

Deeper Learning

One-Page Explainer



At Bay City Public Schools, we believe all students are capable of outstanding achievements and acknowledge that schools, **by design**, play a critical role in supporting student success. This requires that we lead work that disrupts cultural and institutional opportunity gaps by cultivating **deeper learning** conditions that result in **college and career readiness** for every student.

What is Deeper Learning?

Throughout the last few school years, we have asked students, families, teachers, community members, and business leaders what students need to know and be able to do to be successful after high school. Across the board, we heard that graduates today need much more than just the ability to read, write, and solve math problems. Today's constantly changing world of work and civic life shows that students need to master **academic content**, **communicate** and **collaborate** effectively, **think critically**, and become **lifelong learners** (See our [Graduate Profile](#)).

Supporting students as they develop these understandings, skills, and dispositions requires a **fundamental shift** in how we think about schools and the competencies needed by teachers to facilitate that learning. It is that shift that we are referring to when we talk about Deeper Learning.

What are the characteristics of Deeper Learning?¹

In classrooms where deeper learning occurs, students suggest and make decisions about learning that are immediately **applicable and relevant to their lived experience**. They are engaged in **active learning by doing**, with opportunities to reflect or revise their work based on feedback. The learning environment welcomes a variety of perspectives, encourages risk-taking, and fosters **safe, constructive, and supportive collaboration**. The **learning needs of students inform the design of support** in both individual and group contexts and across all types of knowing. And, importantly, students are provided an **opportunity to struggle productively** with complex thinking and problem-solving experiences that are just above their independent level of capability.

What is a classroom example of Deeper Learning?

Groups of students in a social studies class are **preparing a proposal** for the city council on a new monument to add to a local park. A city council member has agreed to help the teacher provide feedback to students on their ideas. **Students attend workshops** provided by the teacher to learn about historical figures and events to be included in their proposals.

Before presenting their proposal to the city council members, **students present to each other** and receive **peer feedback** on areas they can improve. Then, group members **publicly reflect** on how that feedback will—or will not—be applied to their draft proposal.

The teacher uses quiz responses to offer **additional differentiated workshops** based on student needs. In the end, **all students present** their proposals to the city council members while the teacher evaluates their work on content knowledge, critical thinking, and presentation skills. **Students reflect** on their ability to meet deadlines on time and work collaboratively.

¹ New Tech Network, "Indicators of Deeper Learning," https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e_WVKluy5KfrjfnbqHfU62tkhj5AAAtGj/view