



# Teaching reading literacy practices: are they patterns of differences between English-speaking and French-speaking education systems

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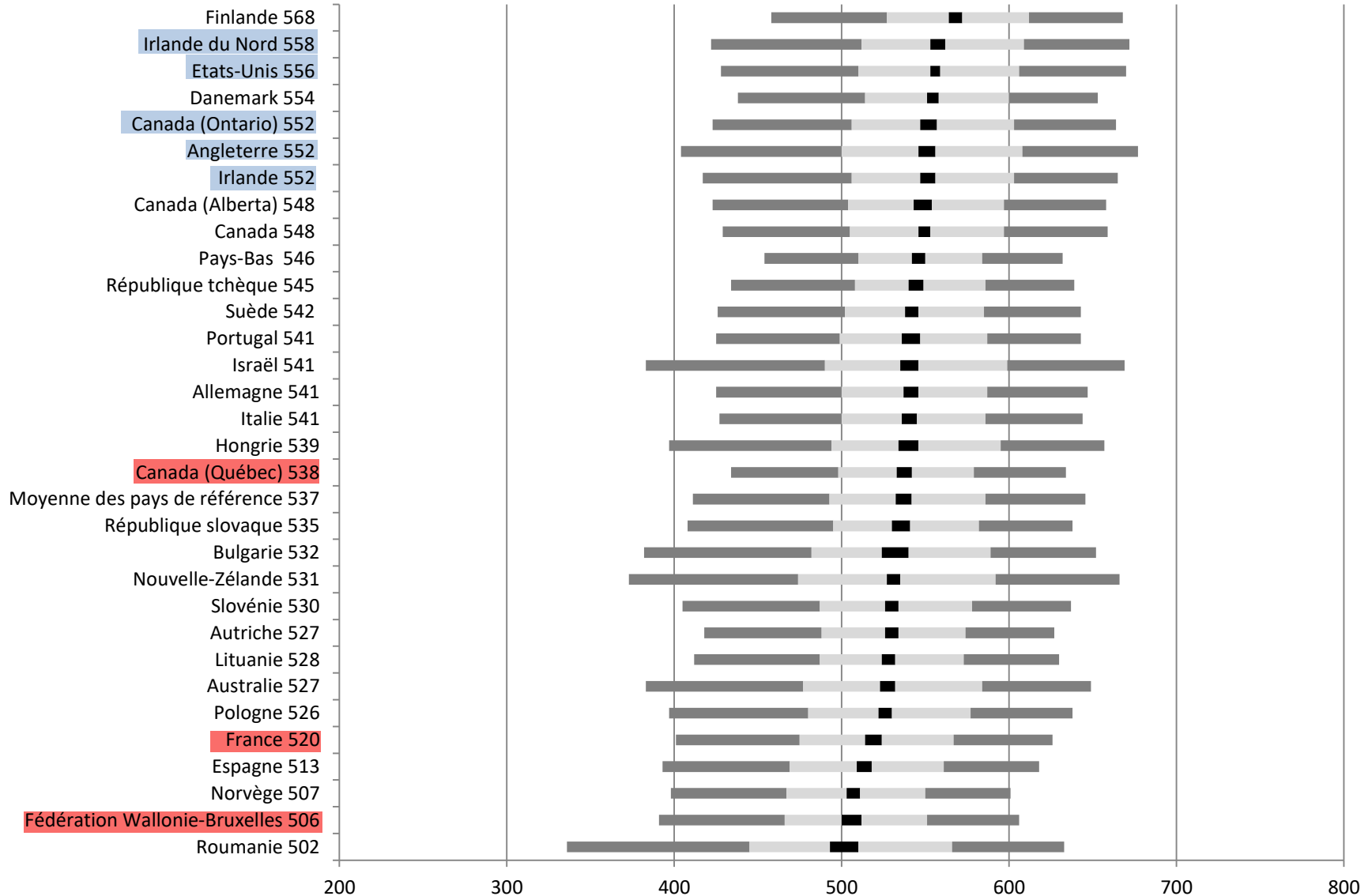
# Data and methods

- Data from the teachers' questionnaires of PIRLS 2011 have been used.
- The IEA PIRLS (*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*) is a comparative large-scale study aimed at assessing pupils' reading literacy at grade 4 (age 10).
- Variables: development of skills/competencies, type of reading material used, types of activities/assessments used in reading.

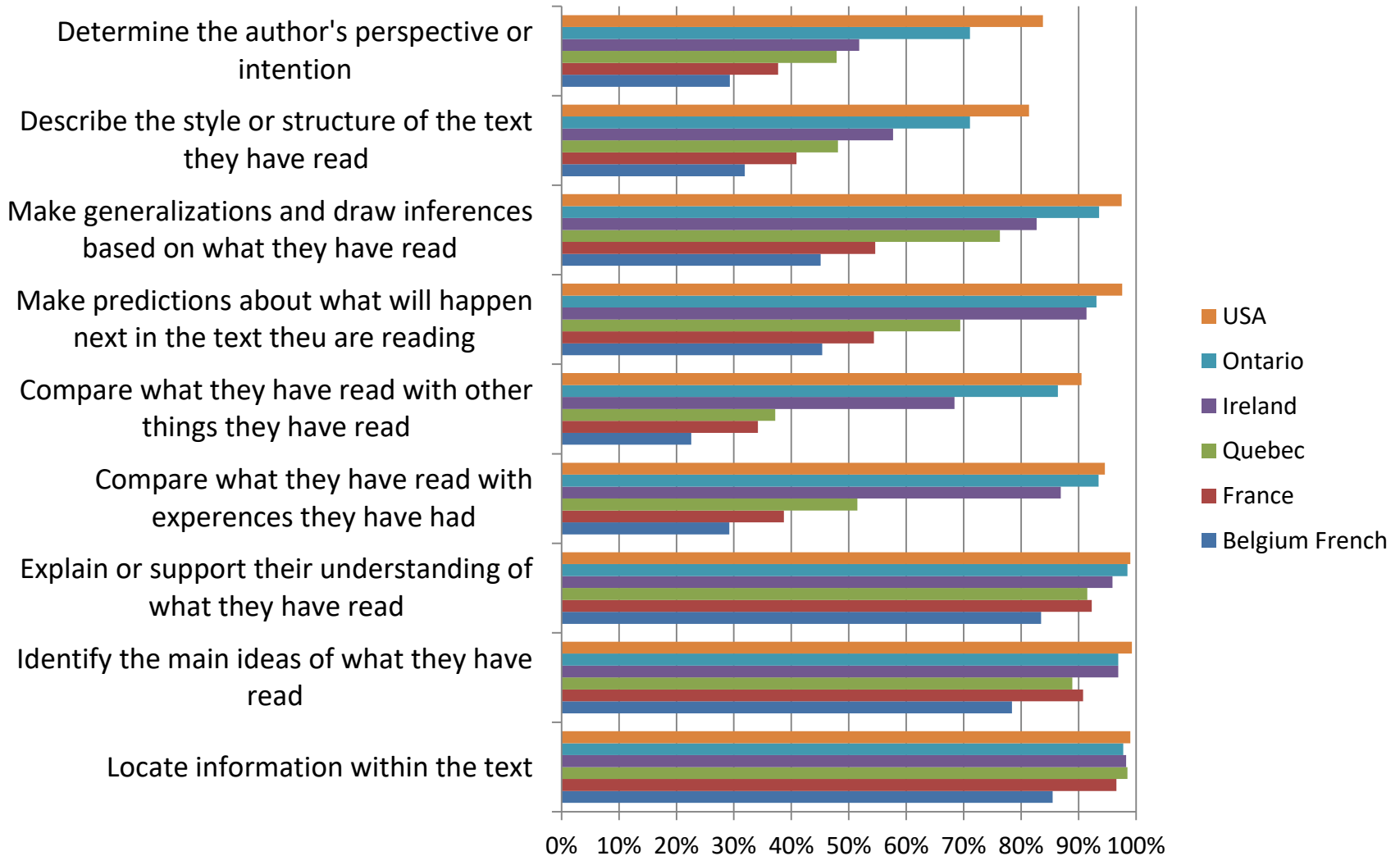
# Data and methods

- Countries/education systems: 3 (or 5) English-speaking (highly performing and formal reading begins at age 6) AND 3 French-speaking.
- Statistics: descriptive.
- Tables: % of students exposed to activities at least once a week.

# Performance in PIRLS 2011



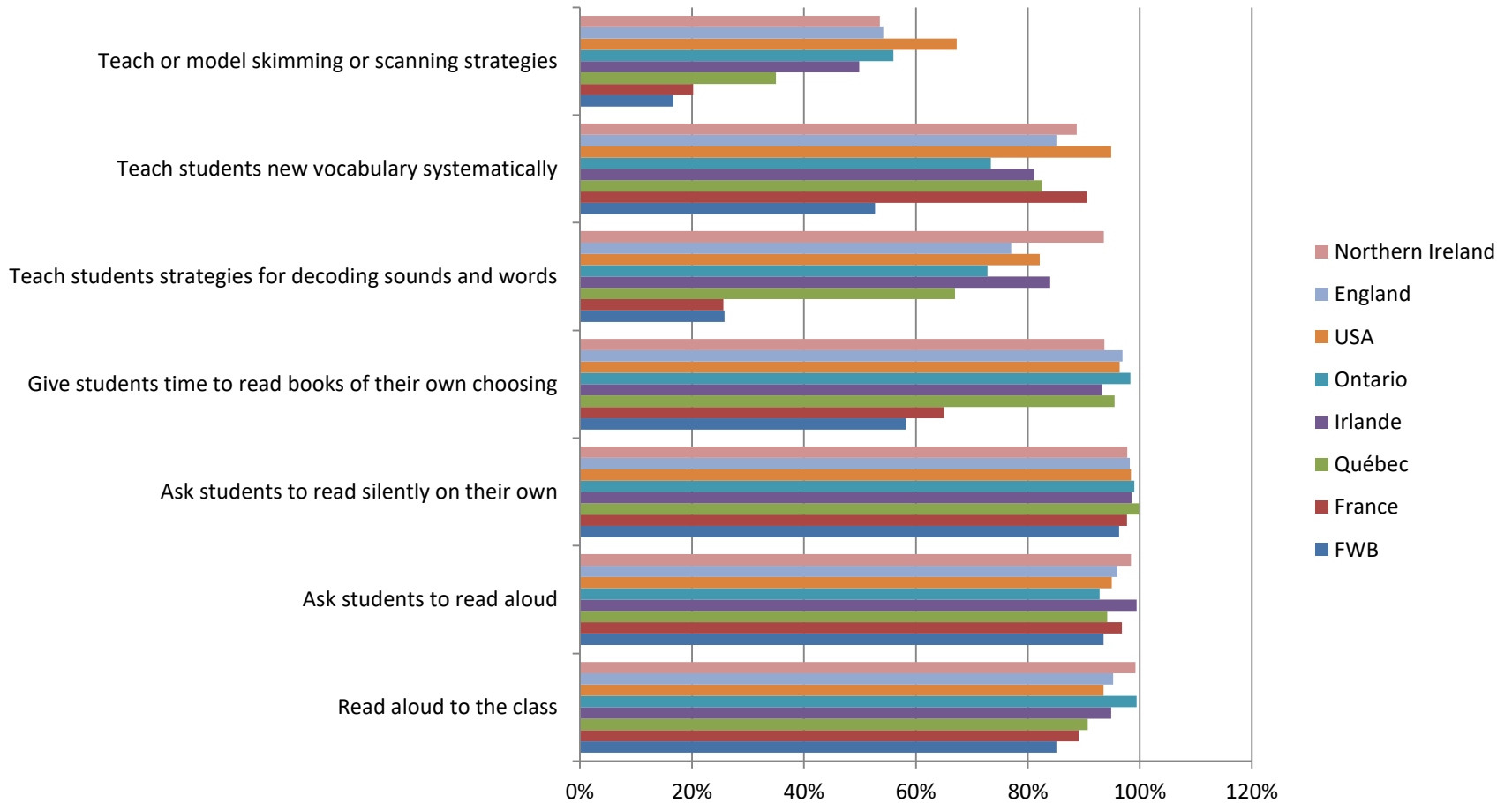
# Skills and competencies



# Skills and competencies

- 1) 3 basic skills and competencies very commonly used in all education systems:
  - Explain or support their understanding
  - Identify the main idea
  - Locate information
  
- 2) 6 more sophisticated skills are quite often used in the US, Ontario, Ireland and less often used in French context:
  - Determine the author's perspective or intention
  - Describe the style or structure of the text they have read
  - Make generalizations and draw inferences
  - Make predictions about what will happen next
  - Compare what they have read with other things they have read
  - Compare what they have read with their experience

# Activities/teaching practices

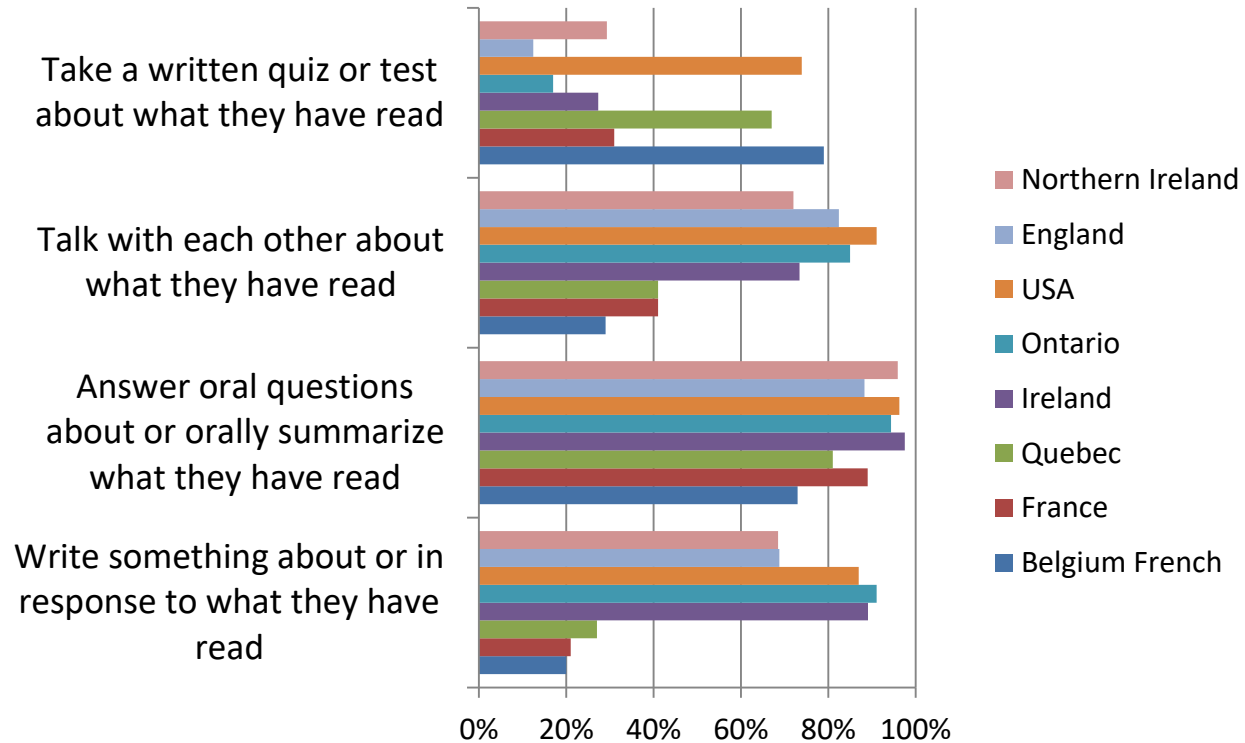


# Activities/teaching practices

- 1) 3 activities are very commonly used in all education systems:
  - « Ask students to read aloud »
  - « Read aloud to the class »
  - « Ask students to read silently on their own »
- 2) For the 4 other activities and teaching practices, there are noticeable differences between education systems:
  - “Teach students strategies for decoding sounds and words” is common practice in English-speaking countries and Québec, less frequent in France and BFS;
  - “Give students time to read books of their own choosing”: same pattern, more autonomy and choice in ES and Québec;
  - “Teach students new vocabulary systematically” is widespread in all countries but Belgium FS;
  - “Teach or model skimming or scanning strategies” is not frequent in grade 4 classes, but significantly more often used in English-speaking countries and Québec, less frequent in France and BFS.



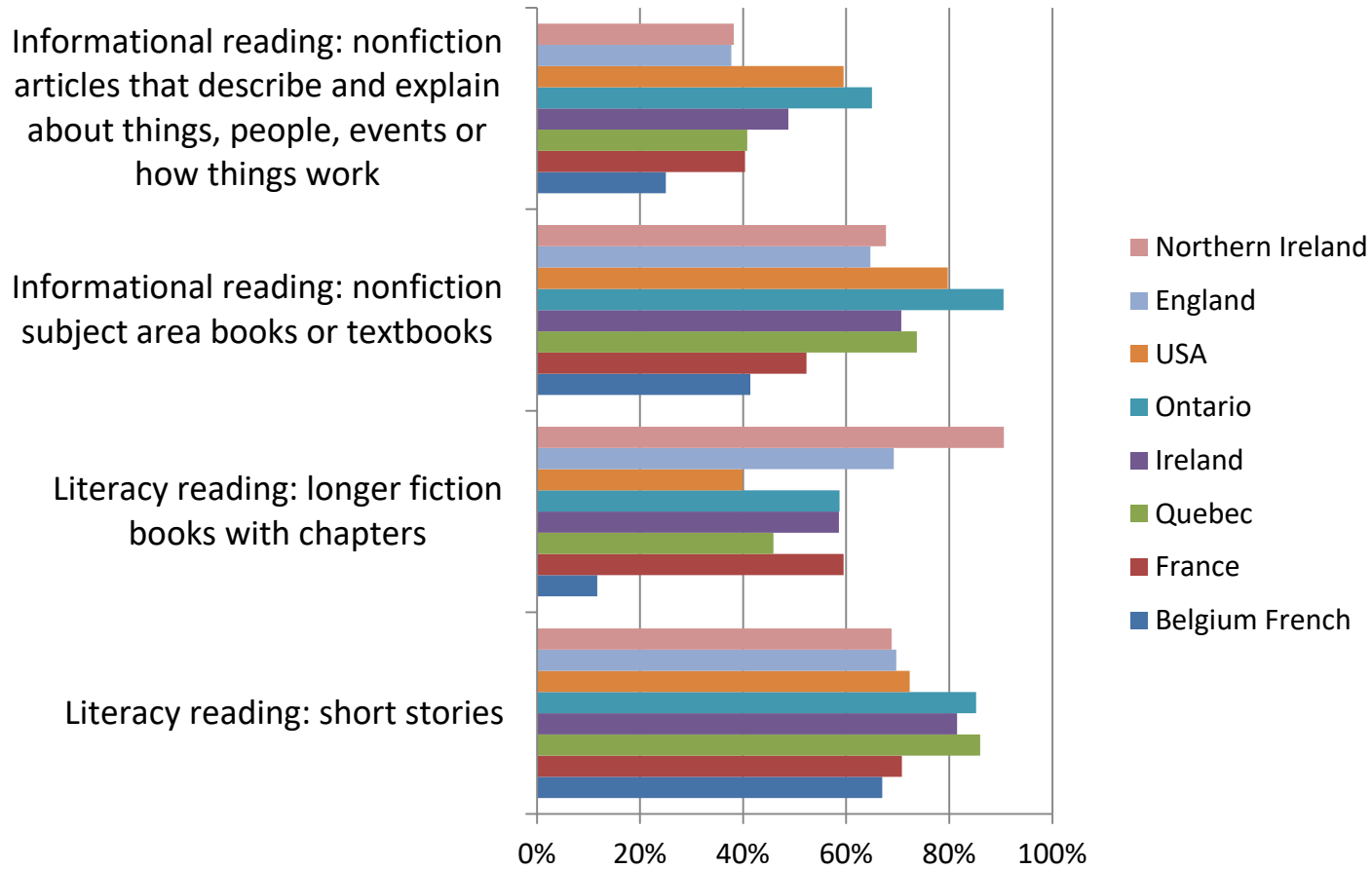
# Activities/assessments



# Activities/assessments

1. Oral questions or orally summarize are common practices.
2. Write something in answer is common in English-speaking countries and not common at all in the French-speaking ones.
3. Variation in the use of written quizz.

# Reading material



# Reading material

- No variation in short stories
- Non-fiction is more often used in most of the ES countries and in Québec than in France and Belgium
- Long fiction books are not used in Belgium , much more frequent in Ontario, Ireland, UK and France.

# Conclusions

- Some competencies, skills, practices are commonly used in all education systems. Typically they are the least challenging or more traditional ones: read silently, read aloud, taking quizzes, answer oral questions, locate information, summarize, use of short texts...
- For more demanding or challenging activities, some clear-cut differences were observed between the different education systems compared, showing a diversity in reading literacy teaching practices.
- On some occasions (8 items), the pattern was a linguistic pattern: English vs French speaking;
- On other occasions (3 items), the pattern was more cultural: UK + North America vs French-speaking European countries;
- On other occasions (3 items), the differences were just country differences.

# Conclusions

- All in all, this was not random, there were patterns of practices that can be related to what is known about effective teaching practices.
- In the best performing English-speaking countries, pupils had more OTL or exposure
  - a) to more demanding and diverse texts;
  - b) teaching practices aimed at developing deep understanding (such as drawing inferences, compare with other readings or relate reading to their experience, make predictions, learn to browse a text...).
- In the country scoring the lowest, pupils had really limited exposure to effective reading strategies and limited experience with demanding texts.

# Limitations

- The approach is just descriptive; we do not claim any causal link between the teaching practices and performance.
- PIRLS data are cross-sectional.
- Data are self-reported by teachers.
- Within countries, correlations of teaching practices with reading achievement are low (lack of variation or covariance with other variables).