



The DCPS Essential Practices

Grade 1-12



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ESSENTIAL PRACTICE 2

CHALLENGE STUDENTS WITH RIGOROUS CONTENT

2.A Rigorous Content

LEVEL 4

The learning experience is both aligned to academic standards (as defined by the Common Core State Standards or other appropriate content standards) and challenging for students. **The learning experience fosters students' intellectual curiosity about the content.**

For example, the teacher:

- Supplements curricular materials or makes instructional choices that build students' interest in the content
- Makes meaningful connections between the content and other content areas/academic disciplines and/or students' lives
- Has students grapple with compelling questions and ideas
- Demonstrates deep commitment to the discipline and/or enthusiasm about the content

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LEVEL 3

The learning experience is both **aligned** to academic standards (as defined by the Common Core State Standards or other appropriate content standards) and **challenging** for students.

For example, aligned content is derived from:

- Common Core State Standards; Next Generation Science Standards; College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework; WIDA; ACTFL; CCTC; or other relevant standards
- DCPS or DCPS-endorsed curriculum
- DCPS Cornerstone assignments or projects
- DCPS digital instructional resources (e.g., Lexia®, iReady®, ST Math®, Discovery Education Techbook®, other blended learning activities)
- DCPS-endorsed social and life skills curricula

AND

For example, the learning experience is challenging such that it:

- Focuses on content and skill(s) students need to successfully meet or exceed grade-level standards
- Is reflective of high expectations for students' learning
- Features content worthy of students' time and effort

LEVEL 2

The learning experience is **aligned** to content standards (as defined by the Common Core State Standards or other appropriate content standards) but is **not sufficiently challenging** for students.

For example, aligned content is derived from:

- Common Core State Standards; Next Generation Science Standards; College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework; WIDA; ACTFL; CCTC; or other relevant standards



ESSENTIAL PRACTICE 2

CHALLENGE STUDENTS WITH RIGOROUS CONTENT

Mathematics Content-Specific Examples

Essential Practice Examples

This practice aligns with Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) Core Action 1: Ensure the work of the lesson reflects the Shifts required by the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

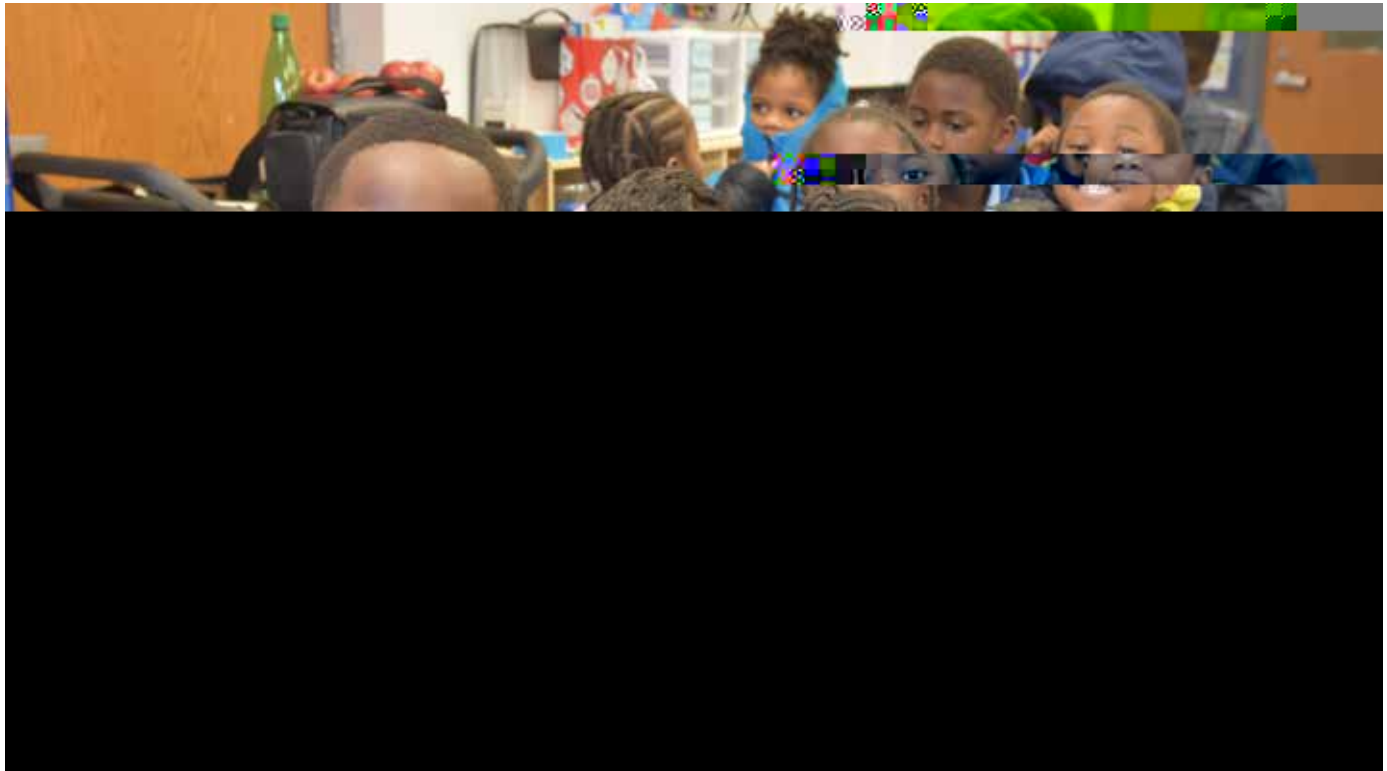
Module Examples

LEAP modules support teachers in identifying appropriate goals aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the Eureka curriculum, and students' individual progress and learning trajectories.

For example, mathematics content:

- Extends previous learning by making connections with mathematics content, methods, and models from previous grades
- Intentionally targets the aspect(s) of rigor (conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, application) called for by the standard(s) being addressed
- Focuses on and promotes a depth of understanding of content in these domains (grades)

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English Language Arts Content-Specific Examples

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ESSENTIAL PRACTICE 3

LEAD A WELL-PLANNED, PURPOSEFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Mathematics Content-Specific Examples

Essential Practice Examples

This practice aligns with Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) Core Action 2: Employ instructional practices that allow all students to learn the content of the lesson.

Module Examples

LEAP modules incorporate NCTM's Eight Effective Teaching Practices in order to support teachers in designing and implementing learning experiences that enable all students to grapple with and master complex mathematical skills and concepts.

For example, the learning experience:

- Includes explanations, representations, and/or examples to make the content of the lesson explicit
- Includes opportunities for students to share, discuss, and justify their mathematical reasoning through discourse
- Supports and promotes variation in solution methods to strengthen students' understanding of the content and mathematical structures

K–8 LEAP modules feature the following core instructional practices:

- Ensure progress toward mathematical goals by making explicit connections to student approaches and reasoning
- Use the mathematical goals to guide lesson planning and reflection and make in-the-moment decisions during instruction
- Ask intentional questions that make the mathematics more visible and accessible for student examination and discussion

For example, grade 1–5 learning experiences include tasks and activities that:

- Develop students' number sense and fluency with basic operations
- Build foundational algebraic thinking skills
- Develop students' conceptual understanding of foundational mathematics' concepts

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ESSENTIAL PRACTICE 4

MAXIMIZE STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

4.A Cognitive Work

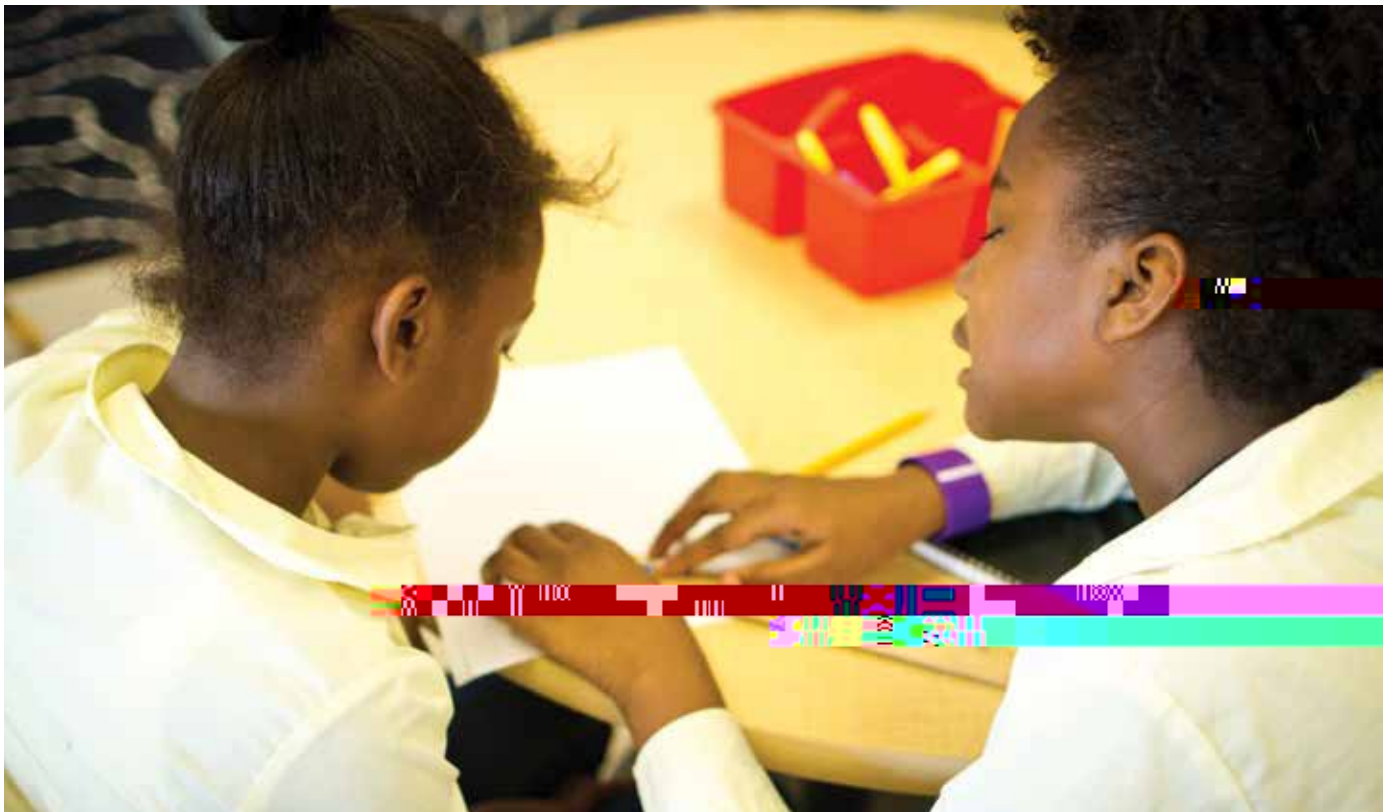
4.B Higher-Level Understanding

	4.A Cognitive Work	4.B Higher-Level Understanding
LEVEL 4	<p>Students spend the majority of the learning experience engaged in meaningful cognitive work, including explaining their thinking with appropriate evidence, applying their understanding of content to complex tasks, or both.</p> <p>For example, the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the majority of the thinking and speaking about content • Use most of their time to productively grapple with content • Are responsible for most of the cognitive work 	<p>All or almost all students demonstrate movement toward higher-level understanding as a result of their participation in the learning experience.</p> <p>For example, all or almost all students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to higher-level questions and solve complex problems • Respond to lower-level questions to develop higher-level comprehension • Use rubrics and/or exemplars to accurately evaluate their own and others' work • Produce work indicative of significant progress toward ambitious learning goals
LEVEL 3	<p>Students spend a significant portion of the learning experience engaged in meaningful cognitive work, including explaining their thinking with appropriate evidence, applying their understanding of content to complex tasks, or both.</p> <p>For example, the learning experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features opportunities for students to do cognitive work such as complex problem solving, group work, independent work, think time, and/or sharing of ideas that is aligned to the rigor of the intended learning 	<p>Most students demonstrate movement toward higher-level understanding as a result of their participation in the learning experience.</p> <p>For example, most students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to higher-level questions and solve complex problems • Respond to lower-level questions to develop higher-level comprehension • Use rubrics and/or exemplars to accurately evaluate their own and others' work • Produce work indicative of significant progress toward ambitious learning goals
LEVEL 2	<p>Students spend a significant portion of the learning experience engaged in work that is not entirely meaningful because either there is more teacher-directed instruction than appropriate or student work consists of rote tasks misaligned to the rigor of the intended learning.</p> <p>For example, the learning experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes too few opportunities for students to productively grapple with content • Includes too few opportunities for students to justify their responses • Does not require students to think deeply about the content 	<p>Some students demonstrate movement toward higher-level understanding as a result of their participation in the learning experience.</p> <p>For example, some students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to higher-level questions and solve complex problems • Respond to lower-level questions to develop higher-level comprehension • Use rubrics and/or exemplars to accurately evaluate their own and others' work • Produce work indicative of significant progress toward ambitious learning goals
LEVEL 1	<p>The expectation of Level 2 practice is not met.</p> <p>For example, the learning experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is predominantly teacher-directed/lecture • 	<p>The expectation of Level 2 practice is not met.</p>

English Language Arts Content-Specific Examples

Essential Practice Examples	This practice aligns with Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) Core Action 3: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.	Module Examples	LEAP modules support teachers in engaging their students in a rigorous and student-centered balanced literacy approach.
<p>For example, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate independence (e.g., comprehend and evaluate complex texts without scaffolding; construct effective arguments, and build on the ideas of others) • Build strong content knowledge (e.g., read purposefully to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise) • Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline (e.g., consider how connotations of words affect meaning; provide differentiated evidence aligned to the discipline) • Comprehend as well as critique (e.g., question an author's or speaker's assumptions and premises) • Value evidence (e.g., cite specific and relevant evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text) • Use technology and digital media strategically and capably (e.g., understand the strengths and limitations of technical tools and select those best suited to learning goals) • Come to understand other perspectives and cultures (e.g., actively seek to understand ideas as presented and evaluate other points of view critically and constructively) 		<p>K–5 LEAP modules feature the following core instructional practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read text sets deeply to uncover areas of complexity worthy of instruction • Use targeted prompts to coach students as they engage in reading and writing • Provide opportunities for students to integrate content into authentic student writing • Plan opportunities to leverage student work as an instructional tool supporting evidence-based writing 	
<p>For example, grade 1–2 students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and answer questions about key details in a text • Identify the main topic and key details in a grade-appropriate text • Participate in shared reading or writing projects 		<p>Grade 6–12 LEAP modules feature the following core instructional practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask text-dependent questions that prompt students to analyze the development of theme over the course of a text • Use exemplary student work to support students in developing claims and counterclaims • Use exemplary student work to support students in writing a narrative that engages the reader, establishes context and point of view, introduces a narrator and/or characters, and organizes a logical sequence of events • Support students' analysis and evaluation of a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence 	
<p>For example, grade 3–12 students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide text-based evidence when supporting oral or written responses • Conduct research to build and present knowledge • Use Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary, language conventions, decoding skills and comprehension strategies to read, write, and speak about text • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience 			

Social Studies Content-Specific Examples



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English Language Arts Content-Specific Examples

Mathematics Content-Specific Examples

Module Examples

LEAP modules address multiple ways teachers can

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