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Spotlight On... Taking the Deep Dive! Move from Surface to Deep Learning

In the [October 2016](#) edition of Literacy Links, we introduced the concept of a three-phase model of literacy learning: surface, deep, and transfer. In the [December 2016 edition](#), we focused on the surface level of literacy learning as a foundation to much deeper learning. In this issue, we explore deep learning.

Surface learning provides a critical foundation and is necessary for beginning the pathway to learning transfer. Surface learners, however, often rely on memorization and are concerned about failure; they avoid risks and seek the “right” answer. Deep learners engage with content, explore ideas, and actively link concepts and knowledge. They are more willing to take risks. Teachers who encourage learners to plan, investigate, and elaborate on learning foster deep learning. Deeper learning prepares students to

- know and master core academic content;
- think critically and solve complex problems;
- work collaboratively;
- communicate effectively; and
- be self-directed and able to incorporate feedback.

In [Visible Learning for Literacy: Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning \(2016\)](#), authors Fisher, Frey and Hattie focus on the practices that have strong effect sizes, positive outcomes, based on Hattie’s research. Students activate literacy learning when they think metacognitively, take action, discuss ideas, and see errors as a necessary part of learning. Deep learning involves slow thinking, where productive struggle leads to conceptual understanding and, eventually, transfer of learning. So what can a teacher do to support and encourage deep learning? Here are some literacy practices that can deepen learning.

Close Reading

A regular practice of close reading provides students an opportunity to read a text multiple times for a variety of purposes. Each new



About Deeper Learning

Trends in the economy mean that the fastest-growing jobs are those that require problem solving and critical thinking, while those that require only routine manual skills will be in decline.

A 2012 report by the *National Research Council* concluded that deeper learning competencies – the ability to apply knowledge to new situations – are associated with better life and work outcomes.

Deeperlearning4all.org

experience with the text plunges the student into a deeper understanding of the content. But, close reading should be done with purpose, with *worthy* texts and routinely but selectively. A worthy text provides sufficient fodder that students are required to think critically, contain enough evidence to support an interpretation, and are accessible to a student, with support if necessary.

Close reading practices that lead to deep learning include:

Concept mapping: More than a graphic organizer, concept mapping asks students to present the relationship between and among ideas in the text as well as the author's method of presenting those ideas. With concept mapping, it's the transformation of thinking that is key, not simply the replication of text. Concept mapping is especially effective when it is used as a planning tool for something else. Multiple concept maps about a topic will provide students greater access to support for their ideas when writing or conducting their own inquiries.

Discussion and questioning: Purposeful collaborative conversations lead to personal engagement and help students extract information, clarify understanding, and adjust interpretations. Teachers can provide students with tools to support conversation such as questions that funnel a conversation (what was the setting of the story?) and those that focus the conversation (how did the setting influence the story?). Students in whole class or small group settings can respond to these questions by identifying the evidence in the text that supports their understanding. Hearing that others may have different ideas and knowing how to check those ideas leads to deep learning.

Text annotation: Annotation based on repeated reading can help to reveal the student's thinking. Selecting a rich text to annotate assures sufficient opportunity to explore interpretations and clarify thinking. Using different colors to annotate during each successive reading may reveal the progression and growth of comprehension. Noting interpretation helps the student map the relationship among his or her own ideas.

Self-questioning: Knowing what questions should be asked to heighten engagement with a text relies on developing patterns of behavior. Teachers can help students develop an internal monologue that assists them to challenge their thinking and prompt them to develop their own questions for further exploration.

Additional resources for diving deeper with literacy learning can be found in the sections below.

Digital Resources

[Literacy Links Archive](#): During the 2014/15 school year, Literacy Links explore the strategies developed by the Vermont Writing

Society prizes those who delve deeper into issues and problems that have vexed humankind.

The ability to hang with a problem requires persistence and a certain amount of confidence in one's ability to eventually arrive at a solution.

-Fisher, Frey, Hattie 2016



The Internet is an excellent source for digital material, but it is also fraught with problems that can derail student projects. Chief among them are issues of credibility and accuracy of information. Teachers ... must now equip students with the ability to question sources.

-Fisher, Frey, and Hattie 2016

Collaborative and published in Writing for Understanding. This method presents various strategies to develop inquiry habits that lead to deep exploration of a topic as part of the writing process.

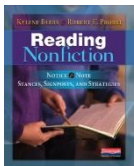
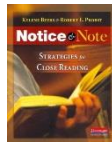
[Cross-Discipline Literacy Network Archive](#): The searchable spreadsheet includes close reading strategies in multiple grade levels and multiple disciplines.

[Lexile by Chapter Guides](#): A novel is not typically written consistently in a single level of complexity. Knowing where to find the most complex parts of a longer text can help teachers determine where to focus close reading instruction and develop strong habits.

Teaching Channel [deeper learning video series](#). 50+ videos showcase 10 Deeper Learning Networks that exemplify innovative teaching models that emphasize real-world experience, academic mindsets, and collaborative project work.

Professional Texts

[Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading](#)



[Reading Nonfiction: Notice and Note Stances, Signposts and Strategies](#)

These texts, written by Kyleen Beers and Bob Probst, outline routines in the form of regular “signposts” that students can seek, recognize, and advantage to develop deeper learning with regular questions.

Literature for Children and Adolescents



A Poem for Peter
By Andrea Davis Pickney

One excellent form of text to engage young readers in close reading is poetry. This new text, *A Poem for Peter*,

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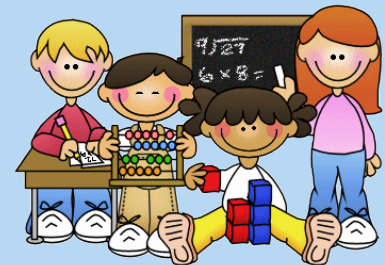
To explore potential training sessions that may be of interest, be sure to check our extensive list of professional development offerings at

www.maine.gov/doe/calendar/

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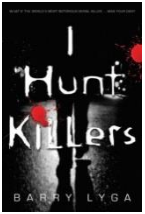
Web: www.maine.gov/doe



shares the biography of Ezra Jack Keats. Told as a poem, students will learn about Keats and be able to discover many connections to well-loved Keats's books, such as *The Snowy Day* and *A Whistle for Willie*.

To promote deeper learning with close reading and analysis for adolescents, try a mystery.

***I Hunt Killers* by Barry Lyga**



Jasper “Jazz” Dent is the son of a notorious serial killer who was grooming Jazz to follow in his footsteps until he was finally caught. Embracing what he has learned, Jazz is determined to hunt serial killers using his special expertise while fearing that he may be more like his father than he wishes.

For a collection of titles relating to social justice, explore this link:

<http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2016/12/12/narrative-nonfiction-social-justice-themes-part-ii/>

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