

SPEAKER SERIES 2025-2026

**Timothy
Shanahan**
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**Enhancing Comprehension and Fluency
When Teaching Reading with Complex Text**

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Pity the poor teacher. One faction encourages teaching with complex text (whatever that means), while another group cautions that any exposure to texts beyond the supposed “instructional level” will promote guessing and undermine reading success. What’s a teacher to do? This presentation explores the instructional level idea – sources, theory, practical applications, research base – exposing the fundamental problems with this approach for most students. Teachers will see not only that the instructional level idea is problematic for improving reading achievement, but the reasons why it suppresses rather than promotes reading gains. Then we will turn to an alternative theory that encourages teaching from texts that students cannot yet read well, exploring practical ways that teachers can use such texts to amplify reading improvement. Ideas of how to manage classroom instruction, to teach fluency and reading comprehension with challenging texts, and to support motivation will be provided.

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