong to the 12- 18 year age group but we include: pre-adolescents (10-12 years, 5th and 6th graders) and post-adolescents (18 - 20 years).

Their reading obstacles are mainly in the areas of:

- Decoding, reading-fluency and adaptive reading,
- Reading comprehension in general and/or in specific domains,
- Critical reading, interpreting and evaluating content, language, textual elements,
- Digital literacy, online research skills,
- Meta-cognitive skills for reading and/or learning critical reading and reflection,



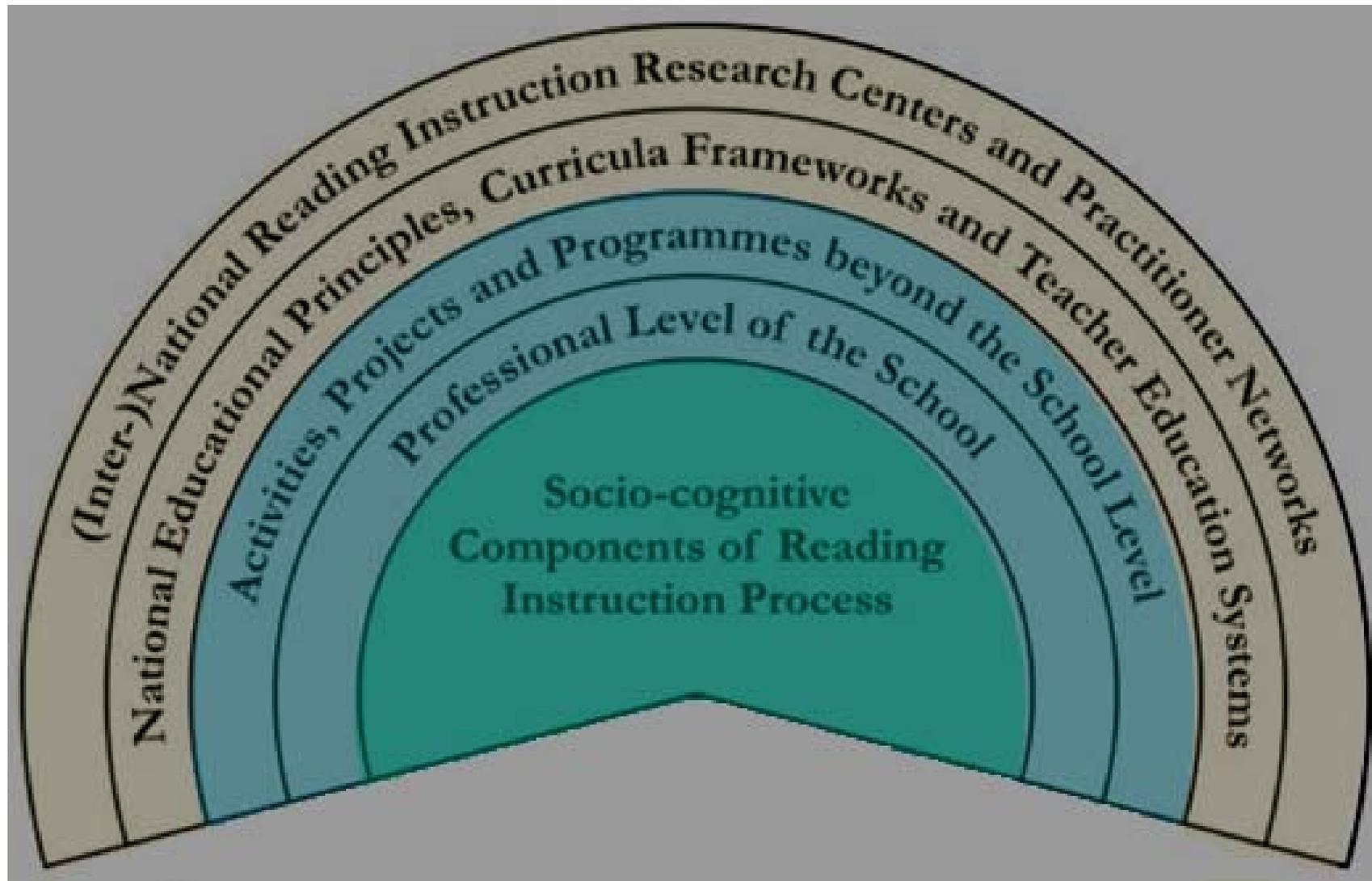
## Who are the „Adolescent Struggling Readers (ASR)“?

Their reading obstacles are mainly in the areas of:

- Creating and using communicative contexts for reading activities within families, peer-groups and school-environments,
- Motivation for learning to read better and/or for reading to learn more effectively,
- Reading-engagement/motivation; building up a stable self-concept as a reader,
- Activating and altering the reader's point of view while reading (aesthetic vs. efferent stance according to Rosenblatt); responding to literature/fictional texts.

# Basic Model I

## Five Levels of "Good Practice" (Jan. 2008)





## Second Phase: National Research on “Good Practice”

### Deductive Research Method - e.g. in Switzerland

- **Directly approaching** well-known, potential cooperation partners in technical colleges or schools, further educational institutions and administration
- **Compilation** of presentable reading promotion projects (ca. 10) in research centre
- **Criteria** for the selection of examples: Focus on (pre-)adolescent struggling readers
  - Focus on (pre-)adolescent struggling readers
  - Focus on lowest educational level of secondary school (i.e. middle school)
  - Evaluated projects
  - Scientific foundation



## Second Phase: National Research on “Good Practice”

### Inductive research method - e.g. in Germany:

- Approaching all 16 Ministries of Education and Culture, all educational servers, all 16 state institutes for teacher training courses, all German didactic colleagues via SDD (Symposium Deutschdidaktik e.V.) mailing list and other networks
- Returns: ca. 50 replies
- Criteria for selection of examples:
  - Suitability for (pre-)adolescent struggling readers
  - Pedagogical intervention addresses at least two problems directly
  - Description of such intervention suitable for analysis.



## Third Phase: Trans-national visits

- 3 Trans-national teams created from 12 project partners
- Team members visit other countries and observe 2-3 examples of “good practice” there
- Trans-national teams discuss these examples and analyse them (looking for “key-elements” of good practice)

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Belgium</li><li>• Germ-F.</li><li>• Hungary</li><li>• Estonia</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Germ-L.</li><li>• Norway</li><li>• Romania</li><li>• Austria</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CH</li><li>• Finland</li><li>• Poland</li><li>• Italy</li></ul>



# Research Tools

- Evaluation of curricula, research overviews, statistics etc. (Guidelines for document analysis)
- Questionnaire about reading materials
- Observation sheet for classroom practice
- Guidelines for interviews with teachers and students.



# Example from the transnational visits

Key-incident: reading environment





# Example from the transnational visits

Key-incident: reading environment





## Fourth Phase: Systematization of findings and experiences

- Evaluation of the material collected in phase 3 and findings from trans-national groups
- Conference-meeting of the publication board (one member per core-partner) in Lueneburg (June 2008):
  - Compilation of key-elements of good practice for ASR
  - Development of a basic model for systemic reading tutoring of ASR
  - Recommendations for further evaluation/preparations for final conference



## Findings: One superior goal and 15 key-elements of good practice for ASR

### Self-concept and meta-cognitive knowledge of students: supporting students' self-confidence and self-efficacy

1. adequate reading materials
2. teacher expertise: quality of teacher training and professional development
3. multi-professional support at school level
4. financial and legal resources at all levels
5. national reading research that matters for practice (transfer)
6. classroom practice that involves students into texts
7. reading engagement and students' involvement in planning the learning process



## Findings: One superior goal and 15 key-elements of good practice for ASR

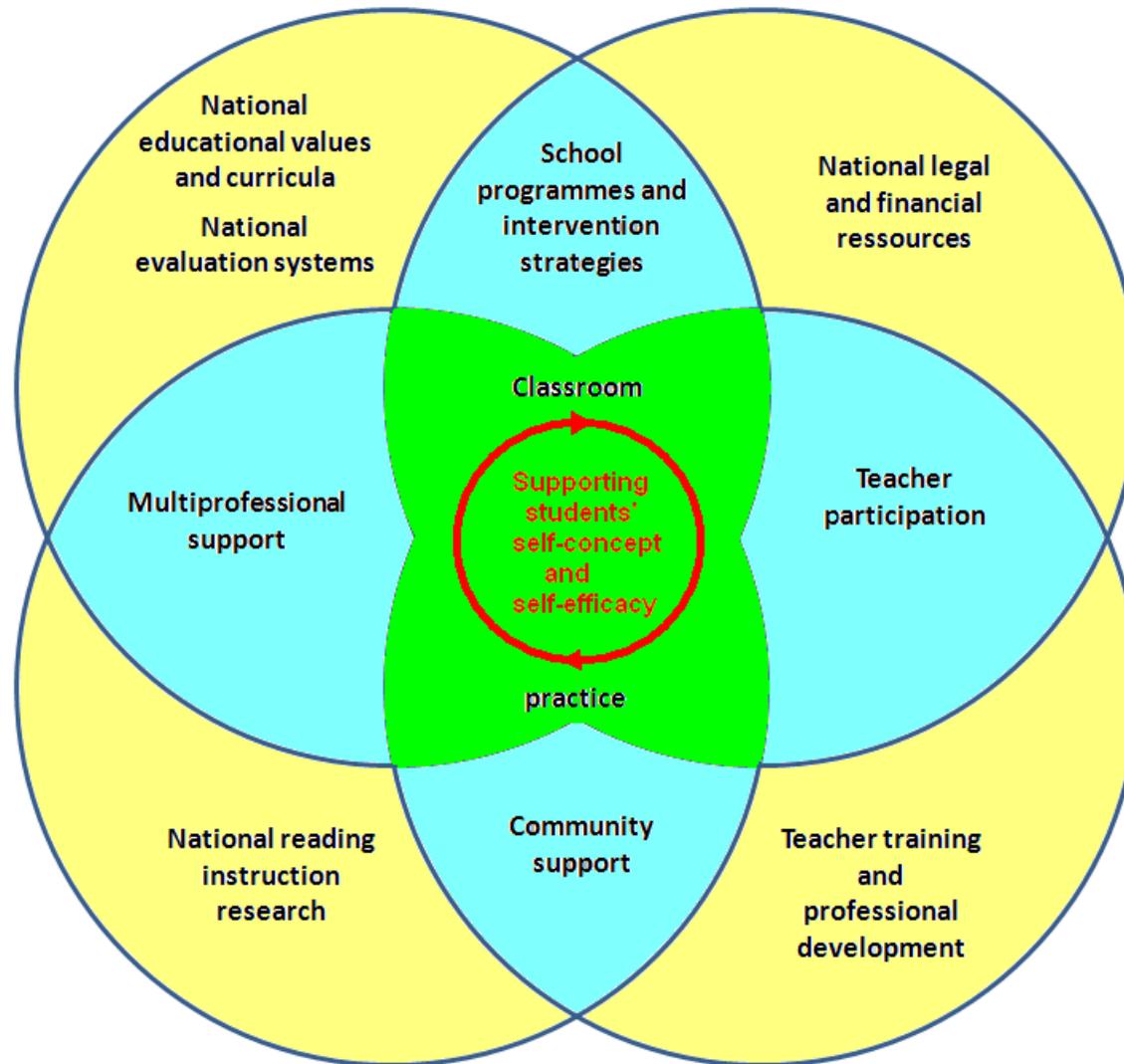
8. (meta-)cognitive reading strategies
9. diagnostic / formative assessment in the classroom
10. teacher-student-interaction has to be based on respect and care
11. inspiring reading and learning environments
12. teacher participation in school programmes
13. community support and involvement in reading promotion programmes
14. national conditions of education policy / national curriculum
15. information & communication technology / media literacy as part of reading literacy.



## Basic Model II: five-level model of “good practice” (discussion in progress)

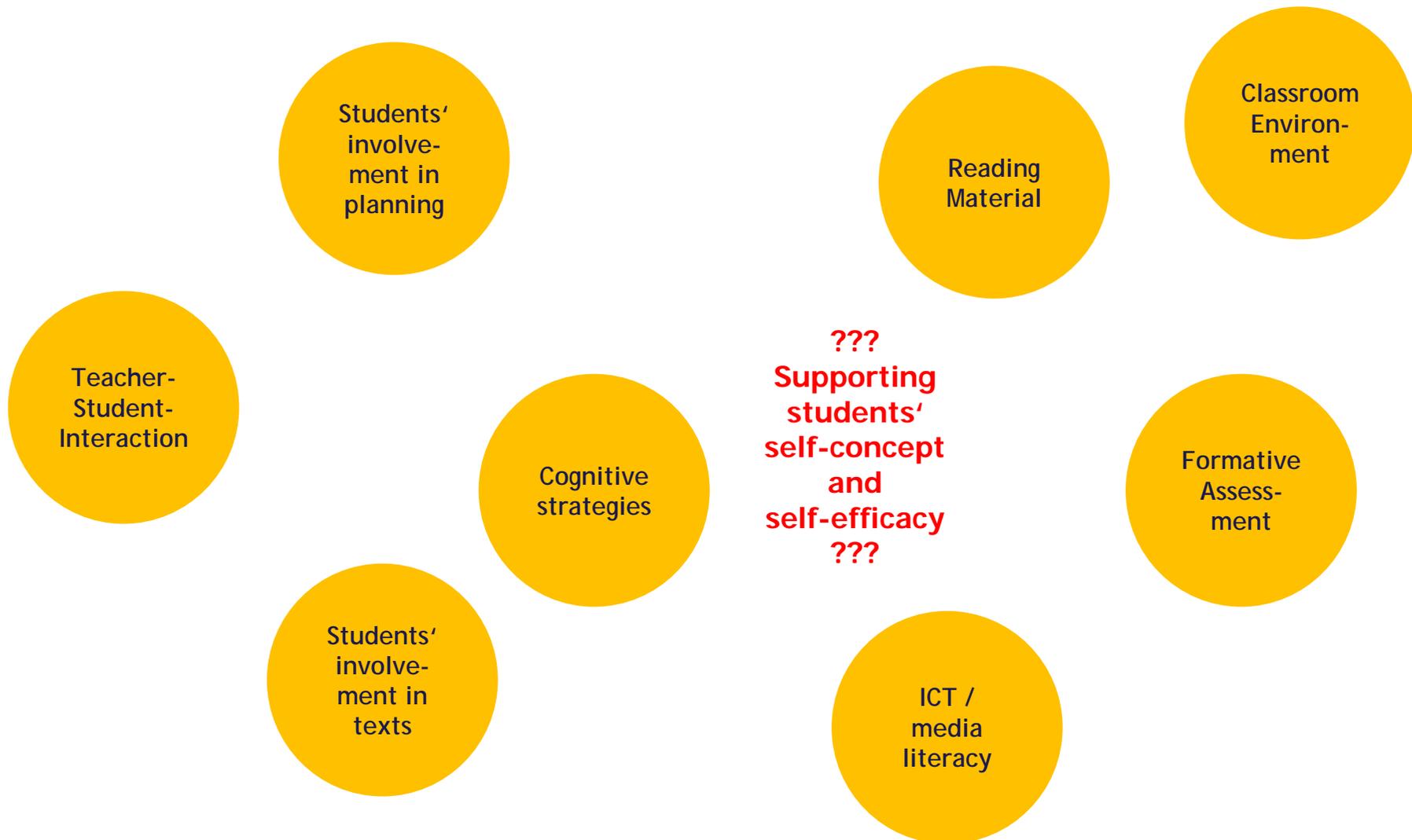
1. **Basis: The personal dimension:** Building up a stable self-concept as a reader
2. The level of **classroom-practice**
3. The level of **school-programmes**
4. **Public or private initiatives** to promote reading (at different levels)
5. The level of **municipal, regional or national educational policy**

# IV Findings and Conclusions – our Basic Model of Good Practice



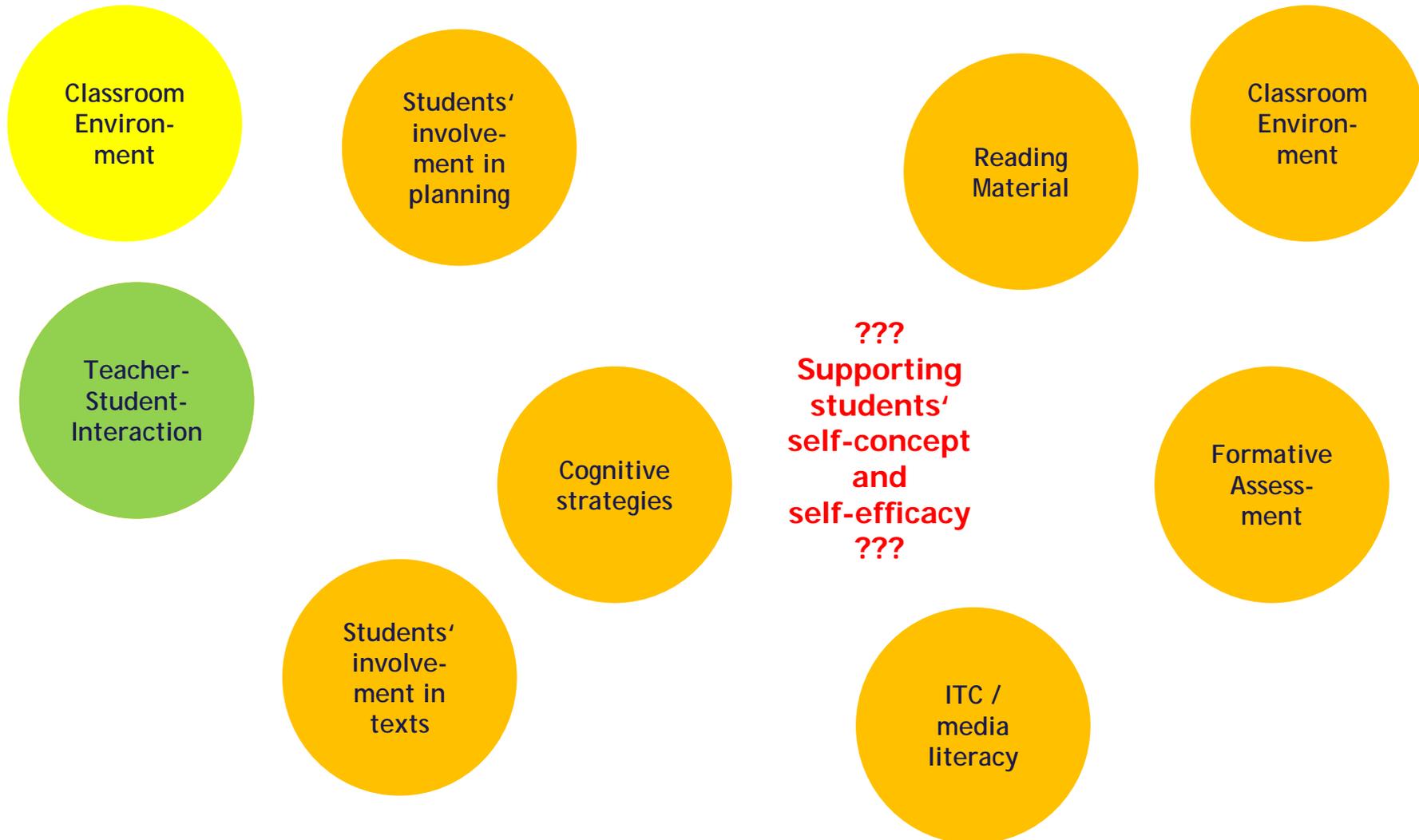


## IV Findings and Conclusions: 8 Key elements for good classroom practice

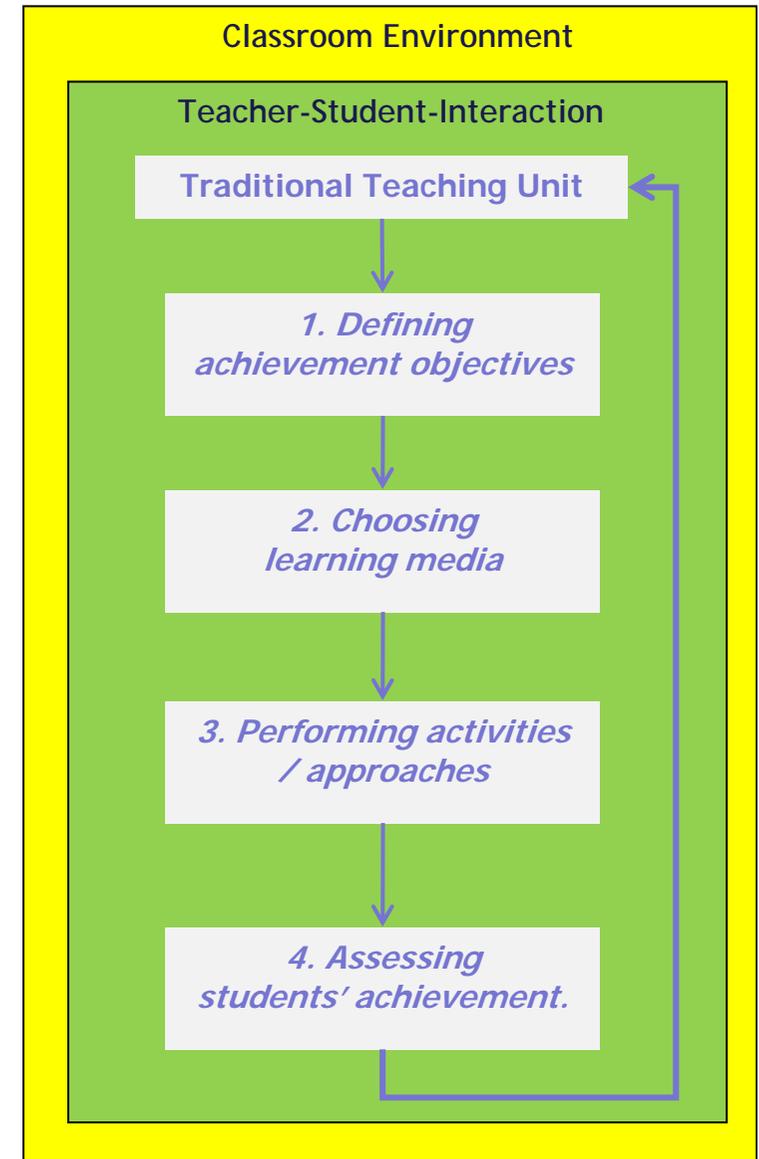
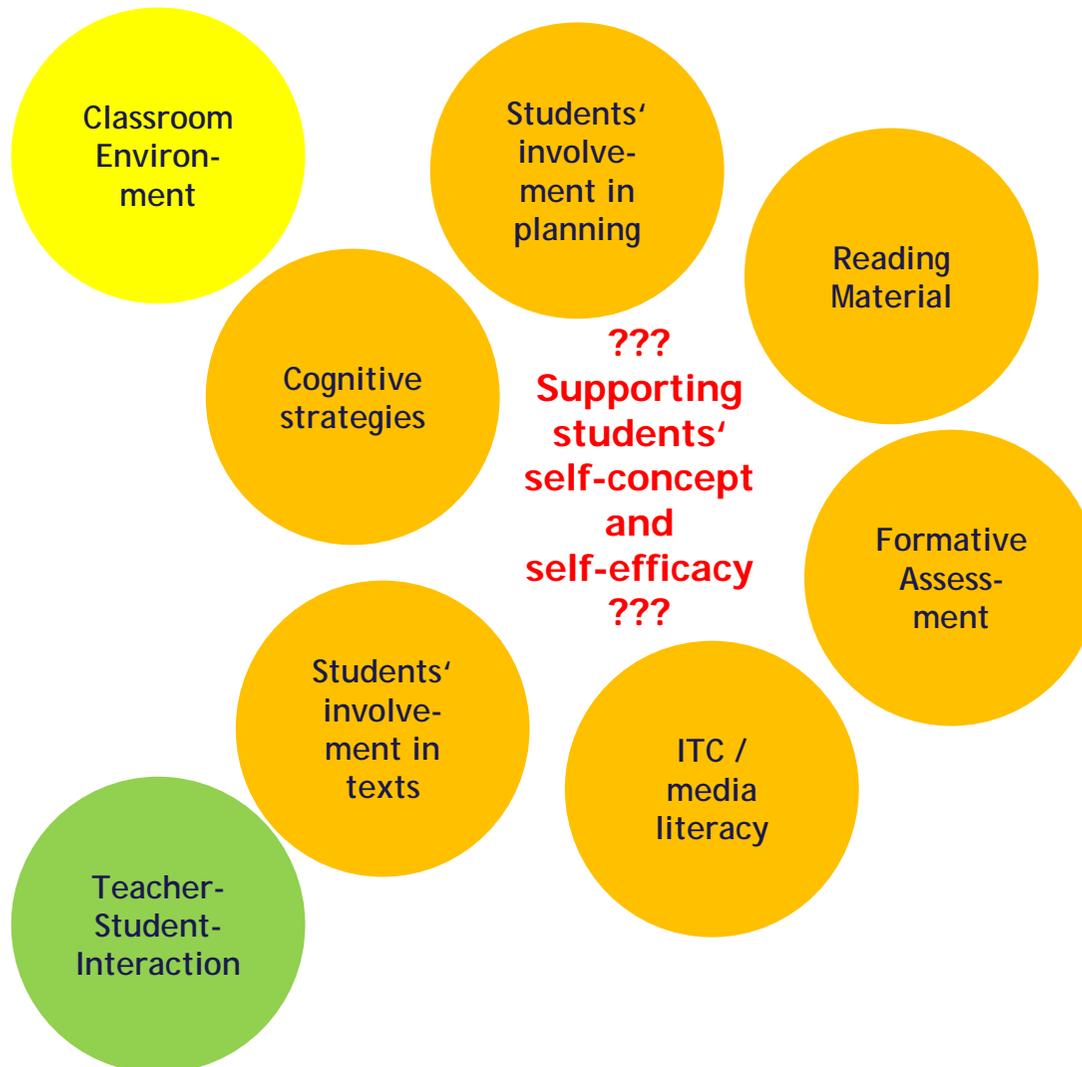


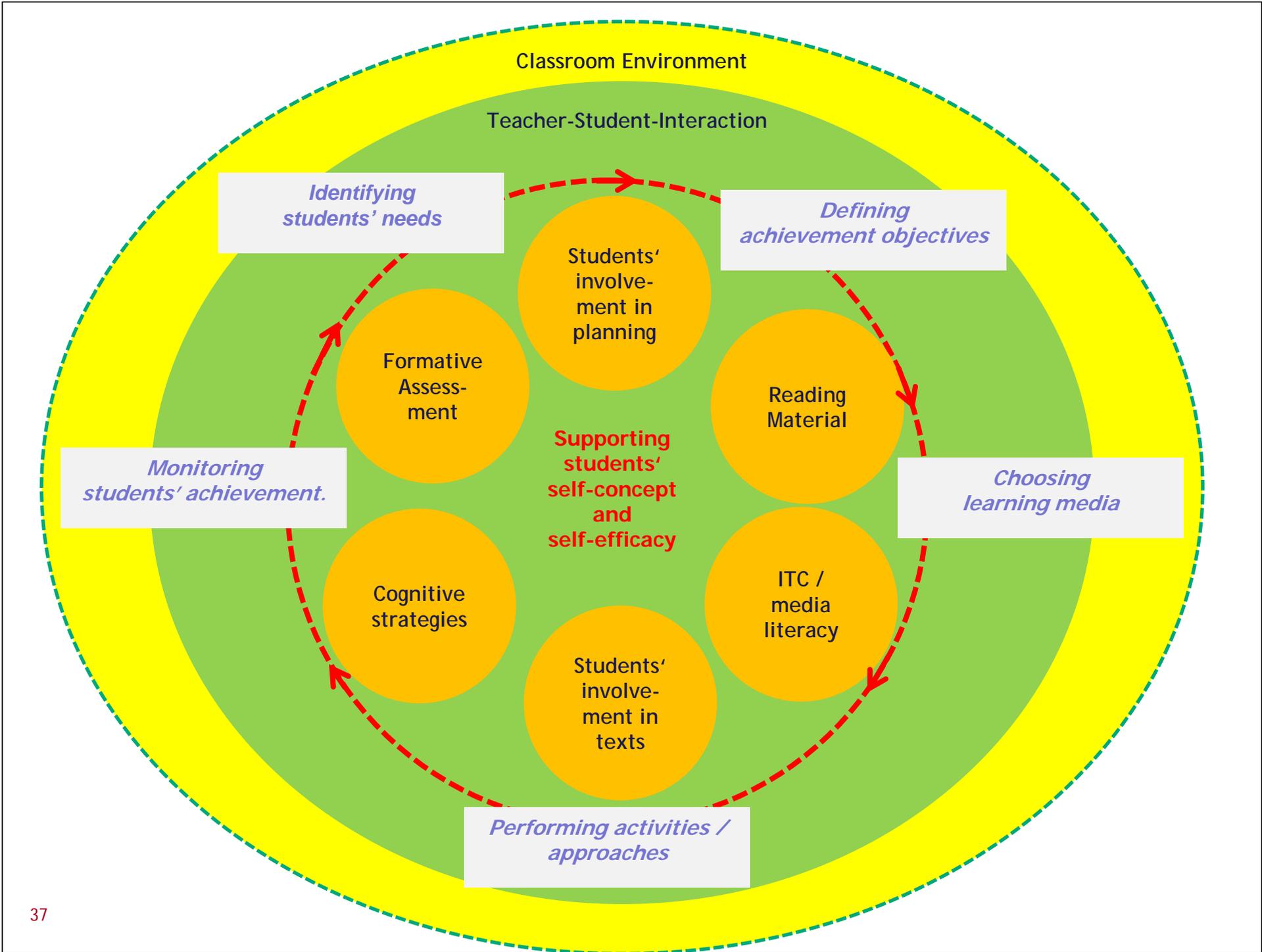


# IV Findings and Conclusions: 8 Key elements for good classroom practice



# IV Findings and Conclusions: 8 Key elements for good classroom practice







# Central Constraints for Good Practice

## Acquisititon of Reading Literacy

Elementary grades only (learning to read)

Secondary grades too (reading to learn)

## Adolescent Struggling Readers

Non readers with insufficient motivation

*readers* with special needs to overcome obstacles

## Instructional Ideas

Content oriented (learning of)

Competence oriented (learning for)

## Teachers' Knowledge of Literacy Instruction and Diagnosis

Only language arts teachers/reading specialists

All teachers in all content areas

## Reading Materials in Language Arts Curricula

Canonical literature

Authentic texts

## Reading Research and Knowledge Transfer into Practice

Casual cooperation

Systematic cooperation

## Educational Values and Systems

Achievement principle

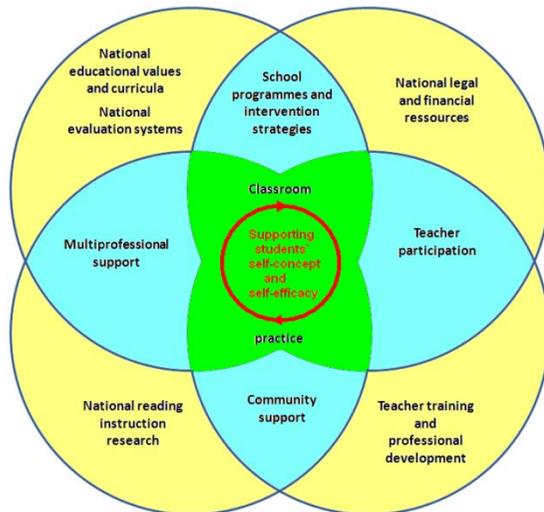
Support principle

## Financial / Legal Resources

Financial resources only

Legal rights for individual support also

# Conclusions

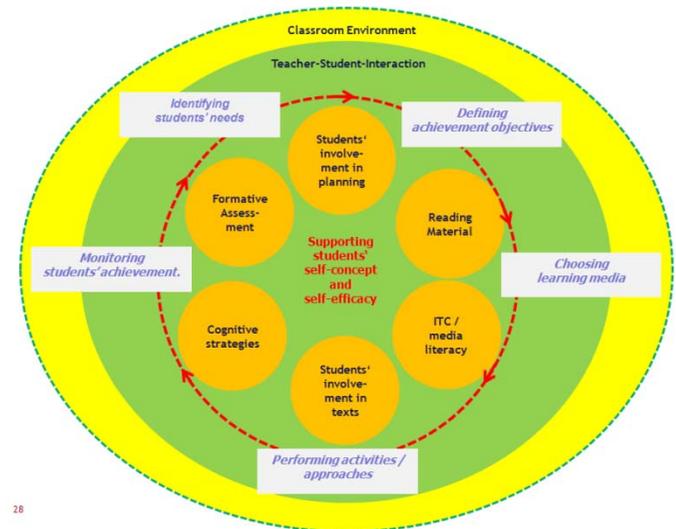


Legal right for individual support

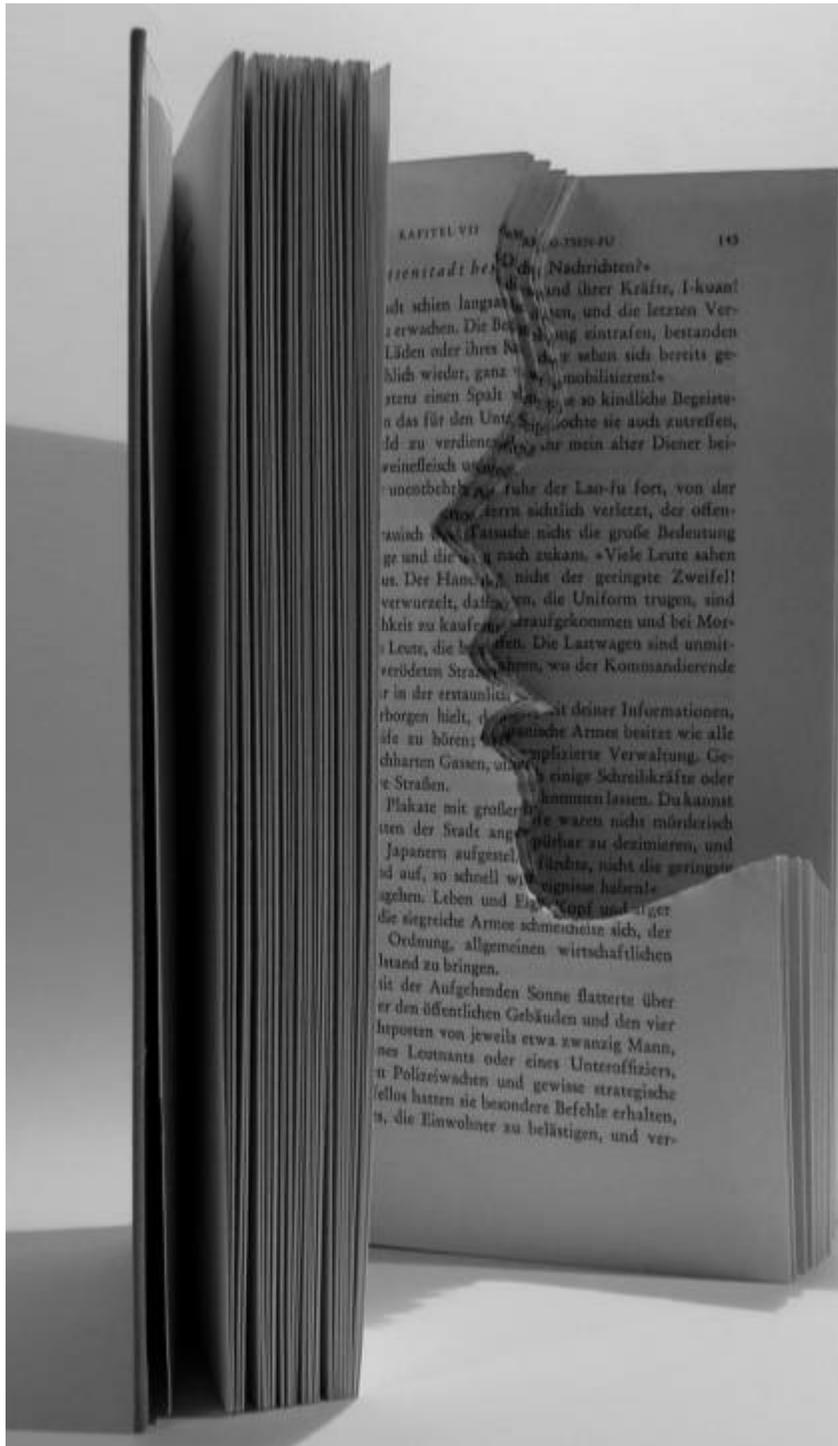
Literacy across the curriculum

Evidence-based adaptive instruction

Formative assessment



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Thank you very much for your  
attention!

Further Information and contact:

Adore-Project

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