EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

WHY DEEPER LEARNING?
The U.S. education system must prepare students to be engaged citizens and to succeed in the high-skilled jobs that are increasingly required in the global economy. To meet these demands, students will need “deeper learning,” a mix of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that include critical thinking and problem solving, effective communication, collaboration, an academic mindset, and the ability to learn how to learn—all applied to the mastery of academic content.

WHAT IS THE DEEPER LEARNING NETWORK?
A national “Deeper Learning Network” of more than 500 schools is delivering deeper learning to students in forty-one states. Composed of ten school networks it collectively serves more than 227,000 students, most of whom are low-income minority students. Each school network has a unique approach, but all foster the deeper learning skills that prepare young people for economic and civic success.


www.deeperlearning4all.org

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING is a network of schools in which students learn by doing. Students at these schools learn math, science, history, English language arts, and many other subjects through projects, or "expeditions", that connect them to their communities and teach them the value of service. Students also learn how to think critically, solve problems, and collaborate—the kind of deeper learning skills that will help them to succeed in college, the workforce, and society.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOLS SIGNIFICANTLY OUTPERFORM DISTRICT AVERAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading/English Language Arts (2010-11)</th>
<th>Math (2010-11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary: +7%</td>
<td>Elementary: +6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle: +11%</td>
<td>Middle: +9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High: +12%</td>
<td>High: +8%</td>
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LEARNING BY DOING
Real-world experience through service is what sets Expeditionary Learning apart. In contrast to traditional instruction, students learn by designing their own projects, going on extended expeditions outside the classroom to work in their communities for weeks at a time—covering topics as diverse as ecology, zoning issues, and voting rights.

Students work alone and in groups, conducting original research, analyzing data, and presenting their findings to their teachers and their fellow students. The work goes in stages, as students solicit feedback from their peers and instructors, making revisions along the way. Each step in the process reinforces a culture of continuous improvement and refinement. Among the most popular events of the school year are exhibition nights, in which students display their work to fellow students, educators, parents, and the community.

DEEPER LEARNING IN ACTION
Students at The Springfield Renaissance School in Springfield, MA are learning about environmental science and saving their school district money. In 2010, Joseph Forest, a city facilities engineer, worked with a tenth grade environmental science class on a project to figure out how to save energy. The students collected data and developed recommendations for conservation in the city’s school buildings, and presented their findings to city officials. Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno not only commended students on their effort, but backed their ideas with a $156,000 investment based on their proposal, known as “Greenprint.” Within two years the city recouped all of its investment and has engaged the students in future projects, dedicating another $250,000 towards that work.
Diverse students who consistently outperform their peers

Expeditionary Learning encompasses a diverse community of students and educators in schools across the country. Their 46,000 students come from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, and over half of their students are minorities. According to a 2013 study by Mathematica, students in Expeditionary Learning schools consistently outperform their peers on standardized tests. This includes substantially higher scores for both black and Latino students. Expeditionary Learning students have a consistently higher college acceptance rate than similar students from other schools.

Teachers who receive ongoing training and development

Expeditionary Learning schools pay particular attention to their teachers. Teachers and school leaders work together to improve curriculum design, instruction, school culture, leadership, and assessment. Faculty members take part in coaching sessions, demonstration lessons, classroom observations, and the EL Commons, an online forum where educators can share information and learn from their peers. Each year over 800 educators come together for master classes, discussion groups, and regional meetings. In addition to rigorous assessment and a focus on making sure that teachers use data to inform their teaching, there is plenty of room for creativity and judgment. Teachers have the flexibility to adjust instruction to meet their students’ needs while measuring progress.

And “learning by doing” isn’t reserved only for students; by accompanying their students on expeditions, teachers understand the importance of going beyond the classroom.

A rigorous network

It isn’t easy to become an Expeditionary Learning school. Each prospective school must undergo a rigorous assessment before it can join the network. Expeditionary Learning collects a variety of data about the school and gauges the district’s support for comprehensive change. It looks for thoughtful and influential leadership within the school and examines the faculty’s willingness to embrace a new model.

Linked to the common core

To fully implement the Common Core Standards decision-makers must demand high-quality, aligned curricula to deliver both the academic content and skills of deeper learning. New York selected Expeditionary Learning to create the statewide English Language Arts and Literacy curriculum for grades 3-8. These materials will be reviewed to demonstrate their quality and alignment to the Common Core. Finally, they’ll be openly available for other states to adopt and to help ensure that all students are prepared for college, work, and life.