

DOINGWHATWORKS



SAMPLE MATERIAL

DEEPER

Jackson Central-Merry Academy for Medical Technology

Topic: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

Practice: Improving Instruction

Jackson Central-Merry Academy for Medical Technology designed an instructional model that facilitates bell-to-bell instruction, promotes literacy activities in every classroom, and provides opportunities for metacognition and assessment. The acronym DEEPER represents the deeper understanding required with the new Common Core State Standards and structures the lesson with the following components:

- **Do Now:** Each class begins with a brief lesson, often referred to as “bell work,” which teachers post before class begins. Students are expected to enter the classroom and immediately begin working on their “Do Now” activity with no direction from the teacher.
- **Essential question:** Every lesson must have an essential question Posted that invokes deep thought based on the lesson’s instruction and requires demonstration of skill/objective mastery to answer. The essential question must require higher-order thinking to answer. The essential question is different from a guiding question. A guiding question might ask a student to identify the extended metaphor in

the poem, “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes. A DEEPER essential question would ask, “Use quotes from the poem to explain your answer to the following. How does the extended staircase metaphor contrast between the ‘crystal stair’ and the life the mother describes? What message is the author conveying to the reader with the shift in focus from the mother’s staircase to the son’s staircase in the last lines?”

- **Engage:** Teachers must engage students for the acquisition of knowledge. A DEEPER lesson accesses a student’s “web of neurons” with creating meaningful learning activities that establish connections to existing neurological pathways (Pillars, 2011). DEEPER lessons include direct instruction that focuses on the learning objective with interactive lectures, authentic literacy activities, and frequent checks for understanding (Schmoker, 2011).
- **Practice:** After the application of knowledge, students must facilitate objective mastery through the application of knowledge. Practice can be guided, group, or independent and include activities that provide opportunities for students to use the acquired knowledge in a practical application with teacher guidance. During student practice, teachers collect data and adjust instruction as needed.
- **Evaluate:** A DEEPER lesson includes an assessment that provides evidence of student mastery of the skill or objective to the teacher.
- **Reflect Now:** A DEEPER lesson must include a lesson summary and closure. During the last 7 to 10 minutes of the lesson, students answer the essential question in written form.

Pillars, W. (2011). “Teachers as Brain-Changers: Neuroscience and Learning.” *Education Week*.

Schmoker, M. (2011). *Focus: Elevating the essentials to radically improve student learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Jackson Central-Merry Instructional Framework

D E E P E R

