Expeditionary Learning

Core Practices

A vision for improving schools

About Expeditionary Learning

Expeditionary Learning partners with school districts and charter boards to open new schools and transform existing schools at all levels, pre-K–12, and in all settings—urban, rural, and suburban. The EL model challenges students to think critically and take active roles in their classrooms and communities, resulting in higher achievement and greater engagement in school. EL provides schools with professional development, coaching, and online tools to improve curriculum design, instruction, school culture, leadership, and assessment practices. The national network of EL schools and professional colleagues includes more than 150 schools, 4,000 teachers, and 45,000 students.

thinking in a
new direction

A Different Approach to Teaching and Learning

In Expeditionary Learning schools...

Learning is active. Students are scientists, urban planners, historians, and activists, investigating real community problems and collaborating with peers to develop creative, actionable solutions.

Learning is challenging. Students at all levels are pushed and supported to do more than they think they can. Excellence is expected in the quality of their work and thinking.

Learning is meaningful. Students apply their skills and knowledge to real-world issues and problems and make positive change in their communities. They see the relevance of their learning and are motivated by understanding that learning has purpose.

Learning is public. Through formal structures of presentation, exhibition, critique, and data analysis, students and teachers build a shared vision of pathways to achievement.

Learning is collaborative. School leaders, teachers, students, and families share rigorous expectations for quality work, achievement, and behavior. Trust, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning permeate the school culture.

When implemented robustly, the Expeditionary Learning core practices detailed in this book create school environments that promote deep engagement in learning and support students to achieve at high levels. EL students gain skills critical to college readiness and lifelong success—literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, persistence toward excellence, and active citizenship—as well as mastery of subject-area knowledge.

EL students around the country are outperforming their state and district peers on standardized tests. In our high schools, 100% college acceptance is the standard. Research shows that our teachers are closing critical achievement gaps for English language learners and for Hispanic, African-American, special education, and low-income students.

This book is a resource for all teachers and school leaders who wish to implement the EL core practices. We hope it inspires educators to challenge themselves as practitioners and challenge their students to reach their potential as learners and leaders.

Expeditionary Learning Design Principles

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound. These principles animate our research-based model for transforming teaching, learning, and the culture of schools.

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. The Responsibility for Learning

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. Empathy and Caring

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. Success and Failure

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. Collaboration and Competition

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. Diversity and Inclusion

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. The Natural World

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. Solitude and Reflection

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. Service and Compassion

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

The Values Behind Our Core Practices

Expeditionary Learning was born out of a collaboration between Outward Bound, USA and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The Harvard Outward Bound project, established in 1987, sought to increase the profile of experiential education at Harvard's school of education, while also bringing increased academic rigor to Outward Bound's work in schools. The proposal to create EL was a marriage of the philosophies of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, and the best of the Harvard Graduate School of Education's theoretical and practical approach to teaching and learning.

The Design Principles on the facing page were written at our inception and live at the heart of our model. Our core practices, written after seven years of work transforming and establishing good schools, provide the concrete and practical guidance that teachers and school leaders need to bring those principles to life. This publication represents the first update of our core practices, with additions and revisions that reflect ten years of learning from using these practices in schools of all types in a wide range of settings. Our model is continuously revised and improved by research and by the practical wisdom of EL teachers and school leaders.

Since the first ten EL demonstration schools began in 1993, we have remained rooted in our heritage, providing teachers and students with academically rigorous experiences that are marked by purposeful learning, challenge, collaboration, and perseverance. The mountain our students and teachers are climbing may be metaphoric—a challenge of scholarship rather than physical effort—but the ethic is the same as on an Outward Bound wilderness course. Everyone—every teacher and every student, regardless of beginning levels of preparedness—must work together as a team to get to the top of the mountain. Everyone must confront the challenge of academic achievement, and everyone must succeed.

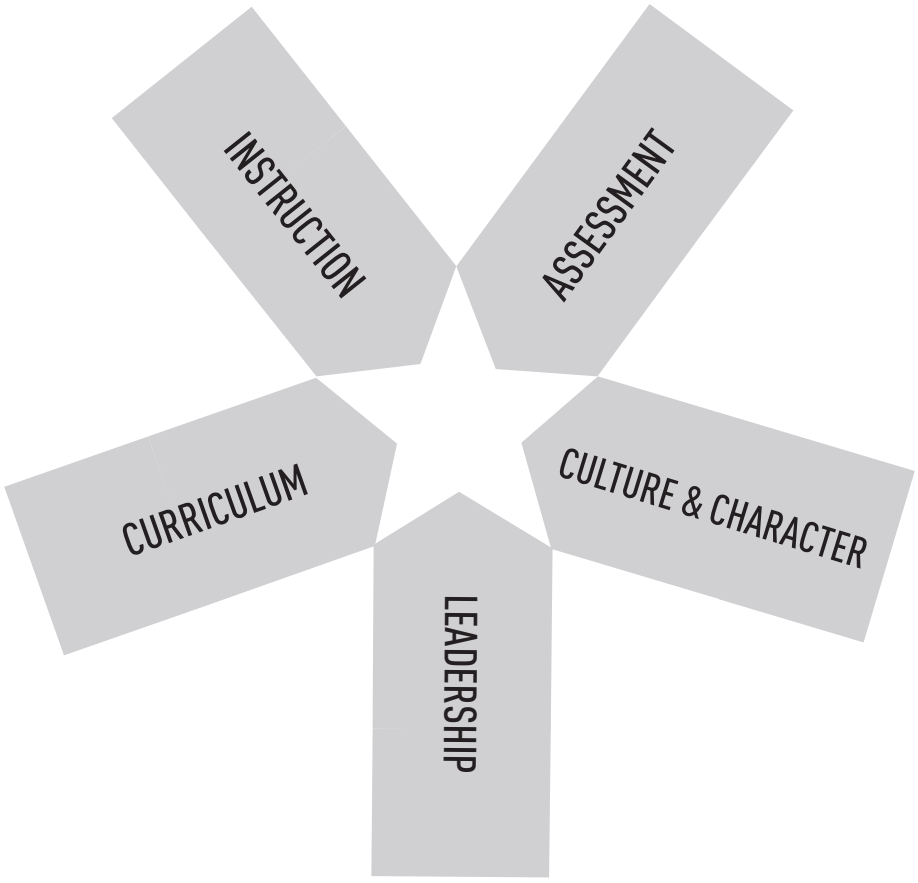
Our core practices mark the path up this metaphorical mountain, detailing the approach that makes our schools high-achieving, engaging learning environments that push teachers and students to do more than they think they can. They build on our unique heritage to lift up a vision of what great schools can be.

How to Use This Book

This Expeditionary Learning Core Practices book serves several purposes. It provides a comprehensive overview of the EL model, a planning guide for school leaders and teachers, and a framework for designing professional development. It does not belong on a bookshelf. It belongs on your desk, marked up with the thoughts, questions, and inspirations that will help guide your practice. We encourage you to make it your own. Customize these structures and strategies to fit your unique classroom, school, and community. Photocopy pages and post them on cabinets. Excerpt passages that resonate with you. No one teacher can do everything in this book, but we hope you will view it as an invitation and a guide as you strive to implement the EL model in your school and classroom.

This book addresses five dimensions that shape student achievement in schools: curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture and character, and leadership. Within each dimension, we have defined five to ten core practices that represent what the EL approach to education ideally looks like in a school and in a classroom. Each core practice is given a dedicated page in this book. On that core practice page is a series of lettered sections and numbered descriptors.

These core practices are not just abstract ideals: they are descriptions of actual best practices that we have documented from EL schools across the country. This new edition of the Core Practices is broader, deeper, and stronger than our last edition, informed by the inspirational success of your work as EL educators, and by our expanded areas of research and professional development. Although the sections of this book proceed sequentially from curriculum to leadership, every dimension is of equal importance, and they work in concert to create a quality EL school.



The Expeditionary Learning Core Practices

Our core practices address five key dimensions of life in school.

Curriculum

Our approach to curriculum makes standards come alive for students by connecting learning to real-world issues and needs. Academically rigorous learning expeditions, case studies, projects, fieldwork, and service learning inspire students to think and work as professionals do, contributing high-quality work to authentic audiences beyond the classroom. Our schools ensure that all students have access to a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, and regularly analyze the curriculum to check alignment to standards and opportunities for all students to meet those standards.

Instruction

Our classrooms are alive with discovery, inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Teachers talk less. Students talk and think more. Lessons have explicit purpose, guided by learning targets for which students take ownership and responsibility. In all subject areas, teachers differentiate instruction and maintain high expectations in order to bring out the best in all students and cultivate a culture of high achievement.

Assessment

Our leaders, teachers, and students embrace the power of student-engaged assessment practices to build student ownership of learning, focus students on reaching standards-based learning targets, and drive achievement. This approach to assessment is key to ensuring that schools achieve educational equity. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Staff members engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from formal assessments, disaggregating data by groups of students to recognize and address gaps in achievement.

Culture and Character

Our schools build cultures of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness, where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. School structures and traditions such as crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated. Students and staff are supported to do better work and be better people than they thought possible.

Leadership

Our school leaders build a cohesive school vision focused on student achievement and continuous improvement, and they align all activities in the school to that vision. Leaders use data wisely, boldly shape school structures to best meet student needs, celebrate joy in learning, and build a school-wide culture of trust and collaboration. Leadership in our schools goes beyond a single person or team—it is a role and expectation for all.

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Curriculum

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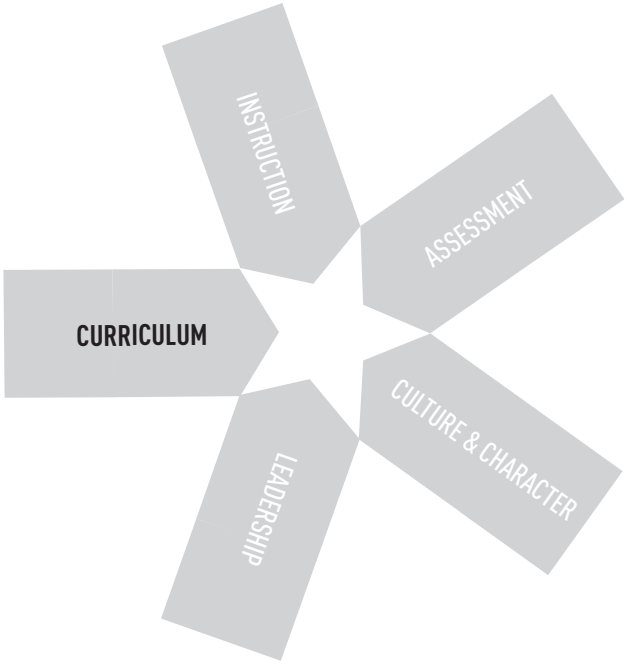

Core Practices in This Section

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- Selecting Case Studies
- Designing Projects and Products
- Incorporating Fieldwork, Experts, and Service Learning
- Producing High-Quality Student Work
- Teaching Global Skills and Knowledge
- Supporting College and Career Readiness

Core Practice 1

Mapping Skills and Content

Expeditionary Learning teachers and school leaders work together to ensure that a set of school-wide, standards-based curriculum maps acts as the foundation for all planning and instruction. The maps incorporate all required standards and college readiness skills and are revised as needed over time. The maps describe a vertical sequence of learning expeditions and projects, and they define the key content and skills that need to be addressed at each grade level and discipline. The maps guard against unnecessary repetition of content across grades and ensure appropriate repetition of skills and concepts.

A. Standards Alignment

1. Teachers and school leaders work together to ensure that learning expeditions, case studies, projects, lessons, and curricular decisions are based on required standards.
2. Teachers and school leaders prioritize standards that will receive particular emphasis, creating opportunities for depth and appropriate repetition of key skills and concepts.
3. Teachers and school leaders review measures of student achievement as indicators of how well the curriculum is addressing standards, and regularly make related adjustments to curriculum.

B. Skill and Concept Maps

1. Teachers and school leaders map skill standards across the year (horizontally) and from grade to grade (vertically).
2. Skill and concept maps reflect a vision that students are always growing in their skills and understanding of concepts. Rather than a map in which skills and concepts are checked off as "done," the maps reflect the notion that students must apply skills and concepts in increasingly more sophisticated and rigorous contexts as they get older.

C. Content Maps

1. Teachers and school leaders create, regularly analyze, and adjust school-wide content maps to ensure that standards are addressed, students are engaged and challenged, and repetition is minimized. As much as possible, content maps are aligned with or combined with skill and concept maps, so that the connection between content, skills, and concepts is clear.
2. Teachers and school leaders ensure that all students have access to a high-level curriculum with appropriate complexity of text and tasks.
3. Teachers and school leaders ensure that the curriculum includes significant focus on problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills for all students.
4. Teachers and school leaders ensure that the curriculum includes topics related to global knowledge, environmental stewardship, equity, and social justice, and that it promotes understanding of other perspectives and cultures.
5. Teachers and school leaders ensure that technology learning is built into the curriculum to equip all students with real-world competencies.
6. Content is driven by standards and sequenced to maximize opportunities for interdisciplinary connections when appropriate.

Core Practice 2

Designing Learning Expeditions

Learning expeditions are the signature Expeditionary Learning curricular structure. They make content standards come alive for students. These long-term, in-depth studies offer real-world connections that inspire students toward higher levels of academic achievement. Learning expeditions involve students in original research, critical thinking, and problem solving, and they build character along with academic skills. All learning expeditions explicitly focus on building literacy skills in students, particularly in the reading and writing of nonfiction text.

Learning expeditions take multiple, powerful elements of the EL model and join them together: guiding questions, kickoff experiences, case studies, projects, lessons, fieldwork, experts, service learning, and a culminating event featuring high-quality student work. All of these structures can also be used independently, outside of full learning expeditions.

A. Scope and Components of Learning Expeditions

1. Learning expeditions are usually 6-12 weeks in duration and comprise a significant portion of daily instructional time for students.
2. Teachers plan learning expeditions that include the following components: learning targets, guiding questions, a kickoff experience, case studies, projects, lessons, fieldwork, experts, service learning, and a culminating event.
3. Learning expeditions are interdisciplinary, but not necessarily with an equal balance of disciplines. On a secondary level they can be either co-led by a multi-disciplinary team or led by a single teacher who builds a learning expedition centered within his or her subject area that includes interdisciplinary features.
4. Learning expeditions integrate skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy, and research, as well as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Explicit literacy instruction, using appropriately challenging text, takes place in learning expeditions at all grade levels.
5. Learning expeditions are constructed or customized by individual teachers or teaching teams and are also refined and assessed for quality through school-wide structures that involve leadership and faculty in critique and support.

B. Flow of Learning Expeditions

1. Teachers plan backward, constructing calendars that begin with the end in mind. Whenever possible, students are brought into the process in class planning sessions during which they help choose and commit to deadlines. Teachers and students ensure that the planned components are realistic and that students will have time to complete projects and associated products and performances with quality.
2. Learning expeditions begin with a kickoff or immersion experience for students that ignites curiosity and sparks interest in a topic. Kickoffs build background knowledge in the learning expedition content, but are focused more on raising questions than answering them.
3. After the kickoff, learning expeditions shift toward deepening students' study and research, allowing them to become experts in the topic. Students often build significant background knowledge before they begin deeper work with experts and fieldwork, maximizing the value of those resources.
4. The learning expedition draws to a close with product creation, synthesis and reflection, and a culminating event that celebrates learning.

C. Choosing and Focusing the Compelling Topic

1. Learning expedition topics are centered on key standards identified in curriculum maps.
2. Topics are constructed to engage student curiosity and passion. They provide opportunities to connect historic, scientific, and other disciplinary concepts to specific case studies that make learning concrete and relevant.

Designing Learning Expeditions (continued)

3. Topics encourage curiosity and discovery and have rich potential for experiential, hands-on exploration.
4. Topics take a broad content unit (e.g., the Revolutionary War, Newtonian physics) and focus it with at least one case study that engages students and clarifies concepts (e.g., the role of a local city in the Revolutionary War, the physics of car accidents).
5. The topic offers opportunities for fieldwork, work with local experts, and the use of primary source material. It offers strong possibilities for original research and the creation of high-quality products for an authentic audience.
6. Community issues and resources focus the topic and require students to collect data, interview citizens and experts, and create products that meet a real community need.
7. The topic invites students to consider multiple perspectives.
8. Learning expeditions often involve issues of cultural diversity, equity, and social justice or environmental stewardship to engage students in compelling conversations about their ideas of right and wrong.

Core Practice 3

Formulating Guiding Questions

In Expeditionary Learning schools, guiding questions frame the inquiry of the class. They are open-ended, nonjudgmental questions that motivate students to explore and discuss topics from multiple perspectives. Grappling with good guiding questions leads students to enduring understanding of broader issues and fundamental concepts within and across disciplines. Guiding questions also link all elements of curriculum and help teachers and students see the connections between lessons, projects, and case studies. They provide a filter for teachers when they are making instructional choices, and they help students understand the big picture of their learning.

Guiding questions are a part of learning expeditions, but they can also be used as stand-alone structures outside of full learning expeditions.

A. The Role of Guiding Questions

1. Guiding questions focus on the broad concepts of learning expeditions. They build curiosity, guide students' inquiry, and connect all elements of students' studies.
2. Guiding questions help to connect the specific topics of case studies and projects (e.g., what role do insects play in nature?)to core concepts of the disciplines (e.g., ecosystems).
3. Learning expeditions typically include one to three guiding questions, which are posted for recurring discussion.
4. Guiding questions help students recognize their deepening understanding over the course of a learning expedition as they develop more informed and sophisticated responses to these questions, individually and as a group.

B. Characteristics of Guiding Questions

1. Guiding questions are open-ended and lead to multiple perspectives and "answers." They can be returned to throughout the study and throughout life to discuss and debate (e.g., What is a "healthy" life?).
2. Guiding questions often reveal fundamental issues and concepts of a discipline and the essential questions that scholars such as scientists and historians must grapple with in their work (e.g., Whose story is told when history is written?).
3. Guiding questions are student-friendly. They are straightforward and memorable, yet thought-provoking.

Core Practice 4

Selecting Case Studies

Case studies animate the major concepts of a discipline or broad topic through concrete—often local—studies of subtopics within the discipline. The case study helps students focus their research and become experts on a specific topic before they generalize their learning to broader concepts and content. Sometimes, Expeditionary Learning uses the term "case study" exactly as it is applied in the fields of law or medicine—to refer to an investigation of a unique person, place, institution, or event (e.g., as part of a U.S. history study of the civil rights movement, students investigate a local civil rights hero). Other times, EL uses the term more loosely, to refer to a narrowed subtopic that allows students to focus their research on a particular example that animates and clarifies the broader topic (e.g., in a study of the Civil War, students are involved in a case study of women's roles in the war).

Case studies are a part of learning expeditions, but they can also be used as stand-alone structures outside of full learning expeditions. Case studies are typically 2-6 weeks in duration and usually include student projects and products.

A. The Role of Case Studies

1. Case studies make learning come alive for students by clarifying and animating broad topics and concepts through engaging, specific examples.
2. Case studies require students to engage in original research with primary source materials, just as professional historians, mathematicians, scientists, and writers would.
3. Case studies allow students to deeply explore a topic and become experts, building their commitment and pride in their work, before generalizing learning to broader issues and concepts.
4. Case studies help students make connections between their academic learning and the real world and build bridges between the school and local community.

B. Planning Case Studies

1. Case studies are centered on key content standards. Students study particular examples of important topics and concepts within these standards.
2. Whenever possible, case studies are centered on local resources to ground students in concrete examples and to help connect the school to the community.
3. Case studies may focus on a unique person, place, or thing (e.g., the closing of a local factory), or narrow a broad topic by focusing deeply on a particular subtopic or perspective (e.g., the topic of birds narrowed to a case study of owls).
4. All case studies are rich in literacy learning—reading, writing, speaking, listening, research—and vocabulary development. Whenever possible, they are also rich in numeracy and mathematical concepts.
5. Case studies prioritize the use of primary source text and data to ground research in the real world, promote discovery, and challenge students as readers and mathematicians. These texts and data are used for explicit instruction in literacy and math skills.
6. Teachers guide students to generalize from case studies, applying their understanding to the broader content and concepts required by standards.

Core Practice 5

Designing Projects and Products

In Expeditionary Learning schools, students are engaged in skills-rich projects that result in high-quality products or performances for audiences beyond the classroom. Projects are a primary structure for in-school learning, teaching core skills and content through classroom lessons, discussions, labs, and work sessions, as well as through student research and fieldwork. Projects are used to teach literacy and math skills, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. The products of student projects are typically modeled on real-world documents and artifacts, with professional models guiding student work. Products are critiqued by professionals and contribute to a real-world audience (e.g., a whole-class scientific study of a local pond, resulting in a water-quality report for the city board of health).

Projects and products are a part of learning expeditions, but they can also be used as stand-alone structures outside of full learning expeditions. Projects are typically 2-6 weeks in duration.

A. Projects

1. Projects are a core structure for learning important skills and content standards during the school day. They are not an enrichment opportunity provided after core learning has been completed as an add-on or supplement.
2. Projects culminate in high-quality student-created products or performances.
3. Teachers plan backward from the final student product or performance. Lessons, labs, research, fieldwork, experts, and product creation, as well as regular assessments, are scheduled to lead up to the completion of a high-quality culminating piece, planned with the audience in mind.
4. Teachers involve students as much as possible in directing aspects of the project, with clear, posted, student-monitored organizational structures (e.g., learning targets, calendars, checklists, rubrics) that hold students accountable for their individual and group progress.
5. Assessment toward learning targets takes place during all aspects of the project, not just at the completion of the final product. The project includes formative and summative assessments such as conferences, quizzes, tests, essays, and presentations.
6. Literacy is intentionally woven into every stage of the project (e.g., reading and research to develop background knowledge, writing in a particular genre or format).

B. Products and Performances

1. Products and performances are created for an audience beyond the classroom, giving students an authentic reason to care about quality.
2. Projects typically engage all students in working toward the same product format (e.g., scientific report, architectural blueprint, historical play) to engage the power of the classroom community to focus together on the same key skills and genre and to support quality through common models of excellence and critique.
3. Within the common product format, there is room for students to make creative choices (e.g., all students may create architectural blueprints, but students make choices in the design of their building). There are also structures for differentiating support for students toward this common product. Through these means, teachers address equity in making sure that all students meet the same high standards.
4. Student products provide material for the culminating event of the learning expedition, which features high-quality student work.
5. Products and performances are modeled on real-world formats rather than artificial scholastic formats (e.g., students write a book review for a local newspaper instead of a book report for the teacher).
6. Teachers and students create product descriptors, rubrics, and criteria lists, often working from exemplary models, so that students are clear about the concrete features that represent high quality.

Designing Projects and Products (continued)

7. Assessment of the final product is typically focused not on content and skills—which have been assessed during the course of the project—but on craftsmanship and character learning targets.
8. Technology is used appropriately in various phases of product development (e.g., recording and analyzing data, graphic design, presentation). Products are used as a compelling purpose for technology learning.
9. Quality work is supported through explicit skills lessons and critique of models so that students gain expertise in a medium:
    a. Student work goes through multiple drafts or rehearsals, with specific, targeted feedback given to improve works in progress.
    b. In group projects, the product is designed so that the work of each student can be evaluated individually, ensuring accountability for all students.
    c. For products with multiple components, benchmarks are set for completion of each component to keep students on track. Some components are mandatory for all students, and others are used as options to differentiate instruction for a range of learners.

Core Practice 6

Incorporating Fieldwork, Experts, and Service Learning

Expeditionary Learning students learn from fieldwork, experts, and service in addition to learning from text. They use the natural and social environments of their communities as sites for purposeful fieldwork and service connected to academic work, and they use professional experts and citizens with firsthand knowledge of events and issues to ensure accuracy, integrity, and quality in their work.

EL differentiates between traditional field trips, in which students are often spectators, and fieldwork, in which students are active investigators, applying the research tools, techniques of inquiry, and standards of presentation used by professionals in the field. In addition to having students conduct research outside the school, teachers bring experts from the community into the classroom who collaborate with students on projects, teach them skills from their field, and critique their work using professional standards. Service learning in EL schools goes beyond charitable acts, such as cleaning up a city park, and extends also to rigorous academic products that provide a service for the community, such as conducting energy audits of city buildings to help a city save money and reduce its carbon footprint. Older students may participate in internships and apprenticeships.

Fieldwork, collaboration with experts, and service learning are a part of learning expeditions, but they can also be used as stand-alone structures outside of full learning expeditions.

A. Fieldwork

1. Fieldwork has a clear purpose that enriches the work of the learning expedition, case study, or project (e.g., data collection, interviews, structured observations) and allows students to be researchers, not spectators.
2. Whenever possible and appropriate, fieldwork takes place over an extended period of time with several visits to the same site.
3. Procedures and skills for fieldwork are taught before the event.
4. Fieldwork is modeled, as much as possible, on the authentic research of professionals in the field (e.g., zoologists, historians, anthropologists).
5. Teachers select data collection tools to suit the purpose of the fieldwork. When data are collected, they are analyzed and used back in the classroom.
6. Fieldwork is structured so that it is safe and productive. Teachers preview sites to shape the field experience effectively.
7. The school has written policies and well-documented safety procedures for conducting fieldwork, which are followed by teachers and students.
8. Students are prepared to be ambassadors for their school when on fieldwork. They are courteous, articulate, organized, and helpful.

B. Experts

1. Teachers regularly engage with experts during fieldwork and as classroom guests.
2. Teachers reach out to a range of experts, who may be professionals from a particular discipline or community members with firsthand knowledge of the topic being studied. Experts may work with just teachers or with teachers and students.
3. Experts work collaboratively with students on projects and/or products, and they help students critique their work against professional standards.
4. Students greet experts with courtesy, respect, and background knowledge. Experts should be surprised and delighted by the students' depth of knowledge and preparation.
5. Teachers and students orient experts to the needs of the project and the protocols for class critique.

6. Often, teachers and students maintain ongoing relationships with experts. Whenever possible, students take a lead role in communication with experts before (to ensure alignment and focus), during (to keep the collaboration on track), and after (showing appreciation), to build student responsibility and skills to perform real-world work.

C. Service Learning

1. Service learning is an integral part of academic work—it teaches students that the skills they are learning can be put to use to make a better community.

2. Service learning goes beyond charitable volunteer work to include projects that address important academic skills (e.g., beyond collecting clothing for the homeless, it may involve creating a guide to free city services that can be distributed at homeless shelters).

3. Teachers and students research service opportunities to ensure that service learning projects provide a real benefit to the community.

4. Service learning is not an afterthought or add-on. It is an extension of the ethic of kindness and service that permeates the school. Students and teachers regularly discuss the ways they can contribute to a better world. As such, service learning is a prime vehicle to teach and take action centered on social justice.

Core Practice 7

Producing High-Quality Student Work

In Expeditionary Learning schools, the curriculum compels students to produce high-quality work, and the whole school supports, celebrates, and reflects on student work in order to create a culture of excellence. Students take work that is intended for public audiences through multiple drafts and critique. They receive targeted feedback from teachers, experts, and peers based on established criteria. Creating real work for real audiences motivates students to meet standards and engage in revision. In the process, they develop perseverance and they realize that they can do more than they thought they could. High-quality work is a reflection and result of the high expectations teachers have for all students. Thus, it is a means to excellence and equity. Students and teachers analyze models to build a vision of quality. Teachers and school leaders analyze student work samples in professional development to best support students' attainment of quality work and standards.

A. Perseverance and Rigor

1. Projects and assignments are rigorous and demanding for all students.
2. Teachers create a classroom climate where students are excited about the opportunity and challenge of work, feel accountable to the group for deadlines, and take pride in doing a better job than they thought they could.
3. In order to produce high-quality final products, students demonstrate perseverance and responsibility for learning as they work through multiple drafts.
4. Teachers support all students in producing high-quality work by providing specific feedback and support, adapting projects and products when necessary, differentiating instruction, and providing supplementary materials and additional time.

B. Craftsmanship

1. Students demonstrate ownership and pride through attending to detail and making their final draft work accurate, thorough, and aesthetically strong. Not all work goes through drafts—practice work in class and experimental work may not be polished—but work shared in public reflects high standards for academic accuracy, depth, and care.
2. As much as possible, students use professional tools and materials and master the conventions of the medium. Students learn to handle professional tools and materials with maturity, care, and expertise.
3. Craftsmanship is supported by experts, brought into school or visited outside of school, who share their wisdom and techniques and the vocabulary of their field.

C. Authentic Purpose and Audience

1. Student products often meet an authentic need and have an audience and purpose beyond families or the classroom teacher.
2. Students regularly make presentations of their work and their learning to school and community stakeholders and authentic external audiences.
3. Some student products are particularly motivating because in themselves they are acts of service.

D. Examining Student Work

1. Teachers collect compelling student work at all levels of proficiency for use with students. Students regularly examine student work together to determine criteria for high-quality work.
2. Teachers and school leaders regularly examine student work samples in grade-level teams, disciplinary teams, or whole-school professional development to assess student understanding and skills and to develop strategies for supporting increased student achievement.

Core Practice 8

Teaching Global Skills and Knowledge

Expeditionary Learning school leaders and teachers recognize that they must prepare students for global citizenship in an increasingly complicated and interconnected world. Such preparation is cross-disciplinary and includes developing knowledge of diverse cultures, languages, and political systems, as well as knowledge of the physical terrains, ecosystems, and natural forces of the planet. Fully integrating global skills and knowledge into the curriculum is tied closely to environmental stewardship and social justice as students are challenged to grapple with the most complex problems facing the world such as climate change, structures of economic inequities, and international terrorism and conflict. They are asked to probe how the peoples of the world are connected and what young people can do to make a difference.

A. Curricula that Supports Global Skills and Knowledge

1. Teachers and school leaders review curriculum maps to ensure that global skills and content (e.g., knowledge of diverse cultures) are reflected in skill and content maps.
2. Students have multiple opportunities through their work in learning expeditions, case studies, projects, and lessons to build global skills and knowledge.

B. Building Character through Global Understanding

1. Schools create character expectations and habits of scholarship that guide students in becoming global citizens through recognizing different perspectives and the opportunities that come through diversity.
2. Students are expected, and given multiple opportunities, to make concrete contributions to the world around them.

C. Teaching World Languages

1. Schools recognize that communication is a key tool and a vital global skill that deepens understanding of other cultures and countries. Schools expect all students to study at least one language other than English by the time they graduate from high school.
2. Language learning is a central part of the curriculum at all levels of instruction, and begins as early as possible with young learners.
3. Language learning is offered in extended, well-articulated sequences that develop increasing levels of proficiency at each level of instruction by teachers who are well qualified in language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and teaching skills.
4. As much as possible, language learning connects students with communities and cultural and artistic opportunities, and empowers them to contribute to the school, community, and world.

Core Practice 9

Supporting College and Career Readiness

Expeditionary Learning schools prepare all students for college and career success by providing a college-bound curriculum with high expectations for all students, fostering a school-wide college-bound culture, and setting up structures that allow time for the college search and application process. A college-bound curriculum is one that includes content area knowledge and skills, such as American literature and calculus; academic research and writing skills; technology literacy; habits of scholarship, such as time management and persistence toward excellence; and "college knowledge" about such things as college admissions and financial aid requirements and the norms and expectations of college life. Paving the way for college begins in the primary years and culminates with intensive focus in the high school years. EL recognizes that there may be particular students for whom entering college directly from high school may not be the optimal path, yet school leaders and teachers nevertheless prepare and compel all students to get accepted to college so that they have the choice now, and the confidence to reapply in the future. All students should have the option and opportunity to go to college.

A. A College-Bound Curriculum

1. Students of all ages develop the habits of scholarship (e.g., self-monitoring, problem solving) that they will need to navigate the academic and social demands of college. This is a continuous and explicit focus of crew.
2. Core academic skills such as research skills and analytic thinking are taught in every subject area and at all grade levels.
3. Literacy instruction is a focus in every subject area and at all grade levels in order to prepare students for the complexity of college texts.
4. Students in grades K-8 have access to the courses and opportunities that prepare them for a college-bound high school curriculum (e.g., eighth-grade algebra, world language).
5. High school students develop the content knowledge and skills necessary for college by taking a demanding college preparatory curriculum that is aligned to college admission requirements.

B. Creating a College-Bound Culture

1. Teachers and school leaders make it clear to all students that they are on a path to college.
2. Hallways, classrooms, and offices display college symbols and messages.
3. Students have multiple opportunities to visit college campuses—starting in sixth grade if possible—to build their knowledge of the multiple opportunities available to them.
4. In high schools, college acceptances are celebrated in classrooms, in crews, and at school-wide events.
5. In high schools, students and families hear messages about college at school-wide events and see college resources on the school's website and in its materials.
6. High school students learn the facts about applying for admission and financial aid and about the norms and culture of college life. Whenever possible, alumni are invited to the school to serve as mentors and resources.

C. Secondary Structures to Support College and Career Readiness

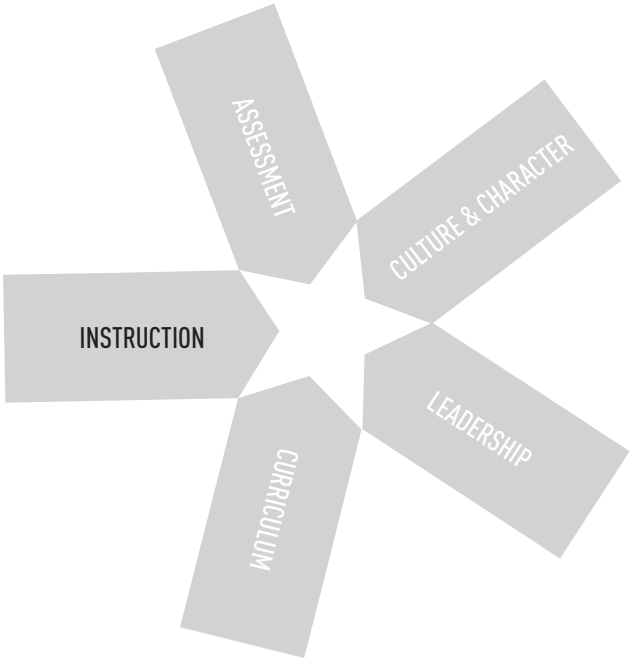
1. High school crew teachers help students make strong course selections that are connected to college and career aspirations, monitor progress toward academic and character learning targets, and work with college-bound counselors to choose colleges and navigate applications for admission, financial aid, and scholarships. Crew teachers invite guest speakers (e.g., recent alumni, college admissions officers) to build student understanding of college life and the academic expectations of colleges.
2. High schools offer intensive classes that provide remediation for those students who need it or content-rich extracurricular opportunities (e.g., internships, college mini-classes) for those meeting learning targets in their regular course work.
3. College-bound counselors and teachers offer students and families support in maintaining a strong high school transcript, taking SAT/ACT tests, essay writing, selecting colleges, applying for admissions and financial aid, and seeking scholarships. Evening sessions on such topics as choosing the right college and filling in financial aid applications are offered to support parents in the college process.

D. Technology for a New Generation

1. Teachers ensure that technology literacy is woven throughout all subject areas and grade levels whenever possible.
    a. Students use technology as a tool for original research and to produce high-quality products, performances, and presentations.
    b. Students use new technologies (e.g., design and presentation software, social networking) to access and manage information and prepare for success in a knowledge economy.
    c. Students understand ethical and legal issues surrounding access to and use of technology.
2. Teachers maintain high standards for the quality of work produced using technology. Learning targets for the technology skills (e.g., effective use of spreadsheet or presentation software) are distinct from learning targets for the quality of thinking and content presented in the project.
3. When technology is used in instruction (e.g., computer tutorial programs, digital white boards), it genuinely supports effective teaching and learning.
4. Teachers take advantage of technological innovations to extend student project work beyond the school day and the school building. Projects and assignments take advantage of the ubiquitous availability of information sources.
5. Teachers ensure that once students have a solid understanding of concepts, they are encouraged to take advantage of new technologies to amplify skills in research and problem-solving.
6. Teachers ensure that internet technologies are used with scholarly integrity and insight (e.g., that web content sources are analyzed for validity, used wisely, and properly cited).

Instruction

Expeditionary Learning classrooms are alive with discovery, inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Teachers talk less. Students talk and think more. Lessons have explicit purpose, guided by learning targets for which students take ownership and responsibility. In all subject areas, teachers differentiate instruction and maintain high expectations in order to bring out the best in all students and cultivate a culture of high achievement.



Core Practices in This Section

- Planning Effective Lessons
- Delivering Effective Lessons
- Differentiating Instruction
- Teaching Reading across the Disciplines
- Teaching Writing across the Disciplines
- Teaching Mathematics
- Teaching Science
- Teaching Social Studies
- Teaching the Arts
- Teaching and Promoting Fitness and Wellness

Core Practice 10

Planning Effective Lessons

Lessons are the building blocks of all curricular structures. Whether planning a single lesson or a series of lessons, Expeditionary Learning teachers attend to flow. They carefully craft a beginning, middle, and end, regardless of lesson type. By attending to each lesson with care, teachers ensure engagement and achievement for every student.

Effective lesson planning begins with naming clear learning targets, which articulate specific learning goals in student-friendly language. Teachers make decisions about which practices to use during lessons, based on close knowledge of individual students, in order to support all students to make progress. They employ strategies to ignite student curiosity and track student understanding, and they maximize opportunities for student voice, critical thinking, and leadership. Thoughtful lesson design leads students to want to learn, to work collaboratively, and to be aware of their learning process.

A. Lesson Design

1. Teachers always use learning targets and knowledge of their students to plan lessons.
2. Teachers vary the lesson formats they use. They make decisions about format based on the learning targets.
3. Teachers craft lessons that begin by building student engagement and setting clear purpose. Teachers address the following questions when planning:
   a. How will this lesson or series of lessons help students make progress toward the learning target(s)?
   b. What will cause students to be curious and want to learn?
   c. How will I provide students with a vision of the learning target(s) in a way that gives them ownership of their learning?
4. Teachers scaffold instruction in the body of lessons to ensure student success. They address the following questions when planning:
   a. What sequenced steps will the students and I take to ensure that all students meet the learning target(s)?
   b. How will students know what quality looks like, and how will I support them in producing quality work?
   c. How will students work or practice together during learning?
5. Teachers conclude lessons by helping students synthesize their current understanding of the content and skills focused on in the lesson and reflect on their progress toward the learning targets. The teacher uses information gleaned from the students' synthesis to plan subsequent lessons. Teachers address the following questions when planning:
   a. How will my students demonstrate and/or synthesize their understanding?
   b. How will I use this information to plan my next instructional steps?
6. Teachers embed differentiation strategies within lessons to ensure that all students are effectively supported and appropriately challenged.
7. Teachers structure lessons so that they talk less and students talk and think more.

B. Lesson Formats

1. Workshops: teachers use the workshop format to introduce and explicitly teach concepts, skills, and strategies related to the learning targets. Teachers often develop workshops in response to what they notice in student work. Workshops include the following components:
   a. Introduction: the introduction taps into students' curiosity, sets a positive tone, builds the need to know, and links to previous learning. The learning target is shared during the introduction.
   b. Mini-lesson: the mini-lesson shows students how to meet the learning target through direct instruction. The teacher prepares students for success during practice/application by providing an explicit model of proficiency. The mini-lesson may include modeling, think-aloud, demonstration, or mini-lecture.

Planning Effective Lessons (continued)

c. Guided practice: guided practice allows the teacher to assess student readiness for working independently by providing an opportunity for all students to try what was modeled with ample support. The teacher renames steps and addresses misconceptions.

d. Practice/application: during practice/application, students practice what was modeled independently of the teacher. Teachers facilitate student thinking and understanding by asking probing questions and assess students' proficiency in relation to the learning target.

e. Sharing: students share work and ideas that show progress toward the learning target. Students and teachers celebrate successes.

f. Debrief: students create meaning by synthesizing as a group during the debrief. Students think about the learning process and name how the lesson furthered their learning. Students and teachers assess proficiency toward the learning target and identify next steps.

2. Discovery-Based Lessons: teachers start a discovery-based lesson, such as 5E's (defined below), with a provocative experience or problem. They invite students to make sense of it, then build skills, vocabulary, and conceptual understanding on a "need to know" basis. Learning targets are shared, or co-constructed with students, after exploration, discovery, and discussion. The description of a 5E's lesson follows:

   a. Engage: teachers engage students (e.g., with a demonstration, brainstorm, problem) to raise questions and elicit responses that uncover what students know or think about the topic.

   b. Explore: students then explore the topic together, without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher asks probing questions of students and listens as they make meaning.

   c. Explain: teachers ask students to explain their thinking based on their explorations and provide students with clarifications, definitions, and direct instruction.

   d. Extend: students extend their knowledge of the topic by applying concepts and skills to new problems and tasks.

   e. Evaluate: the teacher assesses students' knowledge or skills and asks them to assess their own learning.

3. Protocol-Based Lessons

   a. Teachers use multi-step protocols as part of a lesson or as the entire lesson. Protocols are formats for discussion that bring clear structures and guidelines to classroom discourse. There are many examples, such as critique sessions, Socratic seminars, and building background knowledge protocols.

   b. Teachers choose protocols based on the purpose of the lesson (e.g., using the building background knowledge protocol early in a study to immerse students in the topic and to generate student questions).

4. Other Formats—Lecture, Video, Work Sessions, Labs, Games

   a. Teachers choose lecture and video formats on occasions when content learning targets are the focus of the lesson. Teachers embed engagement strategies into lectures, video screenings, work sessions, and labs to make these formats more active (e.g., using graphic organizers, mid-session questioning or critique, and pair-shares).

   b. Extended work sessions and labs are often planned when students are applying knowledge and skills to tasks, products, or performances.

   c. Games are used to practice and master foundational skills. The class analyzes the content and rules for games and understands how they promote learning.

Core Practice 11

Delivering Effective Lessons

Effective lessons engage Expeditionary Learning students in productive work throughout the class period. Lessons create purpose and build curiosity for students. Teachers have time to confer with students, classroom management is smooth, and teachers are aware of each student's level of understanding and participation. Effective instructional practices promote equity and high expectations. They make content engaging, ensure that all students think about and grapple with challenging content, and allow the teacher to know all students and their thinking well. Effective lessons foster character by inspiring each student to develop craftsmanship, perseverance, collaborative skills, and responsibility for learning. They promote critical thinking by asking that students make connections, perceive patterns and relationships, understand diverse perspectives, supply evidence for inferences and conclusions, and generalize to the big ideas of the discipline studied.

A. Creating Purpose

1. Teachers strategically share learning targets with students at the best time (e.g., at the beginning of a lesson, or after a "hook," mystery experience, or discovery period).
2. Teachers connect new ideas and content with the prior knowledge of students.
3. Questions, graphics, video, artifacts, and hands-on experiences engage and draw students into the learning.
4. Teachers may introduce a complex or provocative problem for students to consider.
5. Teachers describe next steps in the learning to orient students in the project or series of lessons and to provide the big picture for their learning.

B. Building Curiosity

1. Teachers pose questions that elicit multiple responses and perspectives from students.
2. Teachers collect, record, and post student questions about the new learning.
3. Teachers use "mystery" artifacts, compelling images, or text related to the subject to spark student interest.

C. Maintaining Focus

1. Teachers and students develop and practice routines that maximize student ownership and responsibility for effective lessons.
2. Teachers use classroom norms, habits of scholarship criteria, and related character learning targets to promote student collaboration and responsibility for creating a productive learning environment.
3. Teachers create structures to ensure group participation and individual accountability (e.g., exit tickets, note catchers). Every student has a clear role and/or a responsibility for producing something that shows his or her thinking.
4. Students engage in instructional tasks as soon as they enter the classroom or at the beginning of a new lesson (e.g., "do now" posted on the board). Students always know what to do when they enter the room for a lesson.
5. Teachers use specific techniques or signals for quickly getting and maintaining students' attention (e.g., call and response, raised hands, rhythmic clapping).
6. Teachers develop and teach routines in the classroom for managing materials, furniture, and space. Students become adept at organizing the classroom for varied types of lessons and purposes.
7. Teachers and students develop routines for dealing with lesson interruptions such as visitors, announcements, and transitions. Students are able to refocus quickly.
8. Teachers and students maximize use of instructional time by streamlining tasks that are noninstructional (e.g., distributing materials, taking attendance).

D. Using Protocols

1. Teachers use protocols to provide equity of voice and to ensure that all students think critically and participate fully. Protocols are formats for discussion that bring clear structures and guidelines to classroom discourse. There are many examples (e.g., Socratic seminars, jigsaws).
2. Teachers use protocols to specifically build the background knowledge of all students.
3. Teachers use discussion protocols to facilitate classroom meetings and crews and to model and encourage behavior that allows for productive individual and group work.

E. Supporting All Students

1. Teachers intentionally and explicitly build students' background knowledge.
2. Teachers pre-assess and/or ask students to self-assess against learning targets in order to determine flexible student groups and to provide all students with respectful tasks that will move them toward proficiency.
3. Teachers scaffold instruction to support a variety of learners:
   a. Teachers provide extra supports to struggling students during lessons (e.g., mini-lessons or guided practice, different/additional materials).
   b. Teachers provide more complex, challenging tasks to students who are proficient.

F. Using Models

1. Teachers use practices such as demonstrations, think-alouds, role plays, and fishbowls to show what meeting the learning target looks like, for both academic learning targets and character learning targets.
2. Samples of products from the world of work provide professional models for students to examine.
3. Teachers use a range of examples of student work, most importantly highest-quality work (exemplars), to generate criteria lists with students and to construct product descriptors and rubrics.
4. Teachers collect student examples of varying quality to use as models for future lessons.

G. Representing Thinking

1. Students and teachers represent their thinking using formats such as graphic organizers, journals, concept maps, data charts, and quick-writes.
2. Teachers use anchor charts and other forms of documentation to publicly synthesize student understanding and to provide the class with a resource for student learning.

H. Reflecting

1. Students identify the thinking and problem-solving strategies they use during a lesson.
2. Teachers ask students to reflect on how their thinking has changed over time.
3. Teachers and students debrief lessons and experiences to synthesize learning.
4. Reflection and debrief help students and teachers set goals for future learning.

I. Ongoing Assessment

1. Teachers regularly check the understanding of each student during and at the end of lessons with quick and nonjudgmental methods. Teachers may use short written responses (e.g., exit tickets) or nonverbal responses (e.g., hand signals, clicker technology).
2. Teachers confer with students individually and in small groups to monitor each student's level of understanding and identify class-wide patterns.
3. Teachers keep observational and anecdotal records during student work sessions and when conferring with students.

J. Structuring Revision and Critique

1. Students produce multiple drafts of work that is intended for public audiences, and they assess their work against models, criteria lists, or rubrics.
2. Teachers develop specific, strategic questions to guide focused revision.
3. Teachers use whole-class critique sessions of exemplary models or instructive work samples as lessons to build vocabulary and concepts specific to that discipline or genre. When possible, guest experts are used in this role as well.
4. Revision protocols give students a forum for giving and receiving specific feedback from one another on particular aspects of their work. Teachers explicitly build students' skills to critique one another's work in a kind, specific, helpful manner. For peer critique protocols, teachers ensure that the focus of critique is narrow and clear, and students are equipped to offer useful insights.
5. Critique protocols help teachers and students examine strong and weak models of work in order to name what quality looks like and identify strategies for improving quality.

Core Practice 12

Differentiating Instruction

In Expeditionary Learning schools, differentiation is a philosophical belief and an instructional approach through which teachers proactively plan to meet students' varied needs based upon ongoing assessment. Teachers utilize flexible groupings of students and design respectful tasks that allow for different approaches to the same goals. Each classroom builds a culture that honors diverse needs and holds all students accountable to the same long-term learning targets, putting equity at the center of the school's commitment and vision. At a school-wide level, differentiation is supported by appropriate grouping structures that are informed by a team of school professionals.

A. Structures to Support Differentiated Instruction

1. Ability grouping (e.g., tracking) is replaced with flexible heterogeneous grouping informed by ongoing assessment.
2. The school offers supplemental services (e.g., tutors, reading programs, interventions, summer school) that provide additional support and intervention to students whose needs are not met in the regular education setting. These school-wide structures are developed based on the recommendations of a multidisciplinary team (e.g., special education teachers, literacy specialists, counselors, classroom teachers) whose recommendations are informed by student data.
3. Students with disabilities and English language learners are taught in regular education classrooms to the greatest extent possible.

B. Integrating Differentiated Instruction

1. Students work toward the same long-term learning targets, and teachers provide multiple pathways for meeting the learning targets based on student needs (e.g., tiering lessons).
2. Teachers determine student needs through use of assessment strategies (e.g., pre-assessments, student self-assessments, inventories, providing multiple opportunities for success).
3. Teachers use instructional practices that ensure that all students are thinking and participating (e.g., providing texts for different reading levels, designing tasks based on different learning styles).
4. Teaching materials are selected so that all students read high-quality literature and nonfiction text, assume multiple perspectives, and develop compassion and empathy.
5. Teachers ensure that all students have opportunities to work successfully with grade-level text and tasks. Differentiated texts are also used to support readers of different levels.
6. Teachers ensure that all students acquire the background knowledge needed to succeed.
7. Teachers understand how cultural differences influence curriculum and instruction and build on student interests and backgrounds.

C. Creating a Culture for Differentiated Instruction

1. Students know and learn with a diverse group of peers.
2. Teachers learn about the home, cultural, and community backgrounds of their students.
3. Teachers examine their own classroom equity practices using protocols such as tracking patterns of student participation in classroom discussions and tracking teacher/student interaction.
4. School communications accommodate linguistic and cultural differences.
5. Teachers and school leaders offer all students access to cultural and social institutions (e.g., libraries, museums, universities).
6. Exhibitions and performances present the work of all students.

D. Supporting Students with Disabilities

1. School leaders and learning specialists use research to determine best practices for students with disabilities.
2. School leaders and learning specialists make professional development related to meeting the needs of students with disabilities available to all staff.

3. School leaders thoroughly examine staffing, scheduling, and structures in order to choose models that best meet the needs of all students.
   a. Collaborative teams that work with students with disabilities are provided with adequate planning time to support this student population.
   b. Collaborative teams evaluate accommodations and consider innovative strategies for diverse student populations.
   c. Modifications are developed based on specific student needs, with the intention of achieving the most rigorous outcome possible for the student.
4. Decisions about placement and programs for students with disabilities are based on high-quality assessments.
5. Schools develop and train effective teams (e.g., Response to Intervention teams) in order to ensure that students needing supplemental support are identified and that placement in interventions and other programs is made appropriately.
6. To the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities complete the same curriculum and meet the same learning targets as their classmates.
   a. Learning specialists create tailored learning targets for students with disabilities that meet Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan goals.
7. Teachers provide supplemental materials so that students with disabilities can access content (e.g., visual cues, graphic organizers, appropriately leveled text).
8. Counselors, teachers, and learning specialists consider college an option for all students and work together to find the best college options for students with disabilities.
   a. Teachers help students learn self-sufficiency and advocacy skills.
   b. Teachers help students understand their learning challenges so that they gain lifelong strategies for further growth and development.
9. Crew teachers support all students' understanding of the diversity of learners that exists in their school, just as they support understanding of other forms of diversity.

E. Supporting English Language Learners (ELL)

1. School leaders and ELL teachers use research to determine best practices for English language learners.
2. School leaders and ELL teachers make professional development related to meeting the needs of English language learners available to all staff.
3. School leaders thoroughly examine staffing, scheduling, and structures that best meet the needs of all students.
   a. Collaborative teams that work with English language learners are provided with adequate planning time to support this student population.
   b. Collaborative teams evaluate accommodations and consider innovative strategies for diverse student populations.
   c. Modifications are developed based on specific student needs with the intention of achieving the most rigorous outcome possible for the student.
4. Decisions about placement and programs for English language learners are based on high-quality assessments.
5. To the greatest extent possible, English language learners complete the same curriculum and meet the same learning targets as their classmates.
   a. ELL teachers create additional learning targets for English language learners that focus on language development.
6. Teachers provide supplemental materials so that English language learners can access content (e.g., visual cues, materials written in the student's home language, culturally relevant materials).
7. Counselors, teachers, and ELL teachers consider college an option for all students and work together to find the best college options for English language learners.
   a. Teachers help students learn self-sufficiency and advocacy skills.
8. Crew teachers support all students' understanding of the diversity of learners that exists in their school, just as they support understanding of other forms of diversity.

Core Practice 13

Teaching Reading across the Disciplines

Reading is a complex process about making meaning. The reading process includes phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. In Expeditionary Learning schools, comprehension strategies and critical thinking skills are taught K-12 to help students make sense of content and the world around them. Students learn to read while reading to learn. Students at all grade levels work with a balance of informational and literary text, and learn to read carefully to extract evidence from text. Complex text sources, whether primary or secondary source material, are used with all students as an enriching challenge. Like a steep mountain, complex text presents an opportunity for students to go beyond their perceived limits and accomplish more than they thought possible. Students—collectively and individually—tackle complex texts with care and patience as their reading skills are strengthened.

Reading is taught across all content areas because each subject area requires students to learn from different kinds of text (e.g., science articles, historical primary sources, math word problems). At the secondary level, teachers of math, science, history, technology, and the arts explicitly teach and support students to be strong readers of text within their discipline. By integrating reading throughout the day, schools convey to students the importance of reading, critical thinking, and meaning-making in school and in life.

A. Reading Process

1. Teachers understand how students develop phonemic awareness, decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension so they can teach those skills and concepts explicitly.
2. Teachers think about their own reading and understand how they use comprehension strategies to make sense of what they read. Teachers are aware of how they use comprehension strategies flexibly in different contexts (e.g., texts specific to a discipline, differing genres).
3. Teachers model the reading process—how they make sense of what they read—for students, using both informational and literary text.
4. Students articulate how they make sense of what they read in different contexts (e.g., understanding word problems in math, interpreting poetry).
5. Students demonstrate understanding of text through explanations that cite evidence from the text—orally and through writing.
6. Teachers use common language to teach comprehension strategies (e.g., making connections, determining importance, synthesizing).
7. Classrooms display evidence of student learning about literacy (e.g., anchor charts, word walls).
8. Teachers intentionally link reading with other literacy experiences (e.g., writing, speaking, listening) through rich topics.
9. Vocabulary building, with an emphasis on academic vocabulary, is an explicit focus at all grade levels.

B. Integrating Reading

1. Teachers regularly integrate reading into all subject areas to teach content and develop skills.
2. Teachers select a variety of texts to develop students' knowledge of a topic: multiple genres, leveled texts, data sets, primary sources, and texts representing differing perspectives on the topic.
3. Readers' workshops are regularly used both in and outside of learning expeditions to explicitly teach reading process skills (e.g., decoding, comprehension strategies, vocabulary strategies) while also teaching content.
4. Teachers use a variety of structures to teach reading (e.g., shared, guided, independent).
5. Students use tools (e.g., graphic organizers, reading journals) to document evidence for text-based arguments and record their thinking.
6. Students apply comprehension strategies as they research topics and analyze data.
7. A variety of protocols are used to structure discussions of texts (e.g., conversation cafe, Socratic seminar).
8. Teachers craft literacy-rich learning expeditions. They use short pieces of text to build background knowledge, read anchor texts aloud to students, orchestrate book clubs, and incorporate research linked to the learning expedition topic.

C. Creating a Culture of Reading

1. Students read every day, throughout the day, for a variety of purposes. They discuss and write about what they read.
2. Reading is incorporated into crew and other school-wide structures, such as community meetings, to underscore the importance of literacy.
3. Adults in the school and larger community are reading role models for students—they read with students and discuss their own reading habits and passions.
4. Students use the common language of comprehension strategies to discuss their reading.
5. Teachers know their students as readers and help students find texts that are accessible and engaging.
6. Students articulate the value of reading in their lives and in the world.
7. Classrooms are print-rich environments. They contain libraries with an assortment of resources, including texts related to learning expeditions, student-produced books, primary sources, and a range of media, genres, and levels.
8. Complex text is framed as an exciting challenge—an adventure—that demands courage, perseverance, and smart strategies, and rewards us with a sense of achievement.
9. Vocabulary, both general academic and discipline-specific technical vocabulary, is celebrated across the school in lessons, crew, meetings, and displays.

D. Assessing Reading

1. Teachers assess student understanding of text primarily through text-dependent questions. Whether oral or written, such questions require students to substantiate their opinions and interpretations with evidence from the text.
2. Recording forms or reader-response journal entries document student understanding and thinking and provide evidence of growth over time.
3. Teachers confer with students regularly about their reading to deepen students' thinking about their reading process and to help students set and track goals.
4. Teachers craft classroom or school-based interim assessments and summative assessments to assess students' level of proficiency at a point in time.
5. Diagnostic test data are used regularly to identify reading problems and inform instruction. Teaching teams meet frequently to discuss concerns arising from data.

Core Practice 14

Teaching Writing across the Disciplines

In Expeditionary Learning schools, writing is taught K-12 across the curriculum. Students learn to write effectively to inform, to build arguments substantiated with evidence, and to write with literary power in narrative and poetic genres. Teachers in EL schools develop and teach a common language for the writing process and the traits of good writing. They use consistent practices for teaching and assessing writing. At the secondary level, teachers of math, science, history, technology, and the arts explicitly teach and support quality writing within their discipline. Students learn to write like historians, scientists, mathematicians, and artists. Through writing, students learn more deeply about content and communicate what they know. They learn to craft quality writing in a variety of contexts. Students write to learn while learning to write. Students have regular opportunities to write for authentic purposes and audiences beyond the classroom, which fosters motivation for producing quality writing. While the nature and amount of writing varies by discipline and grade level, writing is a central vehicle for learning and communicating in all classrooms.

A. Writing Process

1. Teachers explicitly teach the steps of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising (for specific writing traits), editing (for conventions), and making the work public.
2. Students articulate and use the steps of the writing process.
3. Teachers have a common understanding and language for teaching elements of quality writing (e.g., 6 + 1 writing traits).
4. Teachers ensure that students at all levels write to inform and to make arguments based on evidence, as well as write for literary purposes.
5. Teachers use their own writing to model the writing process and traits of quality writing. Teachers are aware of the writing formats commonly used in different disciplines (e.g., scientific journals) and can explain what quality writing looks like in those contexts.
6. Teachers intentionally link writing and other literacy-based experiences (e.g., reading, speaking, listening) through rich topics.
7. Anchor charts document student understanding of the elements of quality writing.
8. Teachers use critique protocols—both focused individual critique and whole-class critique—to improve student writing and understanding of the qualities of good writing.
9. Teachers collect and archive exemplars of high-quality student writing in formats used commonly in their classrooms (e.g., five-paragraph essays, science journals, math solutions that explain process), to use as models for class critique lessons.

B. Integrating Writing

1. In all content areas K-12, writing is used to deepen understanding, promote reflection, and synthesize what students know.
2. Across the disciplines, teachers explicitly teach writing through writers' workshops and critiques (e.g., a writers' workshop on voice in lab reports in science class, a critique on students' constructed responses in math class).
3. Teachers scaffold major writing products so students produce quality writing. They conduct writers' workshops during each phase of the writing process and focus workshops on specific traits.
4. Students write for authentic audiences within and beyond the school community.
5. Teachers design literacy-rich learning expeditions. They use expedition journals, synthesis statements, and written responses to facilitate learning about the topic, and they develop products to include quality student writing.
6. Modes and formats of writing products vary over time so students become proficient writers in multiple genres.

C. Creating a Culture of Writing

1. Students write every day for multiple purposes. Students share what they write.
2. Teachers and school leaders celebrate strong writing throughout the school, through hallway and classroom displays, public readings, acknowledgments, and awards.
3. Teachers raise students' awareness of an author's craft when reading across the disciplines. They teach students to read like writers, and to strive for quality.

4. Students use the common language of writing traits to discuss their writing.
5. Students articulate the value of writing in their lives and in the world.

D. Assessing Writing

1. Writing is assessed in a wide range of formats, including writing to inform and to make evidence-based arguments, personal narratives and reflections, and creative writing in different genres.
2. Students use a common language when critiquing models of writing, conducting peer critiques, and assessing their own writing.
3. Students focus revisions on one quality or trait at a time. They are articulate about what revisions they make and why.
4. Teachers use instructional criteria lists and rubrics based on standards and student-generated criteria to assess writing during the process (assessment for learning) and to assess final pieces (assessment of learning).
5. Teachers and school leaders use results from interim, state, and national writing assessments to help assess student proficiency at a point in time and to inform instruction.
6. Portfolios document growth in writing over time and students' reflections on that growth.

Core Practice 15

Teaching Mathematics

In Expeditionary Learning schools, math is taught with rigor and integrity in discrete math classes. Along with discrete math instruction, math is integrated into projects, case studies, and learning expeditions whenever possible, in a lead or supporting role. Teachers of all disciplines support mathematical thinking in areas such as numeracy, statistics, patterns, and problem-solving. In the same way that an EL school celebrates literacy through events, projects, community meetings, exhibitions, and hallway displays, mathematical thinking and learning is showcased and discussed throughout the building.

EL schools focus on foundational facts—vocabulary, formulas, algorithms, and number facts—that are always grounded in conceptual understanding. Teachers ensure that students develop procedural fluency, calculating with accuracy and efficiency. There is an equally strong focus on problem-solving skills and critical thinking. Students learn to use appropriate technology strategically in problem-solving. Technology tools are used not as a substitute for learning foundational facts, but to enhance conceptual understanding and problem-solving. EL math teachers support students to think like mathematicians and cultivate mathematical habits of mind—curiosity, risk-taking, perseverance, and craftsmanship. Students learn to reason abstractly and quantitatively, model mathematically to empirical situations, and to construct and critique mathematical arguments. EL schools also recognize the "gates of opportunity" represented by high-level math classes and prepare all students to have the opportunity to engage in high-level math learning at the secondary level.

A. Conceptual Understanding

1. Teachers emphasize big mathematical ideas and teach students to derive big ideas from experience and application.
2. Students have frequent opportunities to build understanding through inquiry-based investigations, occurring over one or more class periods.
3. Teachers use lesson structures, such as the 5E's, to help students make progress toward concept-based learning targets and to ensure that students spend the majority of class time developing conceptual understanding.
4. Students and teachers use diagrams, manipulatives, and models to support the translation from concrete to abstract representations and vice versa.
5. Teachers animate standard curricula and resources by connecting them to engaging, real-world examples. Mathematical modeling creates a bridge between math and other disciplines.
6. Student work often focuses on authentic application to support abstract and quantitative reasoning.
7. Teachers foster rich mathematical discourse in the classroom by asking open-ended questions, teaching the vocabulary of the discipline, and pursuing student thinking.
8. Students learn to effectively express their mathematical thinking verbally and in writing.
9. Students learn to critique their own mathematical arguments and those of others.

B. Foundational Math Facts

1. Teachers provide a sharp focus on the specific foundational facts (e.g., number facts, algorithms, formulas, and vocabulary) required by standards. Teachers make clear to students how fluency with facts empowers their mathematical thinking.
2. Teachers build excitement and motivation for students to acquire foundational facts by helping them develop a belief in their own capacity and by celebrating their growth. Teachers use problem-solving and conceptual understanding as a catalyst for learning and reinforcing foundational facts.
3. Teachers support computational fluency through regular use and discussion of strategies and graphic representations that support understanding of patterns, relationships, and shortcuts.
4. Students practice one new skill at a time until proficient with foundational facts. They set goals and monitor progress toward these goals.
5. Teachers regularly provide students with differentiated opportunities, both during and outside of math class, to practice facts at their own level.
6. Extended in-school opportunities—extra classes, study groups, and tutorials—are provided for students who need extra support in learning foundational facts.

7. Students and teachers document growing proficiency in foundational facts with such systems as individualized charts, portfolios, or math journals.

C. Problem-Solving Skills

1. Teachers promote flexibility in mathematical thinking by celebrating diverse thinking and multiple-solution strategies. Students learn standard algorithms, and also learn to critique and use alternative algorithms and shortcuts when effective.
2. Teachers provide problem-solving frameworks and structures for students to approach both familiar and unfamiliar problems, and allow for frequent class discussion and analysis of problem-solving approaches.
3. Students learn to use appropriate technology tools strategically in problem-solving. Tools are used not as a substitute for learning foundational facts, but to enhance conceptual understanding and problem-solving dexterity.
4. Teachers regularly ask students to create as well as solve mathematical problems.
5. Students construct viable arguments for solutions and justify their reasoning to others with numbers, words, graphs, and diagrams. Students insightfully question and critique the reasoning of others.
6. Teachers model using comprehension strategies in mathematics to provide students with a deeper understanding of the problem to be solved and to reinforce the common language of comprehension.
7. Students are required and supported to analyze their errors and to understand and articulate their patterns of errors in order to improve understanding and performance. Students collect and analyze data of personal error patterns from assessments.
8. Students attend to precision and craftsmanship in mathematics through accuracy, neat work, and elegant solutions.

D. Creating a Culture of Numeracy and Mathematical Thinking

1. Schools celebrate, display, and discuss the mathematical thinking and learning of students and adults.
2. Teachers design math-specific projects and case studies that allow students to apply their mathematical understanding to real-world contexts. Teachers integrate math into learning expeditions when its integration compels students to learn rigorous skills and concepts.
3. Teachers integrate math outside of math time (e.g., crew meetings, community meetings, service learning work) to reinforce and develop foundational facts and number sense, and to model mathematical application. Students are involved in math every day—in dedicated classes and outside of math class.
4. Classrooms and hallways provide evidence of students' mathematical thinking and learning through anchor charts and displays of student work.
5. Whenever possible, students study the history of mathematics and the contributions of diverse cultures to that history.
6. Teachers regularly address math in professional development and faculty meetings—exploring staff perceptions and mindset, discussing teaching strategies, supporting each other's ongoing learning about math, and analyzing student math data.

E. Assessing Math

1. Teachers and students use multiple methods for assessing understanding, such as observations, learning logs, math journals, portfolio reflections, and mathematical models built by students, as well as quizzes, tests, and performance assessments.
2. Teachers regularly and effectively use checking-for-understanding strategies during lessons. They ensure that all students genuinely understand concepts before moving on.
3. Teachers track mathematical discourse as one means of judging collective and individual student understanding.
4. Teachers and students regularly analyze data from assessments, individually and collectively, to understand specific areas and general patterns of strengths and weaknesses.
5. Teachers analyze interim and standardized assessments to identify areas of need and inform instruction.
6. Students reflect on, keep track of, and share mathematical learning and thinking.

Core Practice 16

Teaching Science

In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers focus on supporting students to read, write, think, and work as scientists. They use expeditions, case studies, projects, problem-based content, collaboration with professional scientists and engineers, and interactive instructional practices to foster inquiry and enable authentic student research. When possible, student research contributes to the school community or broader community (e.g., kindergartners analyzing conditions for optimal growth in their school garden, high school students testing indoor air quality in the school to inform recommendations to the Board of Education).

EL teachers reinforce the connections among science, math, engineering, and technology as they promote skills in questioning; developing and using models; planning and carrying out investigations; collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; constructing explanations; designing solutions; engaging in argument from evidence; and synthesizing and communicating information. Students learn to be logical in making assumptions, accurate when collecting data, insightful when drawing conclusions, and unbiased when supporting statements with reliable scientific evidence. In addition, because appreciation and stewardship of the natural world is part of the design of EL schools, environmental literacy is integrated into the science curriculum at all grade levels.

A. Science Content

1. Teachers support scientific literacy by focusing on big ideas that cut across all science disciplines (e.g., cause and effect, systems and systems models, structure and function).
2. Teachers use scientific topics as the basis of learning expeditions, case studies, and projects at all grade levels. Topics are often animated by controversial scientific issues or local connections and have strong potential for original research.
3. Teachers structure opportunities for scientific inquiry that allow students to participate in scientific investigations and problem-solving that approximate adult science, including framing questions, designing methods to answer questions or test hypotheses, determining appropriate timelines and costs, calibrating instruments, conducting trials, writing reports, and presenting and defending results.
4. Teachers provide students with a variety of primary and secondary source materials (e.g., trade books, peer-reviewed journal articles, governmental documents). They supplement (or replace) textbooks with rich resources and experiences, including labs, fieldwork, and interaction with experts, to support conceptual understanding.
5. Teachers balance the study of narrow topics with broader topics and concepts (e.g., a case study of local ants is embedded in a larger expedition on classification systems utilized by entomologists).
6. Whenever possible, teachers provide opportunities for students to explore the history and evolution of scientific thinking and innovation as it applies to the topic being studied.
7. Teachers support student appreciation and stewardship of the natural world through experiences, projects, and products that emerge from authentic service learning, not just discussion.
8. Teachers integrate history, government, and science to help students understand science as a social enterprise.
9. Teachers create opportunities for students to collect, represent, analyze, and report real data as a part of science inquiry at all levels.

B. Science Instruction

1. Teachers create multiple opportunities for students to engage in complex, problem-based activities, labs, and investigations, and to represent and analyze data.
2. Students learn to be logical in making assumptions, accurate when collecting data, insightful when drawing conclusions, and unbiased when supporting statements with reliable scientific evidence.
3. Teachers ask students to articulate their theories, arguments, claims, and understandings through instructional practices that foster rich scientific discourse and writing.
4. Teachers use protocols and instructional strategies that require students to generalize, transfer, and apply concepts and procedures to other contexts and problems.
5. Teachers provide a variety of diagrams, tables, visual models, and timelines to help students understand a broad array of information.

Teaching Science (continued)

6. Teachers ask students to represent and reflect on their thinking (e.g., develop science notebooks, create analogies, make graphs, create technical drawings, build models).
7. Students are asked to apply what they learn in diverse and authentic contexts, explain ideas, interpret texts, predict phenomena, and construct arguments based on evidence (instead of focusing exclusively on predetermined "right answers").
8. Students are asked to evaluate multiple perspectives on a topic, and to take and defend positions and to consider alternative viewpoints.
9. Students are taught to use the tools of real-world science with accuracy, care, and expertise at all levels.
10. Students are taught to use comprehension strategies to understand and analyze scientific text.
11. Students are taught to use a formal style and objective tone for technical and scientific writing.
12. Teachers help students build scientific knowledge by using multiple forms of documents, texts, maps, and media.

C. Creating a Culture of Science Inquiry

1. Teachers, students, and school leaders celebrate, display, and discuss the natural and physical world throughout the school.
2. Schools develop indoor and outdoor areas, such as science labs, computer labs, workshops, gardens, and natural areas, to stimulate science and technology interest and inquiry.
3. Students display work that provides evidence of scientific research and learning in public areas of the school.
4. Teachers welcome curiosity, reward creativity, and encourage thoughtful questioning.

D. Assessing Science

1. Students demonstrate understanding of science concepts by explaining them accurately to others using graphic representations, models, demonstrations, writing, and peer teaching.
2. Teachers and students use multiple methods of assessing understanding, such as one-on-one discussions, observations, science talks, science notebooks, portfolio reflections, and student-constructed scientific models, as well as quizzes, tests, and performance assessments.
3. Learning targets for science address content knowledge, understanding of concepts, scientific thinking, craftsmanship, and integrity in applying scientific method.
4. Teachers check for misconceptions and create experiences that challenge those misconceptions.
5. Teachers track student discourse as one means of judging collective and individual student understanding.

Core Practice 17

Teaching Social Studies

In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers of social studies prioritize students' understanding of enduring concepts so that they can apply that understanding to the modern world. Teachers view social studies as a way to develop students' capacity to interpret their world critically and to engage productively in it. They help students understand the big picture and timeline of history and emphasize deep understanding rather than memorization of myriad facts and details. By focusing on big ideas such as the elements that make up a culture or a civilization, teachers support students to appreciate and understand diverse cultures and understand connections among ancient and modern cultures. To help animate history, teachers choose compelling case studies that include narratives that intertwine history, government, economics, geography, and culture, and illuminate enduring themes. Students often investigate and address social issues in their local community and become compassionate community members in the process. While learning social studies, students act as social scientists—they analyze primary sources, consider multiple perspectives, conduct research, and draw their own conclusions. Explicit literacy instruction is a focus for students at all grade levels. Students learn to read, write, and think as historians.

A. Social Studies Content

1. Teachers emphasize the enduring themes—or big ideas—of social studies.
2. Social studies topics are often at the core of interdisciplinary projects, case studies, and learning expeditions.
3. In addition to deep study of particular topics, teachers include broad overview sessions (i.e., surveys of time periods) in order to put particular events in a broader historical context and address the breadth of required standards. Timelines and graphic representations help students comprehend the big picture of historical relationships.
4. Social studies topics often focus on engaging current issues, cultural diversity, and social justice. Teachers invite students to consider the topic from multiple perspectives.
5. Carefully selected case studies act as narrow lenses through which students develop understanding of important content and enduring themes. For example, a case study of Shays' Rebellion allows students to develop an understanding of the founding of the United States, as well as the enduring themes of power, authority, and governance.
6. A social studies case study focuses on a unique person, place, or event (e.g., a local house that was part of the Underground Railroad) or narrows a broad topic by focusing deeply on a particular subtopic or perspective (e.g., the life of children during colonial America).
7. Teachers identify local case studies and connections to make the topic come alive and provide opportunities for students to engage actively with their community.
8. Students acquire social studies skills and understanding through an inquiry-based approach to teaching.

B. Social Studies Instruction

1. Teachers select a variety of engaging information sources beyond textbooks (e.g., articles, data sets) and put particular emphasis on using primary source documents that require students to make judgments as historians.
2. Teachers organize fieldwork or expert visits related to the topic of study, and students engage with and do the work of social science professionals.
3. Teachers explicitly teach comprehension strategies linked with social studies content (e.g., conducting a readers' workshop on determining importance in primary source historical documents).
4. Teachers use models of professional and student work and writers' workshops to explicitly teach what quality writing in social studies looks like. Students often write in modes that are authentic to the social studies field (e.g., ethnography, historical fiction).
5. Students use the vocabulary and reasoning skills of the discipline to discuss social studies concepts.
6. During case studies, teachers provide students with regular opportunities to generalize and to link the enduring themes of social studies to other events.
7. Teachers ask students to take on other viewpoints when learning about a topic and to support those views with evidence (e.g., taking on the role of a historical figure in a simulated town hall meeting).

8. Teachers design projects that require students to interpret information sources, develop theories, and construct arguments based on evidence. The projects require students to think for themselves and draw unique conclusions.
9. Teachers incorporate service learning projects connected to content when appropriate.

C. Creating a Culture of Social Studies Inquiry

1. Students and teachers use daily news and current events topics regularly. The school resounds with rich discussion of social studies topics.
2. Teachers and students connect local issues with the broad concepts of social studies.
3. Schools participate in community events that encourage students to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society.

D. Assessing Social Studies

1. Students are asked to elaborate on their understanding of social studies content through extended writing.
2. Students are asked to communicate their knowledge, present a product or performance, or take some action for an audience beyond the teacher, classroom, and school building.
3. Students are asked to take on specific perspectives or points of view when addressing a concept, problem, or issue.

Core Practice 18

Teaching the Arts

In Expeditionary Learning schools, arts in all forms are celebrated as a foundation of culture and a central aspect of learning and life. Artistic skills are understood as intelligences, and artistic achievement is valued as academic achievement. Student exhibitions of learning feature the arts along with other subjects. EL schools are filled with student artwork, which is displayed in a way that honors the work. Artistic performances are points of pride for the school.

The visual and performing arts are taught using the same effective instructional practices that are used in other disciplines, and all students have access to professional artists and professional exhibitions and performances. Ideally, specialists in visual and performance arts are on the school staff. If they are not, classroom teachers use professional art educators and artists whenever possible to support high-caliber artistic learning. The arts build school culture and student character by emphasizing authentic performance, craftsmanship, risk-taking, creativity, and a quest for beauty and meaning. The heritage of critique in the arts forms the basis for a whole-school culture of critique in all disciplines.

Arts are often used as a window into disciplinary content in other academic subjects (e.g., Ancient Greek architecture as an entry point to Ancient Greek civilization, protest songs as a case study when learning about the civil rights movement). The arts are also used as a window into diverse cultures and regions of the world.

A. Arts Process and Skills

1. Artistic instruction takes place in visual and performing arts classes and is woven into projects in all other disciplines. Art teachers pursue their own curriculum in their classes while also supporting the artistic integrity of projects centered in other disciplines.
2. Teachers in all disciplines design projects and products that require students to learn the techniques of an artistic medium and to represent their understanding through art.
3. Visual arts, movement, and drama are used to make sense of concepts in various disciplines.
4. Teachers ask students to respond to fieldwork, exhibitions, performances, and literature using various art forms.
5. Teachers help students generalize to other disciplines what they learn from analyzing and critiquing art (e.g., making connections between drawing and writing).
6. In-depth artistic observation skills are taught and analyzed.
7. Students are taught a common language for analyzing, critiquing, and responding to art forms they study.
8. Critique and revision help students refine and improve artistic skills and techniques.
9. Students are taught to reason and solve problems in artistic production.
10. Students learn the symbol system for the particular art form they are studying (e.g., notation in music).
11. Students learn the history of various art forms and media they study (i.e., photography, marching bands, puppet theaters).

B. Integrating the Arts

1. The arts or history of the arts can be the primary focus of a learning expedition (e.g., arts in the Harlem Renaissance, in which each case study examines a different artistic genre—jazz, painting, poetry).
2. As they provide vital information about other cultures and time periods, the arts or history of the arts can be the subject of a case study in a social studies expedition (e.g., the Ashcan School of painting during a study of the early 20th century).
3. Art is taught through integrated art projects connected to interdisciplinary learning expeditions, case studies, and projects. Whenever artistic products or performances are included in learning expeditions or projects, the artistic work itself is treated with integrity and high standards.
4. Independent projects in an arts discipline or in the arts are used to teach the skills and techniques of a particular art form.

C. Creating a Culture of Art

1. Teachers use the arts to reach diverse learning styles, to highlight artistic thinking and understanding, and to enable students to discover talents and aptitudes.

Teaching the Arts (continued)

2. The school celebrates art in all forms—the building is rich with original student artwork, which is displayed in a way that honors the work. Performances are points of pride for the school.
3. Documentation panels of student learning, present throughout the school, are strong works of art in themselves.
4. Students exhibit craftsmanship in art projects, products, and performances.
5. Teachers use performances to build classroom culture, community, and teamwork.
6. The school provides all students with access to live art performances, artists, and exhibitions.
7. All students are exposed to the major arts, and each student has opportunities to work in a variety of media.
8. The arts are used to help teach persistence and self-discipline.
9. The arts help students learn about and appreciate other cultures and diverse artistic styles, and differences within their own school community.
10. Art is intentionally used to help students take multiple perspectives.
11. Professional artists, musicians, and actors join classrooms as experts when possible.

D. Assessing the Arts

1. Students use portfolios to collect and reflect upon their artistic work.
2. Art portfolios and artistic achievements in all areas are included in student portfolio and passage presentations and student-led conferences, and are valued as academic achievement.
3. Whenever possible, student art is accompanied by artists' statements or reflections so that artistic thinking can be demonstrated to the public and is a part of learning and assessment (e.g., on gallery walls, and in programs for musical, movement, or drama performances).
4. Learning targets for the arts include goals for artistic skills and thinking as well as character goals related to commitment, teamwork, and perseverance.

Core Practice 19

Teaching and Promoting Fitness and Wellness

Expeditionary Learning promotes wellness in students and school staff members. Healthy eating, exercise, stress reduction, sleep, and healthy relationships—the key elements of physical and mental health—are included as part of a school's wellness approach. The physical education program places a strong emphasis on personal fitness and nutrition and character development, and reinforces the EL school culture of respect, responsibility, and achievement. Physical activity and outdoor time are woven into the school day whenever possible and appropriate (e.g., walking to fieldwork research sites, setting up and cleaning classrooms and common spaces, using physical energizer breaks to enhance academic work times). Experiences in the natural world—working in and appreciating nature—are a priority for students in EL schools. Physical challenges push students to pursue excellence and assume responsibility for their own learning. Teachers help students understand the connections between physical challenge and academic challenge. Schools provide healthy meals to students and discourage unhealthy foods. Crews emphasize the importance of wellness and are stewards of a climate of social and emotional safety for students. Crew meetings and school staff explicitly support students to understand and monitor dangers to wellness posed by alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, as well as unhealthy relationships. School staff models healthy lifestyles and a healthy school culture.

A. Fitness and Wellness Process

1. Teachers promote fitness and wellness through modeling and instruction in a variety of aspects of physical and mental health, including food, exercise, sleep, and relaxation. Teachers engage students in understanding and addressing dangers to a healthy life.
2. The school collects data to demonstrate progress toward fitness and wellness goals.
3. Physical education programs support students in the fitness and wellness process.
4. Outdoor education programs and outdoor challenges, as well as individual and team sports, are explicitly connected to fitness, wellness, and character development.
5. Physical education teachers focus on students' strengths and help each student experience success in achieving improved fitness and wellness.
6. Crew leaders and school counselors support a school culture of social and emotional safety and health.

B. Integrating Fitness and Wellness

1. Students create personal fitness and wellness plans with the support of crew leaders and physical education teachers. Students and teachers monitor plans regularly.
2. Physical education teachers explicitly plan opportunities for students to challenge their perseverance, personal fitness, and collaboration skills.
3. When possible, teachers link wellness, fitness, and physical challenge to academics through projects, learning expedition content, and reflection.
4. Schools have policies and protocols to ensure that physical education classes, adventure programming, and fieldwork are physically and emotionally safe.
5. Schools develop structures to promote students' social and emotional health.

C. Creating a Culture of Fitness and Wellness

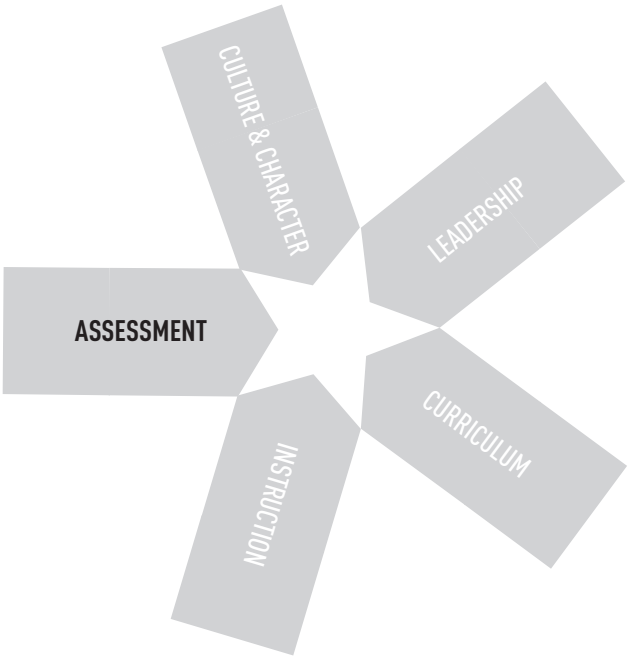
1. Teachers model fitness and wellness as a natural part of the school day (e.g., taking stretch breaks, eating healthy snacks).
2. Teachers include outdoor time and physical activity for students, whenever possible and appropriate, to energize students' minds and bodies and encourage enjoyment of the natural world.
3. Students and teachers plan wellness initiatives that encourage all members of the school to enhance their own physical and mental wellness (e.g., wearing pedometers to track daily steps, keeping food logs, reflecting in journals).
4. Student portfolios, passage presentations and student-led family conferences include student fitness and wellness goals and achievements.
5. School communications with families regularly include wellness strategies or tips.
6. Schools limit availability of foods that do not contribute to wellness.

7. Students have access to community models of excellence in wellness.

D. Assessing Fitness and Wellness

1. Teachers support students to set personal fitness and wellness learning targets and to keep track of progress through journals and data collection.
2. Progress toward personal fitness and wellness learning targets is shared in student portfolios, student presentations, and student-led conferences.
3. Wellness learning targets address the dispositions and life habits important to a healthy lifestyle as well as growth in physical fitness and skills.

Assessment



Expeditionary Schools leaders, teachers, and students embrace the power of student-engaged assessment practices to build student ownership of learning, focus students on reaching standards-based learning targets, and drive achievement. This approach to assessment is key to ensuring that schools achieve educational equity. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Staff members engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from formal assessments, disaggregating data by groups of students to recognize and address gaps in achievement.

Core Practices in This Section

- Using Student-Engaged Assessment to Create a Culture of Engagement and Achievement
- Using Assessment for Learning Strategies on a Daily Basis
- Creating Quality Assessments
- Raising Achievement on Assessments of Learning
- Communicating Student Achievement

Core Practice 20

Using Student-Engaged Assessment to Create a Culture of Engagement and Achievement

Student-engaged assessment is a hallmark of Expeditionary Learning schools. Assessment plays a key role in building an overall culture of engagement and achievement. Students take responsibility for their own learning and see themselves as the key actors in their own successes. Additionally, students and adults operate from a growth mindset—a belief that everyone is capable of high achievement and that learning comes as a result of effort. Habits of scholarship, such as perseverance, craftsmanship, and responsibility, name specific characteristics that support students' academic achievement. All learning, whether in the realm of academic progress or habits of scholarship, is supported by the purposeful use of learning targets.

A. Growth Mindset

1. The school community believes and communicates that all students are capable of high academic achievement. This belief permeates actions and decisions.
2. Teachers praise effort, perseverance, and the use of strategies, rather than ability, intelligence, or talent.
3. Teachers provide descriptive feedback that empowers students to build on their strengths and correct errors.
4. School leaders develop a growth mindset in teachers through professional development and coaching.

B. Student Ownership of Learning and Assessment

1. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Classrooms are characterized by a culture of striving for excellence.
2. Students regularly assess their own growth through organizing and reflecting on portfolios of their work. They are required and supported to present their work publicly and reflect on strengths, challenges, and goals.
3. Assessment experiences increase student motivation. Assessments are not just administered to students, but are discussed, analyzed, and sometimes created by students. Students see assessments as a source of information that helps them learn.
4. Students are engaged in understanding and performing well on annual and interim standardized assessments. They examine the process of standardized testing, including tracking and understanding their work patterns and needs in testing situations, analyzing personal or anonymous whole-class data of performance on interim assessments, and participating in practice and actual tests.
5. Teachers and students collect and analyze data as a way to track progress toward learning targets and set goals.
6. Teachers support a classroom culture of data inquiry. Students collect data on their own work patterns (e.g., how many books they read, how much time they spend on homework) and analyze patterns in their work (e.g., tracking types of errors in math, analyzing a piece of writing for variety of sentence length).

C. Habits of Scholarship (Performance Character)

1. Habits of scholarship learning targets support students' academic success and reflect the character traits of the school as they relate to performance (e.g., "I can advocate for myself", "I can maintain focus in class", "I can complete quality work on time").
2. Habits of scholarship support student learning and college readiness. They aid students in developing study skills, time-management skills, persistence, self-awareness, and the ability to seek feedback and assistance.
3. The school community views habits of scholarship and results from skills and content assessments as equally important.

4. Students track, reflect on, and share their progress toward habits of scholarship. Teachers help students analyze the relationship between the habits, engagement, and achievement.
5. Habits of scholarship are assessed and communicated separately from academic content and skills mastery in student progress reports.
6. The school celebrates students who exhibit strong habits of scholarship (e.g., through affirmations, charts, honor rolls, awards, privileges).

D. Supporting Purposeful Learning with Learning Targets

1. Teachers use learning targets to articulate specific learning outcomes for students. Learning targets are shared in instruction to promote student ownership of learning and are referred to continually by teachers and students.
2. Students understand and own learning targets. When appropriate, students help to refine or construct learning targets for individual or class learning.
3. Teachers use learning targets to frame instruction, assessment, and communication about student progress in academics.
4. Teachers use character learning targets to frame instruction and communication about habits of scholarship (performance character) and relational character.
5. Teachers use learning targets specifically related to craftsmanship, which help students better understand and practice a particular medium, often associated with arts or technology.
6. Teachers craft quality learning targets with common characteristics:
   a. They are derived from national or state standards and school or district documents such as curriculum maps and adopted program materials.
   b. They are written in student-friendly language and begin with the stem "I can..."
   c. They are measurable and use concrete, assessable verbs (e.g., identify, compare, analyze).
   d. They are specific, often referring to the particular context of a lesson, project, or case study.
   e. They identify the intended learning. They are phrased as statements around which students can develop understanding or skill as opposed to naming activities (e.g., "I can describe the ideal habitat for a polar bear" vs. "I can write a paragraph about the habitat of a polar bear").
7. Teachers are clear about whether academic learning targets are knowledge, reasoning, or skill targets. With this clarity, they can ensure that a set of learning targets is balanced and that assessments match the cognitive process demanded of students.
8. Teachers craft sets of learning targets that include both long-term and supporting learning targets. The supporting learning targets name the discrete learning that has to happen for students to reach the long-term learning targets.
9. Teachers choose the optimal time to introduce learning targets during a lesson. For a workshop model, this is typically at the outset of the lesson, or after a "hook" that builds excitement. For a discovery-based lesson, this is typically after students have had time to explore and grapple with new material and concepts and raise questions and hypotheses.
10. School leaders support purposeful learning for teachers by establishing learning targets for professional development and coaching.

Core Practice 21

Using Assessment for Learning Strategies on a Daily Basis

In Expeditionary Learning schools, assessment for learning strategies help students engage in, reflect on, and take responsibility for their own learning. Assessment for learning strategies are formative assessment actions that help students improve their understanding and skills at the outset of learning and during the process of learning. Teachers and students collaborate in the learning process, and both use these strategies on a daily basis.

A. Communicating Learning Targets and Criteria for Success

1. Teachers ensure that all students know and understand the learning targets and the criteria for success.
2. Students articulate a clear vision of the intended learning. They can describe where they are in relation to proficiency and what they need to know and do in order to meet or exceed proficiency.
3. Teachers provide models and exemplars of work similar to what students will create.
4. Teachers guide students in analyzing models and exemplars to help them understand quality and format as well as build vocabulary associated with a project or specific product. Examples of strong and weak work help teachers and students develop criteria for success.
5. Teachers guide students in describing characteristics of quality rubrics or criteria lists. Students generate criteria describing only proficient or exemplary work, reinforcing clear, rigorous expectations.
6. Teachers communicate, at the outset of instruction, how students will be assessed.
7. Students can describe how they will be assessed.

B. Focusing on One Skill, Concept, or Strategy at a Time

1. Teachers strategically design a series of lessons that focus on one skill, concept, or strategy at a time.
2. Teachers ensure that all parts of the lesson (e.g., mini-lesson, guided practice, practice/application, share, debrief) link back to the singular focus.
3. Students explain how having mastery of a skill or understanding a concept is connected to the long-term learning target.

C. Using Strategic Questioning

1. Teachers' lesson plans include strategic questions—pre-planned questions that promote critical thinking and extend student understanding of the skill or concept at hand.
2. Teachers support students in formulating their own strategic questions.
3. Students ask questions of themselves and others to monitor and increase their understanding of the skill or concept at hand.
4. Teachers use checking for understanding strategies during lessons to ensure that all students are accountable during questioning (e.g., cold call, no opt-out).

D. Strategically Using Critique and Descriptive Feedback

1. Teachers and students use critique protocols to help students assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own and others' work.
2. Teachers maintain a safe, respectful classroom culture where critique, both formal and informal, is always kind, specific, and helpful.
3. Teachers differentiate between critique intended to help an individual improve his or her work, best accomplished through individual or small group feedback, and critique of work that is being used as a whole-class lesson, to build understanding of quality in a particular genre or medium.

4. Teachers often structure lessons as whole-class critique sessions with compelling models of strong (and perhaps weak) work to allow students themselves to build criteria for quality (e.g., instead of telling students what makes a good essay, the teacher leads a session in which students together critique essays of varying quality and create a list of qualities in a good essay).
5. Teachers maintain archives of models of exemplary student work, particularly in genres frequently used by students (e.g., lab reports, math word problem solutions) that students can access individually to remind them of standards for quality.
6. Teachers use whole-class critique sessions to build a culture of critique in the classroom and to improve students' critique skills so that students can formally and informally give effective feedback to classmates.
7. Peer critique is used only when students are clear on a specific focus for feedback and are equipped (e.g., through a prior lesson) to provide insightful and useful feedback.
8. Teachers invite guest experts to visit the classroom to critique student work. Teachers prepare experts to focus on specific learning targets, model the classroom/school norms for communication, and build vocabulary and standards of the profession.
9. Teachers provide both oral and written descriptive feedback as formative assessment—feedback that occurs during learning and does not act as an evaluative score or grade.
10. Teachers provide descriptive feedback that:
    a. Directs attention to the intended learning.
    b. Is timely, ensuring that there is time for students to act on the feedback prior to summative assessment.
    c. Addresses a limited number of misunderstandings and provides the right amount of information that students can act on.
    d. Prompts students to think rather than simply make corrections.

E. Teaching Students Focused Revision

1. Teachers support students in limiting revision of their work into manageable chunks (e.g., rehearsing a readers' theater, concentrating on improving oral expression, revising a story for the trait of sentence fluency).
2. Students revise work intended for a public audience multiple times. Each revision reflects progress toward specific, limited criteria.

F. Self-Assessing, Reflecting on Progress, and Setting Goals

1. Teachers use structures to help students self-assess regularly throughout the process of learning. They provide time for students to reflect on their individual and collective progress using private and public structures for reflection (e.g., journals, tracking charts, learning logs).
2. Teachers provide explicit instruction on self-assessing with accuracy and setting specific, achievable goals on a regular basis.
3. Students identify strategies and next steps needed to achieve learning targets. With support from teachers, they develop goals that will lead them to achievement. Students' goals encompass academic needs as well as habits of scholarship.
4. Students refer to their goals, self-assessments, and reflections when communicating about their progress to others.

Core Practice 22

Creating Quality Assessments

Expeditionary Learning teachers craft quality assessments, aligned with standards-based learning targets, in order to collect meaningful, accurate, and timely information about student learning. Teachers are well-versed in the methods of assessment and select the best method based on the type of learning target they are assessing. In addition, they involve students in metacognitive thinking about types of learning targets and matching assessment questions or tasks, and support students to create their own assessments. Teachers use criteria lists and rubrics to support quality work during the learning process and guide reflection and evaluation. Quality assessments are used to support assessment for and of learning.

A. Aligning Standards, Learning Targets, and Assessments

1. Prior to instruction, teachers determine what standards they will assess when teaching an expedition, project, or series of lessons.
2. Teachers use standards from national, state, district, and school sources as appropriate.
3. Teachers create long-term learning targets based on the standards. They identify a realistic number of long-term learning targets that are assessable in a given instructional/grading period.
4. Teachers develop a realistic number of supporting learning targets that name the discrete learning necessary for students to reach each long-term learning target.
5. Teachers identify assessments for each set of learning targets. They almost always develop the assessments/assessment tools before each chunk of instruction begins. They often use preassessments aligned to learning targets to inform instruction and differentiation.

B. Choosing Assessment Methods

1. Teachers match assessments of learning (summative assessments) to the type of learning target (knowledge, reasoning, skill). They design or select quality summative assessments to accurately gauge what students understand or can do.
2. Teachers support students in thinking metacognitively about the different types of learning targets when designing assessment tasks for one another (e.g., when crafting questions for a quiz about a book the class is reading, students attend to the difference between a knowledge-level question and a question that asks their peers to draw inferences about what they have read).
3. Teachers guide students in creating, critiquing, and revising their own assessments to use in class, considering what makes a quality assessment. This practice not only helps students learn the material, it also helps them see how assessment is a necessity in the learning process (e.g., when preparing presentations to teach their classmates, students create assessments for their peers to ensure that they learn the intended material).
4. Teachers plan for and implement assessment for learning strategies (formative assessment) to ensure that students receive sufficient opportunities to practice and make use of timely feedback before completing a summative assessment.
5. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods (e.g., quizzes, conceptual models, essays, performances, response journals).
6. Teachers track the results of these assessments for grading and reporting purposes.

C. Creating and Using Criteria Lists and Rubrics

1. Teachers create and use criteria lists or rubrics in conjunction with performance assessments (e.g., debate, play, essay, science lab, work of art) and some extended written responses (e.g., mathematical solutions and explanations, concept maps, short essays).
2. Teachers involve students in criteria list and rubric development associated with specific tasks so that students develop deep understanding of the criteria and levels of quality. Students analyze models and exemplars to aid in rubric development. They focus only on describing proficiency or above, not on describing low levels of quality.

Creating Quality Assessments (continued)

3. Teachers use criteria lists and rubrics throughout the instructional process: at the outset of instruction, to clarify the task, learning targets, and criteria for success; during the task, to help students revise their work; and after the task is complete, both to evaluate the product or performance and to engage students in reflection.
4. Teachers often collaborate to create and use common, school-wide criteria lists and rubrics in targeted areas.

Core Practice 23

Raising Achievement on Assessments of Learning

Assessments of learning (summative assessments) are part of a balanced system of assessment in Expeditionary Learning schools. Summative assessments fulfill the role of measuring student progress and reflecting the level of student learning at a particular point in time. The results of such assessments have a variety of uses, including informing teachers about the effectiveness of instruction and documenting achievement for purposes of grading, reporting, advancement, and graduation. EL seeks excellent student performance on standardized tests because their results determine opportunities for students and convey to the community, district, state, and other stakeholders one important measure of academic proficiency achieved by students. Teachers can best prepare students for standardized tests through ongoing, high-quality instruction that is explicitly aligned with assessed standards rather than through isolated test practice. Thus, when classroom and school-level assessments of learning are of high quality and purposefully planned, they help to both create a complete and accurate picture of student learning and prepare students for success on standardized tests.

A. Student Preparation and Readiness for Assessments of Learning

1. Teachers prepare students for academic and lifelong success by developing key cognitive strategies such as analysis, interpretation, problem solving, and reasoning.
2. Teachers scaffold instruction to build students' knowledge of content and skills, supporting students in identifying patterns and big ideas linked to guiding questions.
3. Teachers use formative assessment strategies to give students experience with summative assessment tasks and build their capacity to accurately self-assess.
4. Students have a clear understanding of expectations and take responsibility for learning by studying, asking questions, and seeking support.

B. Analyzing Assessment Data

1. Teachers align assessments with their curriculum and learning targets and have the year-end goal in mind.
2. Teachers immediately analyze and use assessment data to drive instruction. Assessment data results in deliberate differentiation to support students' learning.
3. Teachers collaboratively create common assessments and analyze data to identify patterns, establish goals, and inform lesson planning.
4. Students use assessment data to evaluate their own learning, address misunderstandings, determine readiness for next steps, and set longer-range goals with support from teachers.
5. Teachers use assessment data to check the effectiveness of instruction.

C. Interim Assessments

1. Teachers and school leaders create or select interim assessments—assessments that take place every 4-8 weeks and are closely aligned to college readiness standards and standardized tests—before the teaching begins. Teachers design lessons and instruction with the end goals in mind.
2. Teachers and school leaders analyze the quality of interim assessments vis-à-vis standardized tests to ensure that interim assessments meet or exceed the rigor of the state assessment.
3. School leaders support teachers in creating or selecting and analyzing interim assessments by providing professional development time devoted to this work.
4. Teachers and school leaders conduct diagnostic item analysis to inform instructional improvements (i.e., they analyze students' incorrect answers to best understand where misunderstandings and misconceptions lie).
5. Teachers and school leaders share interim assessment results with students, parents, and the school community.

D. Standardized Tests

1. Students have positive attitudes toward and exhibit self-efficacy about standardized tests.
2. To foster student motivation, the school helps families understand the purpose and value of standardized tests.
3. Teachers prepare students for standardized tests throughout the school year, not as an isolated event just prior to a testing situation.
4. Practice tests are used strategically for specific purposes—to help students learn how to best prepare for and take tests and analyze patterns of test performance. Students are then empowered to take charge of improving their own test performance based on understanding and adjusting personal habits and decisions.
5. Teachers help students analyze the formats used on standardized tests (e.g., writing to prompts, multiple-choice questions, showing thinking in math and science) and help them improve their ability to respond to these formats by applying strategies.
6. Teachers help students practice test-taking strategies (e.g., eliminating answers, using context clues).
7. Teachers develop the habits of scholarship needed to build stamina (e.g., time-management skills).
8. Teachers support students in identifying strategies to reduce test anxiety.

Core Practice 24

Communicating Student Achievement

Expeditionary Learning schools share information about student achievement in a wide variety of ways, most of which feature students as the key communicators. In this way, students are engaged throughout the assessment process. Students have individual responsibilities—they maintain a portfolio and discuss their learning during family conferences and passage presentations, and they participate collectively in communicating about achievement during public presentations of learning. EL schools implement standards-based grading because it clarifies expectations for students, families, and teachers, and separates academic outcomes from habits of scholarship. Students understand what they have learned and why. They can speak to their own strengths, struggles, goals, and processes of learning, and they are prepared for college success.

A. Grades

1. Teachers use a faculty grading guide that ensures school-wide uniformity in grading practices.
2. Grades are separated from habits of scholarship levels. Success in both areas is required for credit, promotion, and graduation.
3. Grades are used to communicate about skills and content understanding, not to motivate or punish.
4. Grades describe students' progress toward a set of long-term learning targets that students and families are aware of at the outset of instruction.
5. Teachers provide students with multiple opportunities to make and show progress toward long-term learning targets. Students understand grades not as subjective judgments of teachers but rather as documentation of how far they have progressed toward concrete learning targets.
6. Grades reflect a student's current level of proficiency with skills and content rather than an average. The most recent evidence takes precedence over older evidence.
7. Students and families understand the school's grading practices.

B. Communicating about Habits of Scholarship

1. Schools communicate the relationship between habits of scholarship and academic grades to students, families, and staff members.
2. Schools determine language to describe progress toward the habits of scholarship and a consistent system for collecting quality evidence about progress.
3. Schools report on student progress toward the habits of scholarship through structures that involve students (e.g., written reflections, student-led conferences).
4. Progress toward the habits of scholarship is reported separately from progress about academic achievement.

C. Progress Reports, Report Cards, and Transcripts

1. Progress toward specific learning targets (not just grades) forms the basis of communication about student learning.
2. Parents and students understand how to make meaning of progress reports, report cards, and transcripts. The link between grading policies and reporting practices is clear.
3. Schools have a succinct document that explains how a student's grades were derived and what they mean. This document accompanies student transcripts when they are sent to outside audiences (e.g., college admissions offices).

D. Exhibitions of Learning

1. Schools organize grade-level or school-wide events such as exhibition nights or formal performances/presentations to celebrate the learning of all students.
2. Families, community members, and school partners participate in exhibitions to act as an authentic audience, learn about the work of the students and the school as a whole, and honor student learning.

E. Student-Led Conferences

1. The school schedules time at least twice per year to engage students and their families in conferences in which students communicate their progress toward both academic learning targets and habits of scholarship.

2. The school engages families in the process by sharing expectations, schedules, and information in advance of the conferences. Families understand their role, the student's role, and the purpose of the conference.
3. The school creates structures to prepare students for conferences (e.g., assisting them in archiving and selecting work).
4. Teachers support students in articulating their progress and identifying areas for growth.
5. Students select expedition and project work to demonstrate mastery of learning targets. They complete self-assessments of their performance and share those with their families.
6. Students practice specific conference skills, such as eye contact, clear articulation of ideas, and presenting evidence to support statements.

F. Portfolios

1. Students archive and organize their work across subject areas using a system that has been agreed upon school-wide. Students then select specific work for student-led conferences, presentations of learning, and/or passages.
2. Students' portfolios demonstrate proficiency of content and skills over time. They also show students' growth and proficiency regarding habits of scholarship.
3. Portfolios include rubrics linked to learning targets for major projects and assignments.
4. Students' portfolios include multiple drafts, self-reflections, and feedback from teachers that show how their work has improved and how they have met the learning targets.

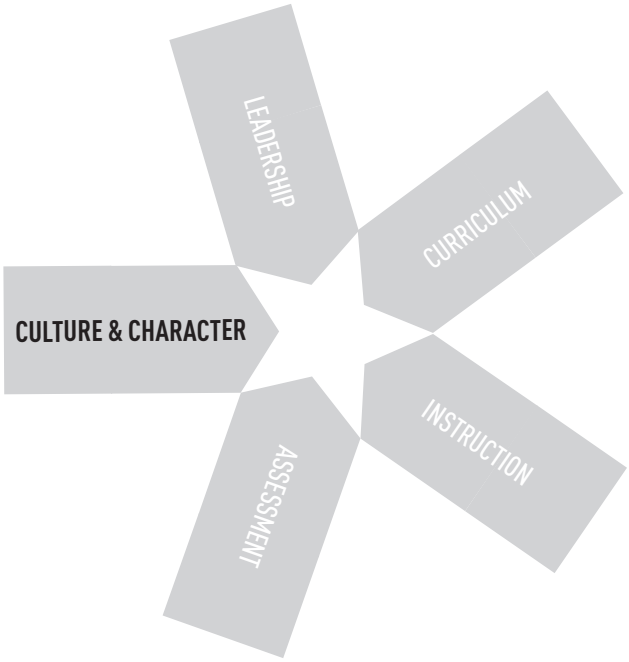
G. Passages

1. Passages (i.e., portfolio presentations, presentations of learning) require students to take part in traditions that confirm their readiness to move forward in all realms of achievement.
2. Passages may include students articulating their current levels of proficiency in core subjects, sharing exemplary work from different subject areas, sharing artistic, athletic, and technology accomplishments, outside of school and service learning contributions, and growth and proficiency with relational and performance character.
3. The school schedules specific time for passages (e.g., third, fifth, eighth, and tenth grades) for all students.
4. Students, with teacher support, analyze their own portfolios to identify quality evidence that demonstrates progress toward academic learning targets and habits of scholarship and readiness for passage.
5. Teachers support students in showcasing their progress and demonstrating their readiness for passage.
6. Teachers support students in practicing presentation skills, such as eye contact, clear articulation of ideas, use of technology, and presenting evidence to support their statements.

H. Graduation

1. Graduation is based on students meeting standards in both academics and habits of scholarship.
2. High schools align graduation content and skills standards with college entrance requirements.
3. Secondary schools provide all students with knowledge of and access to postsecondary opportunities, with the assumption that all students will be accepted into college.

Culture and Character



Expeditionary Learning schools build cultures of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness, where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. School structures and traditions such as crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated. Students and staff are supported to do better work and be better people than they thought possible.

Core Practices in This Section

- Building a Community of Learning
- Fostering Character
- Establishing Structures for Knowing Students Well
- Engaging Families and the Community in the Life of the School
- Creating Beautiful Spaces for Learning
- Promoting Adventure

Core Practice 25

Building a Community of Learning

The foundation of a successful Expeditionary Learning school is a community that brings out the best in students and staff. The school climate is characterized by safety, kindness, joy in learning, and positive leadership by staff and students. The school's mission encompasses academic success and compassionate character. The school celebrates both student academic growth and character development. Teachers and school leaders communicate clear expectations for student character and model those values in their own practice. Policies and practices encourage students to take responsibility for learning, to demonstrate empathy and caring, and to be stewards of the school.

A. Clear School-Wide Expectations

1. School-wide expectations for student character and behavior are founded in a commitment to learning and respectful community.
2. The school formally documents a set of character traits (i.e., a code of character) to which all students and staff members aspire. Those traits include both relational character (treating others well) and performance character (doing one's best), so that success as a good person and success as a scholar are joined. All school members—students and staff—are held accountable for upholding the code of character.
3. School faculty members explicitly teach and refer to the character traits in classrooms. They are used daily to acknowledge positive or challenging behaviors. Teachers support students to make connections between character and their academic success.
4. The school establishes policies and procedures that celebrate character traits and hold students accountable to them. Character achievement is identified in progress reports, disciplinary protocols, awards, and public acknowledgments.
5. When students or teachers report student progress, learning targets for academic growth are separate from learning targets for character. Both are important.
6. Adults model the character traits with students and in their professional relationships.
7. The character traits are practiced in the lunchroom, in the halls, during recess, before and after school, and whenever students represent the school in the community.

B. Traditions

1. A common set of EL traditions is used in whole-school settings and in classrooms (e.g., community meetings, crew, team-building activities) to foster character.
2. The school customizes EL traditions, developing its own unique traditions that express the school's vision of a positive community that is focused on learning.
3. Students play an active role in maintaining school traditions and acting as leaders (e.g., being ambassadors for visitors, leading meetings, maintaining the building, mentoring younger children, leading morning announcements).
4. School spaces accommodate various traditions and classroom configurations (e.g., crew circles, collaborative groups, community meetings).

C. A Climate of Learning

1. Adults act as models of lifelong learning for students. Adult learning is visibly celebrated (e.g., in community meetings, in documentation panels of professional development).
2. Multiple forms of intelligence and learning profiles are recognized and cultivated (e.g., mathematical, linguistic, kinesthetic).
3. The climate of learning is inclusive of all school members. Students and staff with different cultural backgrounds or different learning needs are treated with respect.
4. School discipline is framed in terms of self-discipline and becoming a self-directed learner.
5. Student misbehavior is treated as a learning opportunity for both students and teachers. Teachers probe for causes of misbehavior or conflict, and consequences are logical, consistent, and clearly communicated.
6. Classroom norms, established by teachers and students, reinforce the school character traits and establish classroom cultures focused on responsibility for learning, compassionate behavior, and positive student leadership.

Core Practice 26

Fostering Character

Expeditionary Learning defines character as having two facets—relational character and performance character. Relational character skills are essential for positive collaboration, ethical interaction, appropriate participation, and personal responsibility for actions (e.g., kindness, honesty, integrity). Performance character skills (habits of scholarship) are needed to obtain a standard of excellence in academic or real-world endeavors (e.g., organization, perseverance, craftsmanship). Both types of character are essential for success in school and in life. Fostering character is not an add-on in EL schools—it is embedded in all aspects of the school culture and permeates academic studies. Character is a focus all day long. Academic learning in EL schools is seen not as an end to itself, but rather in service of preparing students and adults to contribute to a better world. Therefore, all learning is character-based. Students are on a mission to do *good work*: work that is good in quality, good for the soul, and good for the world.

A. Relational Character

1. The school's character traits (i.e., code of character) include relational character traits (e.g., kindness, honesty, integrity) and performance character (e.g., organization, perseverance, craftsmanship).
2. The school community demands respect for all. Proactive traditions are implemented consistently to avert bullying and discrimination (e.g., crew discussions, literature studies, historical case studies).
3. Students participate in service learning linked to the curriculum to foster relational character.
4. Teachers explicitly plan opportunities to develop relational character through collaborative work in learning expeditions, projects, crew, and community-building activities.
5. Teachers explicitly teach conflict resolution, problem-solving, and personal communication skills to support students in collaboration.
6. Crew meetings focus deeply and continuously on kind, respectful behavior.
7. Teachers incorporate local issues and global awareness into learning expeditions, projects, and crew to build relational character.
8. Relational character is addressed throughout the day, across classrooms and content areas, and in professional conversations. It is seen not as time away from learning, but as an investment in student achievement.

B. Performance Character (Habits of Scholarship)

1. The school's character traits (i.e., code of character) include relational character traits (e.g., kindness, honesty, integrity), and performance character (e.g., organization, perseverance, craftsmanship).
2. The school articulates its performance character traits by defining habits of scholarship (sometimes called habits of work, habits of mind, or habits of learning).
3. Teachers name specific, developmentally appropriate behaviors associated with the habits of scholarship as learning targets (e.g., "I can revise my work to achieve high-quality products") for which students are held accountable.
4. Teachers intentionally teach habits of scholarship.
5. Habits of scholarship are evident in school structures and documents (e.g., portfolios, school handbooks).
6. Students can articulate the link between habits of scholarship and future success in school, career, and life.
7. Habits of scholarship are assessed and communicated separately from academic content and skills mastery in student progress reports.
8. The school celebrates students who exhibit strong habits of scholarship (e.g., through affirmations, charts, honor rolls, awards, privileges).

Core Practice 27

Establishing Structures for Knowing Students Well

An Expeditionary Learning school culture is planned for, developed, and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers. Students in EL schools are known well and supported by adults. The structure of crew allows for relationship building, academic progress monitoring, and character development. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and with their crew leader. Crew leaders strategically plan crew to address and assess these multiple goals. Multi-year relationships are also forged in other school structures (e.g., multi-age classrooms, looping) to ensure that students' needs are met and individual strengths are discovered. Outside of school, mentoring, internships, and apprenticeships foster relationships between students and community members.

A. Crew in Elementary Classrooms

1. Crew meetings, typically involving the whole class, are held at the beginning of the day (often referred to as "morning meeting") and frequently at the end of the day as well.
2. As crew leaders, teachers develop learning targets and instructional plans to support relational and performance character development, literacy, portfolio work, adventure, service learning, and school-wide concerns.
3. Crew allows students and teachers to forge productive relationships over time to support their achievement.
4. Crew provides a time to focus on relationship building among students and between adults and students (e.g., through greetings, personal sharing, classroom discussions).
5. Crew provides a check-in on how the class is doing in terms of character and academic progress, and how well individuals are doing. If there are problems with courtesy, behavior, tolerance, or responsibility in the group, those problems are often addressed in this setting.
6. Crew provides an opportunity to help students define what it means to be an EL school (e.g., commitment to positive character, exploration of the design principles, the concept of "crew, not passengers").
7. Crew leaders set the tone for high achievement by engaging students in collaboration and competition in a joyful, supportive environment (e.g., through the use of cooperative and problem-solving games).
8. Whenever possible, students in crew sit in a circle so they can see each other, participate actively in discussion, and hold each other accountable for high standards of character.
9. Crew leaders form relationships with parents, monitor academic progress, and lead interventions.

B. Crew in Secondary Classrooms

1. Crew (similar to Advisory in some schools) meets on a consistent basis, multiple times every week, every day if possible.
2. Crew is not homeroom. By contrast, crew sizes are small (ideally 8-16 students) and allow significant meeting time (20-60 minutes), and students are active participants in the class.
3. To keep crew sizes small, staff beyond classroom teachers are trained and supported to be crew leaders.
4. Crew leaders develop learning targets and instructional plans to address relational and performance character development, literacy, portfolio work, adventure, service, school-wide concerns, and postsecondary readiness.
5. Crew allows students and teachers to forge productive relationships over time to support their achievement. To this end, crew composition is structured in the way the school feels works best in its culture (i.e., whether the crew stays together over multiple years, whether the crew is made up of students who are all in the same grade or from different grades, whether the same crew leader stays for all the years, or if a college specialist leader is used for junior and senior high school years).
6. Crew provides a time to focus on relationship building among students and between adults and students (e.g., greetings, personal sharing, classroom discussions).

7. Crew provides a check-in on how the class is doing in terms of character and academic progress, and how well individuals are doing. If there are problems with courtesy, behavior, tolerance, or responsibility in the group, those problems are often addressed in this setting.
8. Crew provides an opportunity to help students define what it means to be an EL school (e.g., commitment to positive character, exploration of the design principles, the concept of "crew, not passengers").
9. Whenever possible, students in crew sit in a circle so they can see each other, participate actively in discussion, and hold each other accountable for high standards of character.
10. Crew leaders set the tone for high achievement by engaging students in collaboration and competition in a joyful, supportive environment.
11. Crew leaders form relationships with parents, monitor academic progress, lead interventions, and ensure readiness for graduation.
12. Crew leaders ensure that all their students know about and have access to demanding academic courses, extracurricular activities, academic and social supports, and the best sequence of classes for college placement.
13. Crew is often used as a setting to prepare for student-led conferences, portfolio reflection and presentations, and school exhibition preparation.
14. For high school students, crew is often the setting for college pathway preparation (e.g., college visits, college research, applications, financial forms, interview preparation).

C. Building Relationships

1. The school ensures that every student is known well by at least one adult who serves as an advocate for the student's academic and social progress.
2. Teachers use a variety of structures and strategies to get to know students well (e.g., crew time, flexible grouping, regular check-ins).
3. The school celebrates the contributions of members of the learning community through community meetings.
4. Multi-year connections between students and adults are created through looping, multi-age classrooms, and/or mentoring or crew relationships that last more than one year.

D. Mentoring, Internships, and Apprenticeships

1. When appropriate and feasible, older students are paired with younger students for orientation, tutoring, and mentoring.
2. Mentorships and internships outside the school foster relationships between students and community members.
3. Mentors provide additional support to secondary students.
4. Internships help high school students build relationships with adults in the community, accumulate work experience, and learn about job and career opportunities.
5. Apprenticeships create opportunities for students to master a craft or a discipline.

Core Practice 28

Engaging Families and the Community in the Life of the School

Expeditionary Learning families are key partners in the education of their children. Students and staff in EL schools make families welcome, know them well, and engage them actively in the life of the school. EL schools explicitly recognize that families care about their children's education, bring strengths, and add value to the community. Regular communication and multiple opportunities for participation encourage families to be strong partners in their childrens' learning. In addition, schools build and sustain partnerships with community organizations and cultural institutions.

A. Welcoming Visitors

1. Students actively welcome visitors to the school, using established practices and norms. When possible, students share products and portfolios of their work with guests.
2. Students are capable ambassadors for the school within and outside of the building.
3. Student-led tours of the school are not just physical tours to point out the rooms. They are tours of learning, where the student work on the walls and in classrooms is described and where the school's mission and code of character are explained.
4. School leaders, teachers, and students have traditions for recognizing the contributions of outside experts and volunteers.

B. Building Family Relationships

1. All families are encouraged and supported to participate in school events through multiple strategies (e.g., scheduling events outside of the school day, assisting with transportation, providing translators).
2. School leaders collect data on family participation and make action plans to ensure maximum involvement of families.
3. School leaders and teachers learn about and respect the cultures, backgrounds, and values of their students' families.

C. Communication with Families

1. The faculty begins the school year by establishing a pattern of positive, regular communication with families.
2. School leaders and teachers create an annual calendar of events that involves families in a variety of ways.
3. A range of publications and formats is used to ensure that all families understand the school's policies, curriculum, approaches to instruction, and assessment system.
4. Teachers communicate regularly with families about students' progress and accomplishments.
5. Student-led conferences are supported as a cornerstone school structure. Participation of all families is expected and supported. Conferences are well organized and students are well prepared.
6. School leaders and teachers develop strategies, such as enrollment interviews, surveys, or portfolio conferences, to learn about families and involve them in students' learning.
7. The school establishes forums that guarantee respectful communication and the opportunity for diverse perspectives to be heard.

D. Participation in the School

1. The school has a variety of ways for families to participate in the school community (e.g., governance, tutoring, classroom experts, portfolio panelists).
2. Interactive family education nights are held throughout the year (e.g., an open house to explain the year's expeditions, workshops to show how students are learning in the various disciplines).
3. Exhibitions of student learning are regularly held at the school, showcasing the work of students and their reflections as learners for families and community members.

E. Building Community Partnerships

1. School leaders and teachers build and sustain relationships with community organizations and cultural institutions.
2. School leaders develop a broad constituency within the community to advocate for the school.
3. The school embraces its responsibility as a member of and contributor to the surrounding community.

Core Practice 29

Creating Beautiful Spaces for Learning

In Expeditionary Learning schools, the physical space of the school reflects and supports the learning environment. When people enter the school, they are immediately aware that they are in a place that celebrates learning. The walls of the school are filled with high-quality student work showcased in common spaces and classrooms. Student work is displayed in a way that honors the work, giving parts of the school a museum quality that inspires student and community pride. Work is often supported by explanatory text that includes student voice and reflection. The mission of the school is evident to guests, students, and teachers in every hallway. Student achievement—academic, artistic, athletic, and related to character and citizenship—is honored in public spaces. Students themselves are leaders in caring for common spaces within the school and on the school grounds, helping to make and keep the school as beautiful as possible.

A. Physical Environment

1. School leaders, teachers, and students ensure that classrooms and common spaces are clean and maintained with care and pride. Whenever possible, students are leaders in this work.
2. The primary entryways for the school are welcoming and beautiful, with displays that send a clear message that the school is a place of high achievement and quality student work. Signage makes the values and mission of the school clear to all, and communicates the school's membership in the EL network.
3. High-quality student work, rather than commercial posters and signs, is displayed in classrooms and common spaces. Student work is supported with text that makes clear what students learned.
4. As much as possible, classrooms are rich with resources for student learning (e.g., books, technology, manipulatives, art supplies, science equipment, models, natural specimens).
5. Classrooms are set up to facilitate student thinking, independence, and care for materials. Supplies are well-organized and labeled; expectations, directions, schedules, and protocols are posted; and walls feature artisically composed displays of the current academic work of the class as well as anchor charts representing key learning.
6. Students take primary responsibility for the care of classroom resources. Everything, especially live plants and animals, is treated with great respect and concern.
7. Items from the natural world (e.g., plants, rocks and minerals, bones, aquariums and terrariums with live animals) are displayed and cared for as they would be in a museum.
8. Student achievement in multiple realms is celebrated throughout the building. Achievement in academics, character, arts, service learning, and sports are showcased.
9. Outdoor spaces (e.g., gardens, courtyards) are cared for and invite teachers and students to connect the natural world to their classroom learning.

B. Documenting Student Learning

1. Traditional bulletin boards are replaced with artful display boards created by teachers and students that feature explanatory text. Almost always, the work of all students is featured, not just that of a select few, compelling all students to create work of quality.
2. In addition to display boards, the school features museum-style documentation panels. Documentation panels explain student learning through an artistic arrangement of student work, explanatory text, tasks, scoring guides, photographs, quotes from students and teachers, rough and final draft student work, and student and teacher reflections.
3. Teachers and students use anchor charts and concept maps to document learning during lessons. These charts and maps are posted in the classroom to reinforce understanding and provoke thinking.

Core Practice 30

Promoting Adventure

A clear expression of Expeditionary Learning's roots in Outward Bound, the spirit and experience of adventure permeates EL schools. It helps to create the student engagement and focus on character that distinguishes the EL experience. Adventure can be any physical, artistic, or intellectual experience that involves risk, challenge, and discovery. Every adventure has a strong element of entering the unknown and not being certain of the outcome. EL promotes the kind of adventures that create opportunities for leadership and collaboration as groups of students and teachers face challenges together. Together, students and adults discover they can do more than they thought was possible, and find aspects of themselves that they didn't know were there.

Reflection is a vital component of such adventures, so that each experience is a rich opportunity for learning about oneself, one's peers, and the world. Teachers take care when planning adventures to ensure physical and emotional safety as they promote risk-taking and courageous action.

A. The Role of Adventure

1. Physical, intellectual, and artistic adventure is embedded in the school's traditions and rites of passage, building community and providing opportunity for leadership and teamwork.
2. When possible, school leaders and teachers experience outdoor adventure and investigate the natural world through fieldwork, Outward Bound courses, or school-organized wilderness and nature experiences.
3. Students have multiple opportunities to reflect and learn from successes and challenges in their physical, intellectual, and artistic adventures.

B. Integrating Adventure

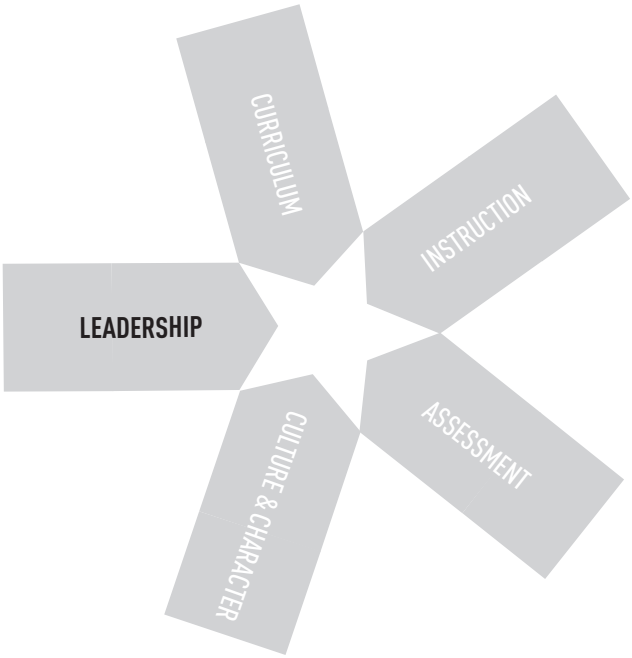
1. Students engage in intellectual adventure through learning expeditions, projects, presentations, and performances, which motivate them to conduct original research, complete real-world work, collaborate with professionals, take on multiple perspectives, defend positions, and take risks in learning.
2. When students leave the building for fieldwork, whether in the natural world or in a city environment, it is expected and purposeful that some students and teachers will be stretched beyond their comfort zone. It is in this environment—taking risks with thoughtful support—that the most powerful learning often takes place.
3. Within the school building, opportunities for students to lead or be a part of new school initiatives, structures (e.g., leadership teams, peer mediation groups), and performances often stretch students beyond their comfort zone and provide opportunities for them to surprise themselves with their capabilities.
4. Students reflect on their successes, challenges, and personal growth in physical, intellectual, and artistic adventure (e.g., risk-taking, courage, perseverance).
5. Teachers explicitly connect adventure experiences to the school's character expectations and habits of scholarship. Such experiences include projects, presentations, performances, fieldwork, collaborative and problem-solving games, Outward Bound courses, outdoor challenges, and team and individual sports.

C. Ensuring Safety

1. The school has policies and protocols to ensure that physical education classes, physical adventure programming, and fieldwork are safe.
2. Teachers use norms, character expectations, and habits of scholarship, as well as clear structures and strategies for teaching collaborative skills and conflict resolution, to ensure emotional safety and to promote courage and risk-taking in intellectual adventure.

Leadership

Expeditionary Learning school leaders build a cohesive school vision focused on student achievement and continuous improvement, and they align all activities in the school to that vision. Leaders use data wisely, boldly shape school structures to best meet student needs, celebrate joy in learning, and build a school-wide culture of trust and collaboration. Leadership in EL schools goes beyond a single person or team—it is a role and expectation for all.



Core Practices in This Section

- Fostering a School Vision and Strategy
- Structuring Time to Support the Vision
- Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for Student Achievement
- Using Data to Drive Instruction
- Cultivating a Positive School Culture
- Leading Professional Learning
- Promoting Shared Leadership
- Shaping School Operations to Elevate Student Achievement

Core Practice 31

Fostering a School Vision and Strategy

A cohesive, clear vision for teaching and learning aligns all aspects of an Expeditionary Learning school—curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture and character, and leadership—to student learning. This vision transforms schools into purposeful places of learning where both students and teachers are fully engaged, working together toward a common vision. Reflection and data analysis ensure strategic, continuous improvement. EL school leaders unite their staff and broader communities around an inspirational vision of student success. The school's vision combines academic scholarship with active citizenship for a better world.

A. Creating, Supporting, and Communicating School Vision and Strategy

1. School leaders create and bring to life a shared vision for school success centered on rigorous academics, effective instruction, and an empowering school culture. Student achievement is at the heart of the vision.
2. School leaders clearly articulate how implementing the EL design principles and core practices helps the school achieve its vision.
3. School leaders align school policies, resources, structures, decision-making processes, and other leadership actions with the vision.
4. School leaders identify and remove impediments from the path to achieving the vision.
5. School leaders continuously champion the vision to all stakeholders through formal communications, interpersonal relationships, and artifacts within the school environment.
6. School leaders develop broad support within the community to advocate for the school and its vision.
7. School leaders actively monitor progress toward achieving the vision and share progress with all stakeholders to interpret findings and leverage change.

B. Planning for Improvement

1. School leaders ensure that time is set aside and used for school improvement planning.
2. School leaders develop a clearly articulated EL work plan—usually a subset of a school improvement plan—that aligns a few prioritized goals, objectives, strategies, and evidence of attainment.
3. School leaders solicit input on the work plan from staff and other partners, including EL staff.
4. School leaders allocate time, funds, and staff in order to achieve school improvement and work plan goals.
5. School leaders partner with EL to provide organized, strategic professional development designed to meet work plan goals.
6. School leaders ensure that all initiatives are aligned with the prioritized goals, objectives, and strategies.

C. Using Data to Set Goals and Monitor Progress

1. Teachers and school leaders articulate various levels of goals—from grade-level to individual student goals that are aligned with school-wide improvement goals.
2. School improvement and work plans are regularly monitored, and data collection (both quantitative and qualitative) related to annual goals is ongoing.
3. School leaders create structures for tracking and celebrating progress toward goals using data walls and data dashboards, which allow teachers and students to track progress on an ongoing basis.

D. Assessing Annual Progress

1. School leaders establish and communicate a process to track goals and communicate the impact that improvement efforts have on student achievement, engagement, and character development.
2. School leaders participate in the annual EL Implementation Review and use feedback from it, along with other sources of data, to assess growth and inform the creation of future work plan and school improvement goals.
3. School leaders and their support staff maintain and share data in order for EL to monitor performance and improve network-wide practices.

Core Practice 32

Structuring Time to Support the Vision

Expeditionary Learning schools use time flexibly and variably to respond to the needs of students and the priorities of the school. While each school is unique, there are key features that all EL schools have in common: extended blocks of class time, a commitment to integration of the disciplines, opportunities for student research and contribution beyond the school walls, challenging curriculum and high expectations for every student, and common planning time for teachers. The schedule accommodates project work, fieldwork, service learning, community meetings, exhibitions of learning, and flexible groupings of students. Time is scheduled during the school year and summer for whole-school professional development and collaboration across grade levels and subject areas.

A. Designing the School Schedule

1. School leaders build a schedule to meet identified needs of students as well as priorities and goals of the school.
2. School leaders customize the school calendar and schedule to challenge and support students of all levels. This may include "Intensive" periods between quarters, trimesters, or semesters that provide extra support for students not meeting learning targets and elective enrichment for those meeting targets. It may also include before- or after-school activities to challenge and/or support students.
3. School leaders approach scheduling comprehensively, taking into consideration before- and after-school programs and collaboration with other schools as well as time in class.
4. The schedule provides time for teachers to work collaboratively and for students to work collaboratively.
5. The schedule allows for uninterrupted blocks of time that foster in-depth learning.
6. The schedule facilitates flexible groupings of students while allowing all students access to a challenging, college-ready curriculum and maximizing inclusion for all. Any grouping for remediation is temporary and does not, by design, limit future opportunities or create differing levels of expectation.
7. The schedule is flexible to allow for fieldwork and service learning opportunities.
8. Students with disabilities and English language learners are taught in regular education classrooms to the greatest extent possible.

B. Creating Time for Staff Collaboration and Learning

1. School leaders allocate resources, time, and money to support intensive professional development during school breaks.
2. The school develops a calendar to guarantee time (e.g., early release days, days between terms) and meeting structures (e.g., whole staff, teaching teams, individual coaching) for on-site professional development.
3. The schedule provides uninterrupted time for individual teacher preparation and planning, team or grade-level planning, and meetings of the whole staff.
4. Teachers use planning time for designing curriculum, improving instruction and assessment practices, and reflecting on and refining aspects of school culture.
5. School leaders and teachers employ structures for productive use of common planning time, including norms, agendas, minutes, roles for facilitation and participation, and plans for follow-through.

Core Practice 33

Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for Student Achievement

School leaders and teachers in Expeditionary Learning schools ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are tightly aligned to high standards for student achievement, including required district frameworks. School leaders, in coordination with EL school designers, facilitate a collaborative process for curriculum mapping that includes a comprehensive review of current practices, careful sequencing and prioritization of content, vertical alignment across grade levels, and opportunities for interdisciplinary connections. Leaders support the creation of assessment plans for all curriculum units that identify formative and summative assessments associated with standards-based learning targets. School leaders carefully monitor implementation of agreed-upon curriculum, instruction, and assessment through frequent classroom visits and feedback to teachers.

A. Adopting Comprehensive Standards

1. School leaders adopt academic standards based on state standards and college and career readiness. They work from these standards to develop curriculum maps, using data to determine which standards are most strategic for student success and are of the greatest enduring value within particular disciplines.
2. School leaders guide the adoption of school-wide character expectations/habits of scholarship aligned with college readiness.
3. School leaders create timelines and transition plans as necessary when adopting new standards.

B. Mapping Curriculum

1. School leaders establish a process for creating and reviewing skill and content maps.
2. Skill and content maps reflect the importance of key standards.
3. School leaders and teachers develop and adhere to curriculum maps to align skills, concepts, and content across grade levels, to ensure appropriate repetition of key standards, and to eliminate any gaps or unnecessary redundancies.

C. Supporting Planning, Instruction, and Assessment

1. School leaders provide time and professional development support for teachers to create instructional plans, including expedition overviews, project plans, and lesson plans.
2. School leaders support teachers in developing strategic assessment plans aligned with curriculum maps.
3. School leaders review teachers' plans, provide feedback as appropriate, and/or create opportunities for colleagues to review and critique each other's plans for rigor, alignment, and relevance.
4. School leaders oversee the creation or selection of high-quality interim assessments that are aligned with the school's curriculum.

D. Providing Support and Accountability

1. School leaders support and hold teachers accountable for implementing agreed-upon curricula.
2. School leaders regularly review learning targets, classroom assessments, student achievement data, and other indicators of practice to assess the alignment, rigor, and relevance of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
3. School leaders celebrate examples of strong student achievement, curricular alignment, rigor, and relevance and share these examples with others to replicate successful practice.
4. School leaders invest in and ensure that teachers have access to high-quality instructional materials and resources aligned to school standards and curriculum.
5. School leaders invest in and ensure that teachers have access to and use high-quality assessment tools aligned to school standards and standardized tests.

Core Practice 34

Using Data to Drive Instruction

Teachers and school leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools collect and analyze data to understand student achievement, assess teaching practices, and make informed decisions about instruction. Data inquiry teams analyze and disaggregate various data to determine patterns of performance. These teams emphasize collaborative inquiry as the keystone for productive data use. They use multiple sources of data, including and going beyond test scores (e.g., classroom assessments, student work, student engagement indicators). EL schools invest in the capacity of every teacher to access, understand, and use data effectively.

A. Fostering a Data Culture

1. School leaders establish and articulate a clear, consistent vision for data use across the school and develop organizational structures (e.g., data inquiry teams) and faculty norms consistent with that vision.
2. School leaders consistently model data use and data-based decision-making.
3. Teachers and school leaders demonstrate a belief in the efficacy of using data to improve teaching and learning.
4. Teachers and school leaders demonstrate a commitment to "no blame" collaboration coupled with shared accountability for results.
5. School leaders empower teachers to collaboratively analyze data and to make critical data-based decisions.
6. Teachers and school leaders select and utilize appropriate technology to support data collection so that they have access to data in formats that are easy to interpret, analyze, and act upon.
7. Teachers and school leaders participate in ongoing professional development to build their capacity to effectively analyze multiple types of data and properly interpret results.
8. School leaders support collection and analysis of high-quality data from multiple sources.
   a. Data about student performance may be drawn from the following:
      i. School progress reports
      ii. Standardized tests (local, state, and national)
      iii. Performance assessments
      iv. Student work
      v. Classroom observations
      vi. Student presentations of learning
      vii. Post-graduation performance indicators (e.g., college acceptance, persistence, success)
   b. Data about student character and school-wide culture may be drawn from the following:
      i. School surveys
      ii. Attendance, attrition, promotion, and graduation records
      iii. Discipline records
      iv. Student engagement and motivation measures
      v. Habits of scholarships/character portions of progress reports
      vi. Classroom observations
      vii. Student presentations

B. Developing Data Inquiry Teams

1. Grade-level teams and/or academic departments form data inquiry teams. Every teacher in the school participates in a data inquiry team. These teams regularly collaborate to examine data from formative and summative assessments.
2. Data inquiry teams conduct item-level and standard-level analysis for individual students, subgroups, and classes.
3. Data inquiry teams create and monitor action plans based on their analysis of student data. These action plans include steps that all teachers will take to support increased student achievement (e.g., reteaching, tuning of curriculum, academic interventions).
4. Interim assessments are administered by teachers and analyzed by data inquiry teams.

C. Engaging Students with Data

1. Teachers engage students in regular data-based conversations about progress toward learning targets in academics and character.

2. Students use their classwork as a data source, analyzing strengths, weaknesses, and patterns to improve their work.
3. Students track their progress on interim assessments, analyze their errors for patterns, and describe what data tells them about their current level of performance.
4. Students use data to set goals and reflect on their progress over time. They incorporate data analysis into student-led conferences.

D. Using Data to Ensure Equity

1. School leaders and teachers disaggregate and study achievement patterns by gender and race, and by socioeconomic, English language learner, and special education status.
2. Teachers know the achievement patterns of subgroups of students in their classrooms and of subgroups in the school as a whole.
3. School leaders and teachers use data to monitor and address achievement gaps.

Core Practice 35

Cultivating a Positive School Culture

All staff members in Expeditionary Learning schools are part of a community of learners. They work together on behalf of students to improve the school's program, share expertise, build knowledge in their disciplines, and model collaborative learning. Staff culture is characterized by trust and respectful collegiality. Teachers focus on solutions free of judgment, blame, and defensiveness and support each other in improving their practice. School leaders, teachers, and students join together to maintain a school culture characterized by self-discipline, compassion, collaboration, and joy in learning.

A. Modeling an Expeditionary Learning School Culture

1. School leaders champion a positive student culture school-wide. They devote time and attention to developing and maintaining traditions, systems, and structures necessary to support school culture.
2. School leaders celebrate and define the values of EL through their daily words and actions, displays and materials related to the school vision, and community meetings and public events.
3. School leaders model and promote EL traditions such as opening readings, team-building activities, and staff and student recognition for achievement and acts of character to build and sustain both staff culture and whole-school culture.
4. All staff members take responsibility for all students, not just the ones they interact with regularly, and act proactively to ensure that the school's code of character is demonstrated in hallways and common spaces, and during school-sponsored events off the school grounds.
5. All staff members model the school's code of character in their words and actions.
6. All staff members frame and address issues related to student discipline constructively, in line with the EL commitment to fostering a strong school culture and individual student character.
7. All staff members believe in all kids, appreciate diversity, and apply a problem-solving orientation. They always discuss students and their families respectfully.

B. Building a Professional Culture of Learning

1. School leaders model and actively foster the critical attributes of trust necessary for achievement: respect, integrity, competence, and personal regard for others.
2. School leaders intentionally model effective instructional practices in staff meetings, professional development, and team meetings.
3. School leaders ensure that new teachers have strong mentoring and professional development suited to their needs.
4. School leaders establish and maintain structures such as mentoring, teaming, and peer observation to build trust and promote professional growth.
5. School leaders reflect regularly on their own progress toward personal goals and toward addressing school goals, modeling for staff and students an ethic of self-improvement.
6. All staff members in the school are themselves learners, willing to implement and master new practices and model learning for students.

C. Promoting Effective Collaboration

1. School leaders and staff establish norms for working together. They build systems that compel and support the group to adhere to those norms in all settings (e.g., protocols, check-ins, reflections).
2. School leaders use protocols that foster productive, collaborative inquiry and conversations focused on teaching and learning, including working collectively to examine and evaluate instructional plans, assessment plans, student work, and data.

Cultivating a Positive School Culture (continued)

3. Through statements, structures, and actions, school leaders regularly reinforce the notion that trust in one another is a foundation for success.
4. School leaders support teachers to expand their repertoire of practices by drawing on the strengths of colleagues in other disciplines.
5. School leaders cultivate shared ownership of successes, challenges, and change initiatives.

Core Practice 36

Leading Professional Learning

School leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools focus on improving student achievement by developing quality teachers. School leaders establish and communicate high expectations. They align professional development, feedback, and coaching with formal evaluation systems in order to promote the professional growth of every teacher and ensure school-wide excellence.

A. Leading Change

1. School leaders assume primary responsibility for increasing student achievement, implementing the EL model, and coordinating on-site professional development aligned with the school's work plan.
2. School leaders model being "lead learners" by participating in on-site and off-site professional development offered by EL as needed to ensure the success of the school.
3. School leaders continue to develop their own knowledge and skills in effective leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school culture.

B. Recruiting and Hiring Teachers

1. School leaders reach beyond the traditional applicant pool to proactively recruit and select teachers who demonstrate an alignment with the school's vision and the EL model through their professional experience, written application materials and interview process.
2. School leaders recruit and select teachers who display a passion for raising student achievement, a belief in every student's capacity for leadership and critical thinking, and the ability to form strong relationships with students and their families.
3. School leaders intentionally seek innovative, creative thinkers and cultivate a faculty with diverse perspectives and backgrounds while also building a cohesive team that is unselfishly committed to the common vision and mission of the school.
4. School leaders use clear protocols and processes to hire teachers and other school staff. They involve other faculty members (and sometimes students, parents and/or community partners) through hiring committees, group interview processes and other structures.
5. School leaders require finalists for positions to demonstrate their proficiency with best practices (e.g., presenting sample curricula, facilitating a lesson with students or adults, sharing a portfolio of their work with students).

C. Setting Clear Expectations for Staff Roles and Responsibilities

1. School leaders establish and maintain clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for all positions in the organization in order to implement the vision and goals of the school.
2. School leaders allocate staff members tactically and flexibly to best meet student needs.
3. Organizational charts communicate relationships and clarify supervision responsibilities.
4. Job descriptions, performance expectations, and evaluation processes align to identify the professional knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the school's vision.
5. School leaders ensure competency (e.g., fulfillment of each individual's formal responsibilities) to build trust and achieve the vision.

D. Supporting Professional Growth

1. School and district leaders analyze budgets to maximize resource allocation for professional development.
2. School leaders ensure a high level of staff participation in on-site and off-site professional development.
3. School leaders align professional development with the goals and targets identified in the work plan.
4. School leaders provide the necessary resources to develop every teacher's content knowledge and instructional repertoire, ensuring school-wide excellence.
5. School leaders support inquiry-based staff development approaches such as study groups, coaching, and structured observations to help teachers focus on the relationship between student learning and instructional and assessment practices.

6. School leaders actively support building-based coaches and instructional guides. Leaders attend to coaches' learning and development through frequent communication, direct supervision, and explicit guidance regarding professional growth.
7. School leaders reinforce and institutionalize the implementation of EL practices through observation, coaching, and evaluation processes.
8. Staff members who demonstrate a high level of success and engagement with the EL model share their expertise with the greater network.

E. Providing Frequent Descriptive Feedback

1. Learning Walks
   a. Teams of school leaders and teachers regularly conduct learning walks or other forms of protocol-driven "walkthroughs" in order to discuss and define the qualities of effective instruction and to identify patterns of instructional strengths and areas for improvement across classrooms.
   b. School leaders and teachers identify areas of focus for learning walks connected to school goals.
   c. School leaders and teachers provide timely and specific written feedback to the whole staff focused on the observed patterns of practice.
2. Mini-Observations
   a. Principals and other school leaders supplement formal observations with shorter, targeted mini-observations.
   b. Mini-observations may be set up as lower-stakes visits, focused on descriptive feedback, as opposed to evaluative feedback. When used as part of a formal evaluation, these observations are linked to criteria and/or rubrics used in formal evaluation processes.
   c. Mini-observations result in immediate feedback to teachers focused on instructional priorities and school goals.

F. Coaching Teachers

1. Coaching is linked to the school's improvement priorities and a teacher's instructional priorities.
2. Instructional coaching is focused on student achievement and includes data collection.
3. All teachers, whether one-on-one or in small groups, engage in nonevaluative coaching cycles with instructional coaches and/or EL school designers. Sustainable coaching is grounded by school-wide structures and systems.
4. Instructional coaching cycles include goal setting, learning, observation and data collection, and reflection.

G. Using Data to Inform Coaching and Supervision

1. School leaders and coaches meet individually with teachers to discuss data trends in their classrooms. These conversations are designed to be safe and supportive and are based on data from interim assessments, state tests, and teacher-designed tasks.
2. School leaders and teachers discuss specific students and assessment tasks to identify successes and challenges.
3. School leaders and coaches use these conversations to identify methods of support and professional development actions to encourage individual teacher growth.
4. School leaders and teachers disaggregate data by teacher and program to study patterns of teacher and program performance, with proper cautions regarding simplistic assumptions of causality.

H. Evaluating Teachers

1. To the greatest extent possible, the evaluation tool prioritizes student achievement and growth and includes measures that encompass EL's expanded vision of student achievement.
2. To the greatest extent possible, the evaluation tool includes specific criteria for teacher performance aligned with the EL model.
3. School leaders align observations, data analysis, and feedback with evaluation tools to support teacher growth and provide assessment for learning.
4. School leaders identify opportunities for expanded teacher leadership linked to strong performance as indicated by teacher evaluation tools.
5. Teachers participate in their own evaluation process through structures such as self-assessment, goal setting, and the creation of a body of evidence that demonstrates their growth and achievement.

Core Practice 37

Promoting Shared Leadership

Expeditionary Learning school leaders encourage school staff, families, and community members to assume leadership roles in their areas of expertise. Supported by a leadership team, they maintain focus on teaching and learning even as they manage other responsibilities. All stakeholders engage in data-based conversations linked to school improvement, and the school uses a clear process for making, communicating, and implementing decisions.

A. Developing Leadership Teams

1. The leadership team acts as a collective force to increase the learning and engagement of every student through continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school culture in alignment with the EL core practices and each school's unique mission.
2. The leadership team monitors student achievement, fosters the implementation of the EL model, and supports continuous school improvement by developing and following an annual work plan.
3. The leadership team represents multiple stakeholder groups including administrators, classroom teachers, and specialists. In some settings it may be appropriate to include parents and students as well.
4. The leadership team is limited to 10 or fewer individuals, providing balanced perspectives and expertise, but not necessarily representing every team or stakeholder group.
5. The leadership team clearly identifies roles and responsibilities.
6. The leadership team meets regularly and uses agreed-upon norms and procedures to build trust and ensure balanced participation.

B. Facilitating Leadership Team Data Conversations

1. The leadership team analyzes data related to student achievement on standardized tests, school progress reports, student work, and other measures related to character, motivation, and engagement. Additionally, the leadership team may analyze data concerning instructional practice, school culture, and parental involvement.
2. The leadership team uses these data to monitor progress toward school-wide goals, adjust the work plan, allocate resources to best support student achievement, and identify grade levels, subgroups, and/or disciplines where additional support is needed.

C. Upholding Shared Decision-Making

1. The school's decision-making model articulates the kinds of decisions to be made and who is responsible for making each kind of decision. It is publicly shared.
2. The school has effective mechanisms for communicating and implementing decisions.
3. The staff embraces and upholds decisions that support student learning, even if they disagree with the decision itself.

D. Engaging the School Community and Other Stakeholders with Data

1. School leaders, teachers, families, students, and other stakeholders engage in data-based conversations linked to school improvement goals.
2. The conversations are driven by questions that inform a process of inquiry, problem-solving, and collaboration and are guided by clear norms that support a culture of productive data use and collective ownership of student success.
3. Teachers and school leaders organize data displays that support analysis by a variety of stakeholders. The data are presented so that they can be analyzed effectively and efficiently.
4. Teachers and school leaders make current data available to stakeholder groups while that data is still relevant and helpful.
5. School leaders support collection and shared analysis of data about community engagement using multiple sources, including student and family satisfaction surveys, community attendance at school events, and community events and partnerships.

Promoting Shared Leadership (continued)

6. School leaders support collection and shared analysis of data about organizational performance using multiple sources, including applications and enrollment patterns, budget targets, resources and fundraising, and staff recruitment, retention, and satisfaction.
7. EL school leaders use data to tell their school's stories, leverage change, and allocate resources.

Core Practice 38

Shaping School Operations to Elevate Student Achievement

In Expeditionary Learning schools, operations support student achievement. School leaders develop and manage budgets and operational systems to create a safe, high-performing learning environment that aligns with the school's vision and values, including comprehensive systems for resource acquisition and allocation, facility management, safety and risk management, student recruitment and enrollment, legal and regulatory compliance, and technology.

A. Managing the Budget

1. School leaders develop and manage a sound budget to support teaching and learning and advance the vision.
2. School leaders create long-range budgets to ensure a sustained relationship with EL.
3. School leaders identify necessary resources to implement the vision.

B. Sustaining Operational Systems

1. School leaders design and manage operational systems and procedures to prevent distractions and keep the focus on student learning.
2. School leaders manage student recruitment and enrollment strategically to ensure equitable access, serve the community, and meet the budget.
3. School leaders ensure the maintenance of the physical facility and equipment to maximize learning. They establish systems and structures to guarantee that maintenance occurs safely, efficiently, and effectively.
4. School leaders develop and maintain procedures for safety and risk management.
5. School leaders ensure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that impact the school.
6. School leaders provide for the use of appropriate and effective technology in the management and operations of the school.

Index

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