Introduction

Happy New Year, UCF Literacy Symposium community!

May health and wellness, joy, and growth be yours in 2023.

I am excited to announce that our theme for 2023 is *Literacy Principles for Deeper Learning* (in Grades preK-12). Why this theme? Because all students deserve to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for learning and success in school and beyond. Florida's B.E.S.T standards, literacy initiatives, and 21st century learning and living demands call for deeper learning across grade levels and content areas.

Stay tuned for more information about our Upcoming Events. We have a great line-up of presenters starting in February and hope you can join us.

I would love to hear from you! Share your stories, what you think about the newsletter and our events, or propose future topics and resources you are interested in here: LitSymposium@ucf.edu.

Until next time, Charge On!

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Research Bites: A Long Story Short

This question guided my search: *In what ways does research inform us about the importance of deeper learning in today's classrooms?*

I selected to share the latest research report from the American Institutes of Research titled, *Study of Deeper Learning: Opportunities and Outcomes* (AIR, 2022). This publication summarizes results from a longitudinal study with 20 high schools, referred to as network schools, that had a schoolwide focus on deeper learning in California and New York.

Here are three research bites from the report:

1. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation identified the following 6 dimensions of deeper learning: mastery of core academic content, critical thinking and problem solving, effective communication, ability to work collaboratively, learning how to learn, and academic mindsets. Evidence shows that opportunities for deeper learning and deeper learning competencies in high schools may positively impact students' achievement and preparation for postsecondary education, work, and civic participation.

2. Students in network schools reported higher levels of opportunities for deeper learning, higher academic engagement, products that reflected deeper mastery of academic content (e.g., newspaper articles, documentary videos), motivation to learn, self-efficacy, collaborative work,

and connecting and transferring what they learned in school to authentic real-world problems. Deeper learning also supported the development of students' interpersonal competencies and academic mindsets.

3. Students in network schools scored higher on both state assessments and the PISA-based Test for Schools, had significantly higher graduation rates, and were more likely to enroll in four-year colleges.

Research to Practice Takeaways

The following five takeaways can support your instructional decisions about literacy principles for deeper student learning.

Although this longitudinal research's explicit focus was not on literacy, the deeper learning competencies and related results carry many implications for literacy and learning across content areas and grade levels.

- Results from several studies on deeper learning remind us that learning is no longer only how much content students know, or how well they perform on a test, but can they think critically, learn how to learn, engage in learning inside and outside the classroom, and explore solutions to authentic and challenging problems?

- Deliberate and engagement-rich instruction supports deeper learning. For students to develop and use literacy skills for deeper learning, they need opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, read complex and engaging texts, engage in dialogic reading, academic discussions, collaborate with peers, write about the texts they are reading, receive targeted feedback from teachers, and reflect on their problem-solving processes.

- Engage students in authentic tasks and teach them how to grapple with complex texts and ideas that deepen their thinking and learning. Help students become self-directed, motivated, curious, and more meaningfully engaged in learning. Use think alouds and feedback to teach students how to self-monitor, self-regulate, and reflect on their learning.

- Here are some ways to develop students' cognitive, intra-personal, and inter-personal skills that facilitate deeper learning.
  - **Cognitive skills**:
    - create specific reading, writing, and discussion routines in the classroom
    - check students' understanding of text and thinking during reading
    - develop students' academic mindsets
  - **Intra-personal skills**:
    - model how to self-monitor one's understanding of text during independent reading
    - model fix-up strategies when meaning, motivation, or stamina drop
    - ask students to explain why a strategy, solution or model worked
  - **Inter-personal skills**:
    - create a learning environment that is rich in purposeful, engaging, and collaborative activities
    - create clear norms and expectations about the use of academic language in writing
    - showcase student work

- Deeper learning is not *just* about adopting a rigorous, standards-based approach. Deeper learning is enacted in language *and* relationships that students develop through meaningful work. A deeper learning approach is not only focused on a student accurately reading and talking about a text. It is also about the social practices, academic mindsets, and dispositions a student will develop *through* meaningful, purposeful, engaging, and productive work. Deeper learning shifts the role of the classroom teacher to that of an architect who strategically apprentices *all* students in becoming active, motivated, curious, and independent learners.

One Question for You

Here's some food for thought…

- What is one literacy principle or practice you can use to engage your students in deeper learning?

Resources

These resources can inspire and support your professional learning goals.

- Communication Skills: Encouraging Quality Classroom Discussions
- Critical Thinking and Student Engagement: Easy Ways to Build Metacognitive Skills
- Driving Deep Reading Comprehension in K–5
- How to Help Readers Grapple with Challenging Texts
- Using Frequent Feedback Cycles to Guide Student Work