

Effective Literacy Instruction

A critical reflection on Aaron Wilson's lecture

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Question 1 of 2

As a result of Aaron's literacy lecture, my awareness of strategies I might use to meet the literacy needs of all learners has deepened as follows:

Aaron Wilson's lecture felt less like a shift in my values than a confirmation of them. Having previously worked with structural literacy frameworks like 'The Code' and built phoneme-grapheme resources for students, I was already familiar with phonemes, decoding, and cognitive load. I have also seen how literacy resources pitched to much younger learners can deepen shame for students who are behind, because the mahi itself keeps naming the gap. In response, [this phoneme-grapheme workbook](#) uses more mature visual themes, including Kehinde Wiley, to support critical thinking and stronger student engagement while still teaching foundational literacy skills. What felt newly clarifying was seeing that Wilson's perspective, and the Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories

curriculum I champion (Ministry of Education, 2022), share the same underlying architecture. My awareness also deepened around the "Matthew Effect": when teachers respond to reading difficulty by reducing the amount of text, they can widen the gap between high- and low-decile schools.

Wilson's critique of "phases" resonates with Te Mātaiaho: literacy develops fluidly rather than through silos (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). I now see the "apex" of literacy as decoding specialized disciplinary genres. That felt especially relevant as I worked through the dense jargon of cosmology and theoretical physics while trying to formalize my [Sovereign Lattice Hypothesis](#); even as someone confident teaching literacy, I could feel how disciplinary language itself can become a barrier. The lecture reinforced the need to make "hidden mental processes" public. By verbalizing strategies like identifying modal verbs or long noun phrases, we move from "teaching a subject" to apprenticing novices into a community of practice.

Question 2 of 2

Literacy strategies applicable to my subject area are as follows:

In Social Studies, I will apply these strategies by treating literacy as the subject's "spine". A primary application is the ["Gamer Language" hook](#). Wilson's use of chat logs, and his invented-word exercise, showed how readily students can infer meaning from context while specialized communities use jargon for precision and identity. I will adapt this through platforms like Roblox or Fortnite, and through invented but plausible disciplinary terms embedded in rich sentences, to

bridge students to academic registers. This creates an inclusive entry point before we tackle the "long, complex sentences" of the social sciences.

My kaupapa for Te Kete Ako shifts from "simplification" to "amplification". Rather than stripping texts of modal verbs—which provide essential accuracy—I will provide "high challenge, high support" templates (Gibbons, 2014). This includes ["Concept Stars"](#) for structured brainstorming and the [Te Whare Kupu Map](#), which I have adapted to include Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) for a holistic, culturally responsive lens. I will also use ["emotive sorting" \(clines\)](#) to help students navigate connotations between synonyms, such as "scrawny" versus "lean". By teaching students to survey features like headings and topic sentences, I aim to foster independent "disciplinary literacy" so students become informed Treaty partners capable of decoding the world around them.

Reference List

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