Why All Three Measures Matter

With each day and each school year that passes, children improve their reading proficiency by engaging with increasingly difficult texts. For educators, selecting age- and grade-appropriate texts can be challenging due to differences in students’ reading abilities, motivation and prior knowledge (Fountas and Pinnell).

EBSCO offers quantitative text complexity measures in several of its school products, including Core Collections™ and NoveList®. However, this measurement is just one of three that must be considered when choosing reading materials for your students.

Sources:
Below we have compiled text complexity measures for three popular books. These examples show how all three aspects come together to give a full understanding of a book's complexity.

### Finding Winnie
- **Target audience**: Lower grades (K-3)
- **Number of pages**: 56
- **Genre**: Nonfiction

**Quantitative Measures**
- Lexile = AD590L
- Accelerated Reader: IL = LG, BL = 3.4, AR Points = 0.5
- Fountas & Pinnell = I-P

**Qualitative Measures**
- Prior knowledge of Winnie the Pooh character
- Understanding/recognition of “story within a story”
- Sentence structure

**Reader and Task**
- Reader: Young elementary students who have heard A House at Pooh Corner (read aloud)
  - Task: Identify the touchpoints between the bear in Finding Winnie and the fictional Winnie the Pooh (compare and contrast)
- Reader: Older elementary students (independent readers)
  - Task: Consider the setting (World War I) and identify examples of how the book reflects life during that time period.
- Reader: Middle school students who have read at least one other Caldecott Medal-winning book
  - Task: Compare art style between two Caldecott Medal winners, create a work of art in one of the styles.

### Brown Girl Dreaming
- **Target audience**: Middle grades (4-8)
- **Number of pages**: 240
- **Genre**: Memoir

**Quantitative Measures**
- Lexile = 990L
- Accelerated Reader: IL = MG, BL = 5.3, AR Points = 5.0
- Fountas & Pinnell = O-V, U-Z

**Qualitative Measures**
- Book is written in free verse poetry versus traditional prose
- Use of figurative language (e.g. simile, metaphor and alliteration)
- Themes (poverty, racism, family and friendship, coming of age, identity, finding voice through writing, power of dreams)

**Reader and Task**
- Reader: Middle school students who have read Locomotion (also by Jacqueline Woodson)
  - Task: Identify similarities between the poetic writing styles used in the two books.
- Reader: Middle or high school students
  - Task: Read “To You” by Langston Hughes (which opens Woodson’s memoir) and identify the ways in which Woodson’s childhood stories connect to the themes in Hughes’ poem.
- Reader: High school students
  - Task: Citing evidence from the book, write an analytical essay about how major events in U.S. history during this time period influenced the author’s life and culture.

### Of Mice and Men
- **Target audience**: Upper grades (9-12)
- **Number of pages**: 118
- **Genre**: Fiction

**Quantitative Measures**
- Lexile = 580L
- Accelerated Reader: IL = UG, BL = 4.5, AR Points = 4.0
- Fountas & Pinnell = I-P

**Qualitative Measures**
- Prior knowledge of setting (California’s Salinas Valley during the Great Depression) and the experience of migrant workers in the 1930s
- Literary devices used (foreshadowing, irony, symbolism)
- Themes (friendship, responsibility to others, loneliness, belonging, respect for old age, right vs. wrong, the effects of oppression and abuse, the American Dream)

**Reader and Task**
- Reader: High school students
  - Task: Listen to “I Ain’t Got No Home” by Woody Guthrie and identify similarities between the life of the song’s narrator and the lives of George and Lennie.
- Reader: High school students
  - Task: Create a plot diagram or storyboard of events in the novel, including the exposition (and conflict), rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- Reader: High school students
  - Task: Write an analytical essay that examines a theme in the novel.