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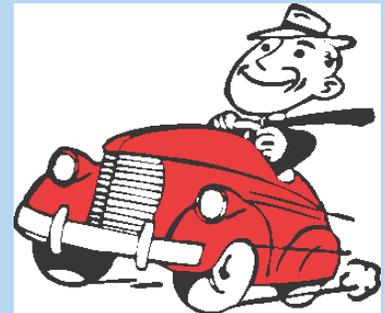
Volume 13, Number 5

Spotlight On... Visible Literacy for Learning Transfer

Last fall, we introduced the three phase model of supporting literacy development featured in the book [*Visible Learning for Literacy: Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning*](#) by Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Hattie. The [October 2016](#) issue explained the three phases: surface, deep, and transfer. [December 2016](#) explored surface learning and [February 2017](#) featured deep learning. In this issue, we focus on the concept of learning transfer and provide information to promote successful instructional practices that support the conditions for transfer. We want students to gain knowledge and skills that they can use both in school and outside of school, immediately and in the future.

Fisher and Frey explain that transfer of learning is when a student is applying a concept in a new and different way, and with relatively little guidance from the teacher. We each demonstrate learning transfer every day. Simply, when a learned behavior or skill is internalized and synthesized to the point of automaticity, we apply what we know and can do to ensuing situations without necessarily giving specific thought to the individual components of the task. Surface learning provides the opportunity to get familiar with a new context and determine the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the new situation. Deep learning moves understanding to a conceptual level.

There are two types of learning transfer: near and far. *Near transfer* is something we do when learning is new. A close association between a previously learned task and a novel situation is necessary for promoting transfer of learning. A learner may recognize the familiarities between the situations and predict the skills needed to complete the new task. *Far transfer* occurs when the learning situation is quite different than previous experiences. To support developing near transfer of learning, *low-road hugging* approaches provide students a pathway that advantages success in one situation to applications in a new or novel that situation that resembles the context for the original learning. Recognizing phonetic patterns in new words, analyzing character development in a different story within the same genre, or identifying the same



Many of us learned how to drive a car as teenagers. Since then, we have driven many different cars. We don't need to learn how to drive each car; we transfer our knowledge of how cars work and adjust to the particulars of each model.

theme in multiple texts are examples of low-road hugging strategies. *High-road bridging* to far transfer provides the pathway to lasting application, such as encouraging students to derive rules and principles based on examples or to use analogies and metaphors to illustrate connections across content

Creating the condition for transfer requires careful planning, intentional instruction, and a clear understanding of a significant goal. Some of the conditions that support transfer include:

Teaching Students to Organize and Transform Conceptual Knowledge (Hattie effect size = .85)

- Students need to figure out how surface knowledge about a concept and deep knowledge about how concepts relate come fully under their command to synthesize information and create new understandings.
- Graphic representations, developing and extending analogies, and applying learning in varied tasks helps to transform conceptual knowledge.

Peer Tutors or Activating Students as Resources for One Another (Hattie effect size = .55)

- Students helping peers learning has a positive effect on both the student receiving the help and on the student providing the feedback.
- Tutoring or peer feedback situations must be structured and students must be trained to be effective.

Reading Across Documents: Synthesizing Within Text Sets

- Thinking conceptually is demonstrated when students adopt a critical approach to analyzing multiple texts.
- Students need to learn how to respond to texts which contain conflicting or contradicting information. **(Hattie effect size for problem-solving teaching = .61)**
- Building knowledge for transfer should involve questioning, doubting, investigating, and seeking resolution.

Socratic Seminar: Engaging In Productive Discourse (Hattie effect size for classroom discussion = .74)

- Students must understand and practice rules for productive discussions
- Engaging in active listening is critical
- Thinking or internal processing must precede articulation of original ideas or response to others

Some students will naturally internalize procedures and conceptualize learning to transfer application to new situations. Most learners will need help to make that transfer. Instructional strategies that include intentional opportunities to create the



NEAR AND FAR TRANSFER

Assuming automatic transfer of learning will more likely lead us to live out the supposed Chinese proverb that says “people have to stand still for a long time with their mouths open before roast chickens will fly into them.”

Transfer will not happen magically.

[The real stuff of schooling: How to teach students to apply knowledge](#)

By [Valerie Strauss](#) March 24, 2015,
The Washington Post

DOE

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

www.maine.gov/doe/calendar/

conditions for transfer will increase the likelihood that each student will achieve independence as evidenced by transfer. Additionally, providing regular, actionable feedback to students will also support their ability to transfer learning by reinforcing application and encouraging next steps.

Digital Resources

Peer feedback:

- *The Story of Austin's Butterfly*

This video of Expeditionary Learning was captured at Presumpscot Elementary School and explains how a first grade student used feedback from his classmates to continuously improve his work.

Texts Sets: Reading Across Multiple Texts

- [The Text Set Project to Build Knowledge and Vocabulary](#) includes texts and lesson plans to support reading multiple texts.
- [NEWSLA](#) provides texts and resources to teach current and historical topics.

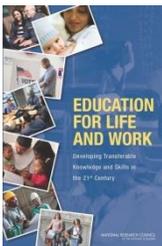
Collaborative Conversations:

- **November 2013** ([RTF, 2.2MB](#) | [PDF, 371KB](#)). This past edition of Literacy Links focuses on the significance of collaborative conversations as a tool for promoting learning.

Professional Texts

[Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century](#)

The National Research Council, et. al. (2012)



To achieve their full potential as adults, young people need to develop a range of skills and knowledge that facilitate mastery and application of English, mathematics, and other school subjects. At the same time, business and political leaders are increasingly asking schools to develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-management – often referred to as “21st century skills.” This text is available as a free download.

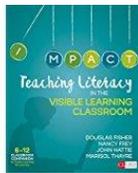
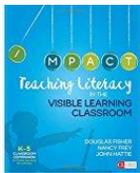
All of the work we do as teachers is for naught if students fail to appropriately transfer their learning.

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey & John Hattie

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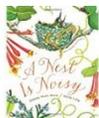
Teaching Literacy in the Visible Learning Classroom

By Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, & John Hattie



“Whether through direct instruction, guided instruction, peer-led and independent learning—every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design. In this companion to Visible Learning for Literacy, Fisher, Frey, and Hattie show you how to use learning intentions, success criteria, formative assessment and feedback to achieve profound instructional clarity” (Amazon Review).

Literature for Children and Adolescents



As spring approaches, it is a perfect time to discover or rediscover the writing/illustrating team of Dianna Hutts Aston and Sylvia Long. Their series of texts focused on aspects of nature are well-researched and highly engaging. Check out all of the titles in the series: *A Nest is Noisy*, *A Rock is Lively*, *A Butterfly is Patient*, *A Seed is Sleepy*, *An Egg is Quiet* and *A Beetle is Shy*.

Teen Book Finder Database

Find and create lists of great recommended reading from titles from YALSA’s award, book, and media lists.

[A Brief History of Young Adult Literature](#)

CNN, April 15, 2015

This article, originally published in 2013, provides an explanation of the impact of young adult literature on culture and the background of Teen Read Week.

For additional information about this edition, email:

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