

EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY AND LEARNING

A Coaching Perspective:

What do we know?

What can we do?

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Adolescent Thinking and Learning

- Understanding the adolescent learner ultimately means understanding how and under what conditions learning best occurs. Learning is believed to be a natural, ongoing, and active process of constructing meaning from information and experience. It is an intuitive and universal human capacity that enables, from an early age, the mastery of symbolic systems such as language, music, and mathematics (Gardner). Learning is an internally mediated process that is controlled primarily by the learner and is affected by his or her motivation, perceptions, skills, experiences, and knowledge. It is an intellectual process highly influenced by social interaction and situational context, in addition to personal beliefs, dispositions, and emotions.
 - G.W. Beamon, *Teaching The Adolescent Learner*

Adolescent Thinking and Learning

The Adolescent Perspective

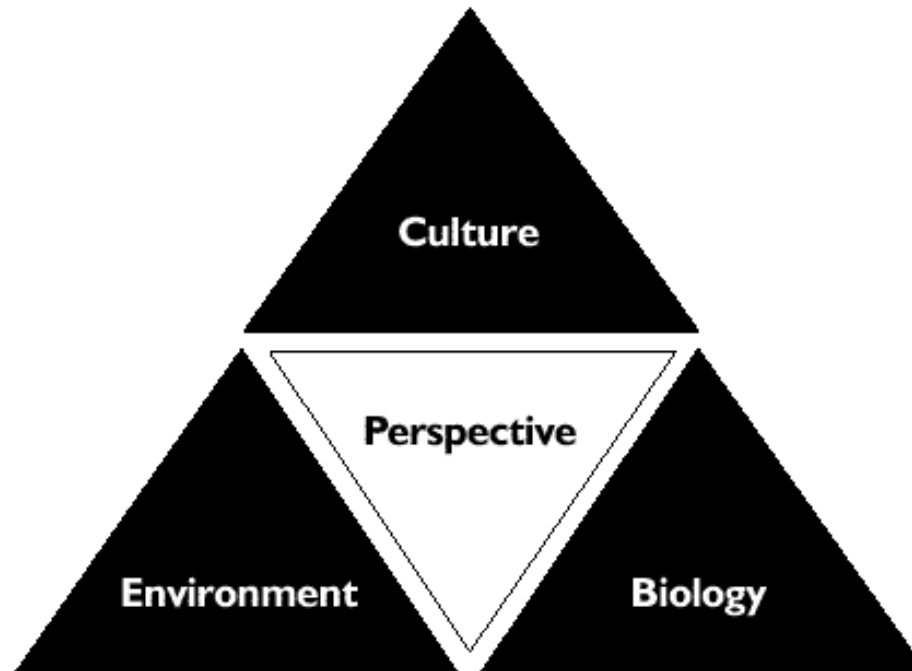


Figure 1.1

- From *Teaching the Adolescent Learner*

Adolescent Thinking and Learning

- Adolescent learning requires that adolescents are able to connect what they are trying to learn with what they already know, understand, or have personally experienced so they are favorably inclined, or motivated, to put forth the necessary effort and time. Perhaps most importantly, learning involves interactive, purposeful, and meaningful engagement...Whereas younger learners are initially preoccupied with acquiring the language and tools of learning and are more easily motivated and influenced by family-related factors, adolescent learners are more independent, culturally attuned, and dependent on acquired literacy for higher levels of content learning.

G.W. Beamon, *Teaching The Adolescent Learner*

And what do you think?

- What stands out for you and how does this description compare to your understanding of learning?
- Compare your views with a partner and discuss.

What do we know?

- Conditions That Support Adolescent Learning
 - Adolescents learn better when they...
 - encounter learning that is appropriate to their developmental level and is presented in multiple ways and in an enjoyable and interesting manner.
 - MEANING-CENTERED LENS, ENGAGEMENT
 - are intellectually intrigued by tasks that are “authentic” and perceived as challenging, novel, and relevant to their own lives.
 - MEANING-CENTERED LENS, MOTIVATION
 - are allowed to share and discuss ideas, and to work together on tasks, projects, and problems.
 - SOCIAL LENS
 - are afforded multiple strategies to acquire, integrate and interpret knowledge meaningfully, to demonstrate understanding, and to apply knowledge to new situations.
 - MEANING-CENTERED LENS, LEARNING TO LEARN

What do we know?

- Conditions That Support Adolescent Learning
 - Adolescents learn better when they...
 - are provided opportunities to develop and use literacy skills and strategic thinking skills in the processing of new concepts and information.
 - LANGUAGE-BASED LENS
 - are provided frequent opportunities to demonstrate understanding of new learning and are given focused and appropriate feedback to monitor personal progress.
 - MEANING-CENTERED LENS, FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
 - are in a safe, supportive environment where value is given to personal ideas, opportunities for success are maximized, and where fear of punishment and embarrassment is minimized.
 - HUMAN LENS

What can we do?

- Focus on the research:
 - What makes the biggest difference?
 - Engagement
 - Motivation
 - Reading
 - Vocabulary
 - Writing
 - Talking
 - Testing

Making a Difference

- *Engagement*
 - **Student-centered:** a focus on what students will do.
 - **Literacy-rich:** an emphasis on reading, writing, talking.
 - **Content-rich:** interesting and developmentally appropriate.
 - **Collaborative:** an emphasis on student sharing and teaming.
 - **Time-sensitive:** shorter bursts of learning and processing.
 - **Success-possible:** appropriate and accessible activities.

Making a Difference

- *Motivation*
 - **Relevant:** a focus on providing opportunities for personal connections.
 - **Connected:** teaching and learning that builds on prior knowledge.
 - **Multi-sensory:** presentations and activities that combine multiple (and authentic) modalities.
 - **Rewarding:** students receive positive and, when possible, immediate feedback.
 - **Choice:** negotiated or limited choice of activities, materials, responses.

Making a Difference

- *Reading*
 - **Comprehension:** an emphasis on reading for meaning and building comprehension strategies in a BDA format.
 - **Habit:** opportunities for students to read throughout a day.
 - **Modeling:** read-alouds and think-alouds to guide process.
 - **Authentic and Interesting:** choose material that is challenging and accessible.
 - **Independence:** provide choice, time, structure to motivate.

Making a Difference

- *Vocabulary*
 - **In Context:** teach vocabulary within the context of concepts.
 - **Awareness:** connect reading and vocabulary.
 - **Connectedness:** teach word families and avoid disconnected lists.
 - **Strategies:** build explicit strategies to compile words, word study to strategize meaning, context clues to predict and determine.
 - **Active Use:** multiple use of new words (written and spoken) in context.

Making a Difference

- *Writing*
 - **Habit:** multiple opportunities to create, draft, organize, and revise.
 - **Write to learn:** opportunities to connect writing to learning by notemaking, summarizing, classifying, listing, etc.
 - **Fluency:** habit combined with opportunities to read writing aloud.
 - **Focused Feedback:** selective, specific, and applied.
 - **Authenticity:** in topic, format, media, and product.
 - **Revision:** to build precision and apply writing rules.

Making a Difference

- *Talking*
 - **Meaning:** students talk, question and reflect on topic to build deeper understanding.
 - **Engagement:** students interact and engage to share, rehearse, and collaborate on a task.
 - **Community:** class-wide knowledge base.
 - **Communication:** opportunity to share reading, writing, and rehearse responses.

Making a Difference

- *Testing*
 - **Formative:** regular, frequent opportunities to assess smaller chunks of learning and adjust instruction.
 - **Generative:** generating an answer improves learning.
 - **Summative:** pre-designed and shared assessments focus both teaching and learning.
 - **Processing:** formative assessments provide opportunities for student processing, questioning, and reflection.

Where is your school?

Areas of strengths

Areas of need

A Coaching Application

- On the planning sheet provided, brainstorm with your school partners and mentors how to impact two areas of needs that you've defined through the lenses of Joellen Killion's ten roles.

Some important references

- *Adolescent Literacy Resources: Linking Research and Practice*

Julie Meltzer with Nancy Cook Smith and Holly Clark from The LAB at Brown University, 2008

- *The Voice of Evidence in Learning Research: Improving Adolescent Literacy*

J.T. Guthrie and N.M. Humenick from National Ctr. For Educational Evaluation, 2004

- *Academic Literacy Research: Instruction for Adolescents*

J.K. Torgesen, S. Wexler, et.al. from RMC Research Ctr. on Instruction, 2007

- *What the Research Has to Say*

P.D. Pearson, A.J. Dole, et.al. from International Reading Association

- *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*

Janet Metcalfe, The National Center for Educational Research, 2007