



Our Core Values and Beliefs about Exemplary Literacy, K-12 **April 2023**



CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS learn best in a classroom community when they...

- are seen, heard, and matter.
- develop a sense of agency and ownership through opportunities for choice.
- practice, transfer and apply their learning to authentic reading, writing, thinking, talking and listening experiences.
- read, hear and discuss texts that serve as mirrors of themselves, windows into understanding new experiences, and sliding glass doors to step into the perspectives of others.¹
- are highly motivated and engaged in the learning process.
- engage in a high volume of low stakes writing and speaking experiences to make meaning and consolidate learning.
- read, write, and practice relevant foundational skills in joyful and purposeful ways.
- understand the intersection of literacies across all content areas.



EXEMPLARY ELA TEACHERS...

- cultivate a community of thinkers, readers, writers, and listeners, through compelling read-alouds and opportunities for accountable talk/academic discourse.
- foster critical thinking through the orchestration of all literacies.
- use clear and precise language, multi-modality teaching tools, modeling and demonstration.
- provide both explicit instruction and opportunities for inquiry and exploration.
- structure literacy time to include whole group lessons with ample opportunities for differentiated, small group instruction and meaningful independent/collaborative practice.
- purposefully select and use a variety of texts including:
 - Accessible complex “texts” across all genres, content, and formats.
 - Text sets that extend students’ vocabulary, knowledge and language.
 - Texts to practice and apply reading skills and strategies for meaning making (independent level texts, instructional level texts, and decodable texts).
- approach instructional decision-making from a strengths perspective.
- grade less, assess more, and provide targeted feedback.
- prioritize relevance and “real world” application.

¹ Bishop, Dr. Rudine Sims

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EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION ...

- is a right for all students and is every educator's responsibility.
- centers humanizing pedagogies of equity², joy, and cultural relevance.
- extends across all disciplines. It is connected to academic content and includes building background knowledge, vocabulary and ideas about the world in which we live.
- responds to the needs of all students. It cannot be a "one size fits all" approach.
- derives from current research and evolves as new insights are discovered.
- is comprehensive and aims at meaning-making:
 - In reading, effective literacy instruction includes explicit instruction in each component of the Active View of Reading including foundational skills, bridging processes, language comprehension, and active self-regulation.³
 - In writing, effective literacy instruction includes explicit instruction across genres in process, craft, structure, conventions and spelling.
- supports student agency so children and adolescents become independent and effective communicators, problem-solvers and critical thinkers.



THRIVING SCHOOLS are ones that...

- embrace a culture of lifelong learning, curiosity and character.
- build capacity and sustainability for lasting improvement.
- create a space and environment in which teaching and learning are celebrated and reflect the children and adults within the community.
- cultivate strong leaders who communicate a shared vision of effective instruction, set clear expectations, and provide support and feedback.
- value teachers as professional decision-makers and consistently include their voices, perspectives, and insights as integral to the life of the school.
- prioritize ongoing professional development and time for teacher collaboration to deepen learning, reflection and refinement.
- empower teachers to make decisions based on the needs and "genius"⁴ of their students.
- provide abundant access to digital and physical texts that offer choice around a wide range of ideas, perspectives, knowledge and stories.
- pursue purposeful practices and learning opportunities designed to elevate children, adolescents, educators, and humanity.

² Need to define equity beyond "providing rigor or access to all." Seeds of antiracist ideologies.

³ Nell Duke, Active View of Reading"

⁴ Genius not defined as outlined in connection to an IQ test. This definition was developed within a system of marginalization. "Genius", as discussed by Dr. Gholdy Muhammed, is that which already lies within students and teachers. "Genius is the brilliance, intellect, ability, cleverness, and artistry that have been flowing through minds and spirits across the generations." Cultivating "genius" demands that we "teach in ways that raise, grow, and develop existing genius."