

* Learning to Learn: The Heart of Penn Literacy

Presented by:
Joseph Ginotti
GSE/PLN Director
University of Pennsylvania



* When common sense gives way to narrow research and testing hysteria, when teachers must produce statistics that can be scored, standardized, and filed in cumulative folders, they will invariably resort to canned learning materials and practice test samples. Students will continue to respond negatively to such pressure, becoming anxious, fearful, and oppositional – or simply give up in anticipation of what may happen to them if they don't perform. The thrill of discovery, the very essence of learning is in danger of suffocating under an avalanche of multiple-choice questions.

* **The Importance of Learning to Learn**

* Is it possible to satisfy the testocrats and, at the same time, infuse students with a hunger for learning? By coming to understand adolescent learning, the importance of engagement, and the power of learning communities, it *is* possible for teachers to transform their own instructional practices within the confines of educational mandates. A shift in thinking about what it means to learn will achieve what all the mandates in the world cannot. It is possible for secondary classes to be intensely academic and also to deeply engage adolescent learners. Students can score well on standardized tests as a natural by-product of meaningful learning beyond the confines of the test. By adhering to basic learning principles, schools can be a place where thoughtful writing, wide reading, and lifelong critical thinking can become a mainstay of educational practice.

* ***From Engaging Adolescent Learners***
Dr. Brian Cambourne, 2012

* What stands out for you and how does this description compare to your understanding of instructional practice and the learning community of your own school?

* Compare your views with a partner and discuss.

*** And what do you think?**

- * 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.
 - *
 - * are intellectually intrigued by tasks that are “authentic” and perceived as challenging, novel, and relevant to their own lives.
 - * are allowed to share and discuss ideas, and to work together on tasks, projects, and problems.
 - * are afforded multiple strategies to acquire, integrate and interpret knowledge meaningfully, to demonstrate understanding, and to apply knowledge to new situations.

* **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.
- * are provided frequent opportunities to demonstrate understanding of new learning and are given focused and appropriate feedback to monitor personal progress.
- * 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.

Academic Learning and Literacy for Adolescents, Center on Instruction at Brown University, 2012

 **What do we know?**
Conditions That Support Adolescent Learning

- Help students to ***engage, focus, process, remember, and apply*** content through active...

- Reading experiences

- Writing experiences

- Talking experiences

*** Know what makes a difference:
Focus on student-centered learning!**

Research asserts that teachers, coaches, and school leaders focus on what we can control that makes the biggest difference in student achievement:

**Engagement: content-rich and literacy-rich instruction*

**Motivation: relevant and connected content and activities*

**Reading: comprehension, habit, independence*

**How to do this?*

Use Evidence-based Practices

Research asserts that teachers, coaches, and school leaders focus on what we can control that makes the biggest difference in student achievement:

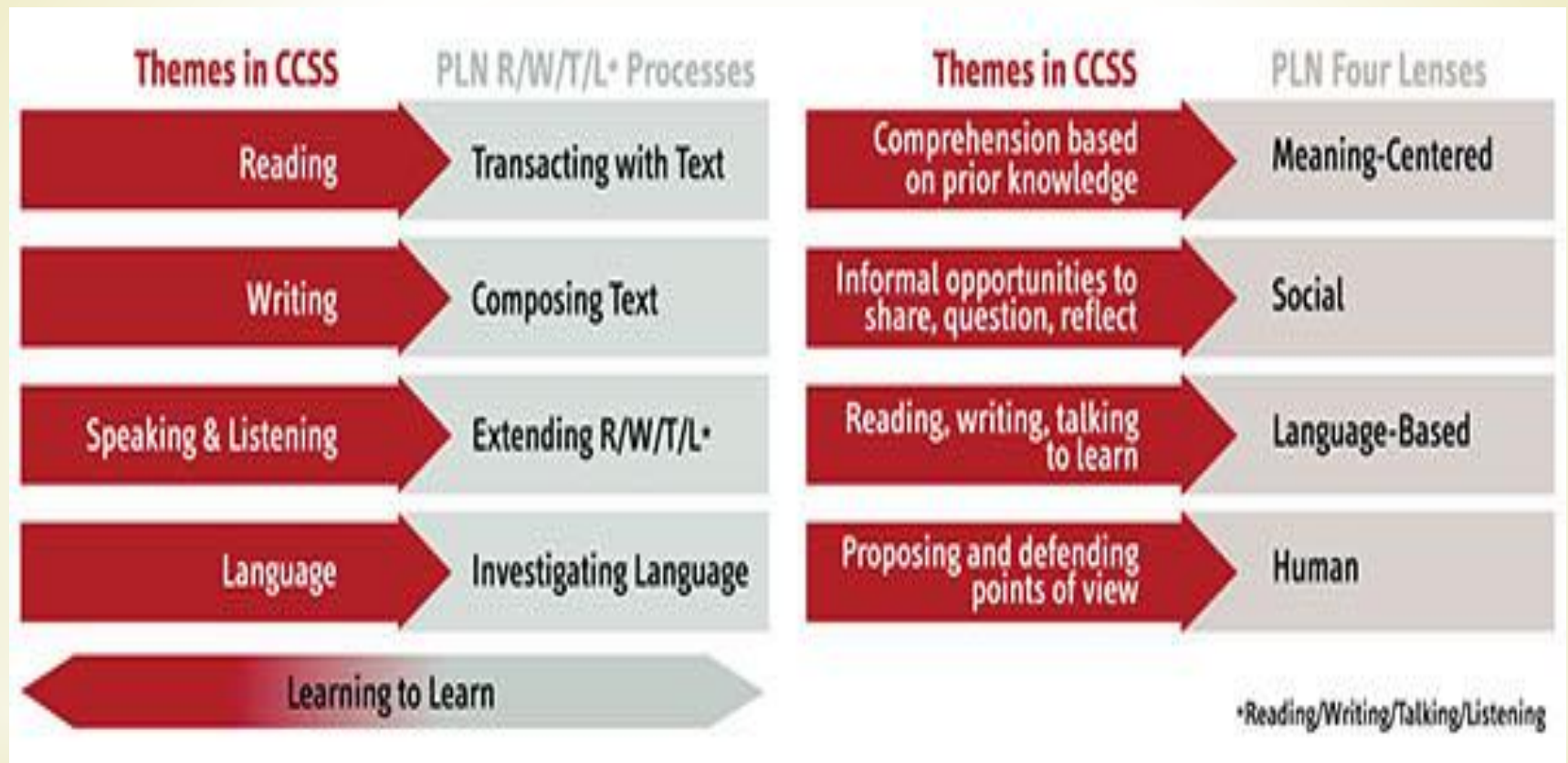
* **Vocabulary:** *contextual, connected, active*

* **Writing:** *to learn, to communicate, to publish*

* **Talking:** *to process, to communicate, to build community*

* **Testing:** *formative assessments, authentic summative assessments*

* **How to do this?**
Use Evidence-based Practices



*The PLN Connection

* Things to remember:

* Things to share:

* Questions I have:

* **What stood out for you as an instructional coach?**

* *Adolescent Literacy Resources: Linking Research and Practice*

Julie Meltzer with Nancy Cook Smith and Holly Clark from The LAB at Brown University, 2012

* *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, 2011

* *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*

Janet Metcalfe, The National Center for Educational Research, 2012

* **Some important references**