

# Advanced Literacies Instruction: Spotlight on Instructional Units of Study

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## Why is this important?

Effective literacy instruction situates explicit instruction of crucial component skills (phonics, fluency, and word reading skills) within a more expansive framework that brings the world to students in meaningful ways and supports them as they develop the foundation they need to access and learn from texts. This is guided by the notion that learning big ideas and answering complex questions also means learning to study.

Instructional units of study as a key mechanism for creating the conditions for knowledge-building literacy instruction are successful when they exemplify three characteristics. The first, (1) depth of learning, is achieved in units of study by placing a concept, word, or theme at the center of the instructional design for the purpose of building up content and world knowledge and critical thinking skills, ultimately setting up learners to comprehend, discuss, and compose sophisticated texts. The second characteristic, (2) a focus on the learning process, is achieved in units of study by moving away from mastery and highlights the learning process; instead of pushing students to master words or subject matter through memorization or lockstep procedures, a knowledge-building

### DEPTH OF LEARNING

Place a concept, word, or theme at the center to deepen understanding.

### LEARNING AS A PROCESS

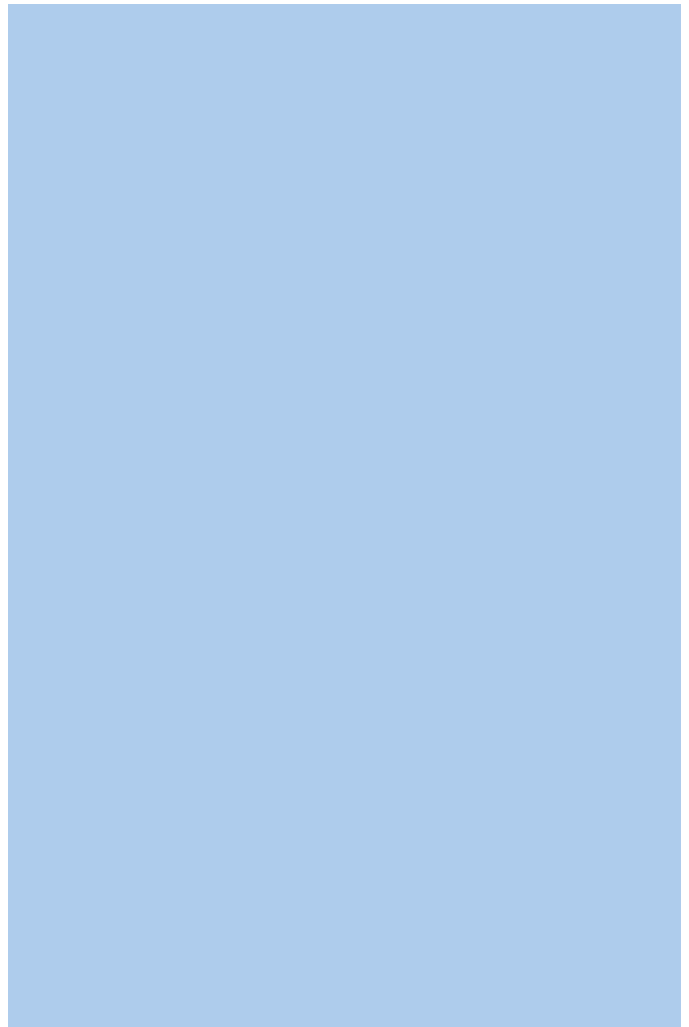
Facilitate learning such that students can grapple with ideas and learn from mistakes.

### INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Support meaningful interactions among teachers and peers.

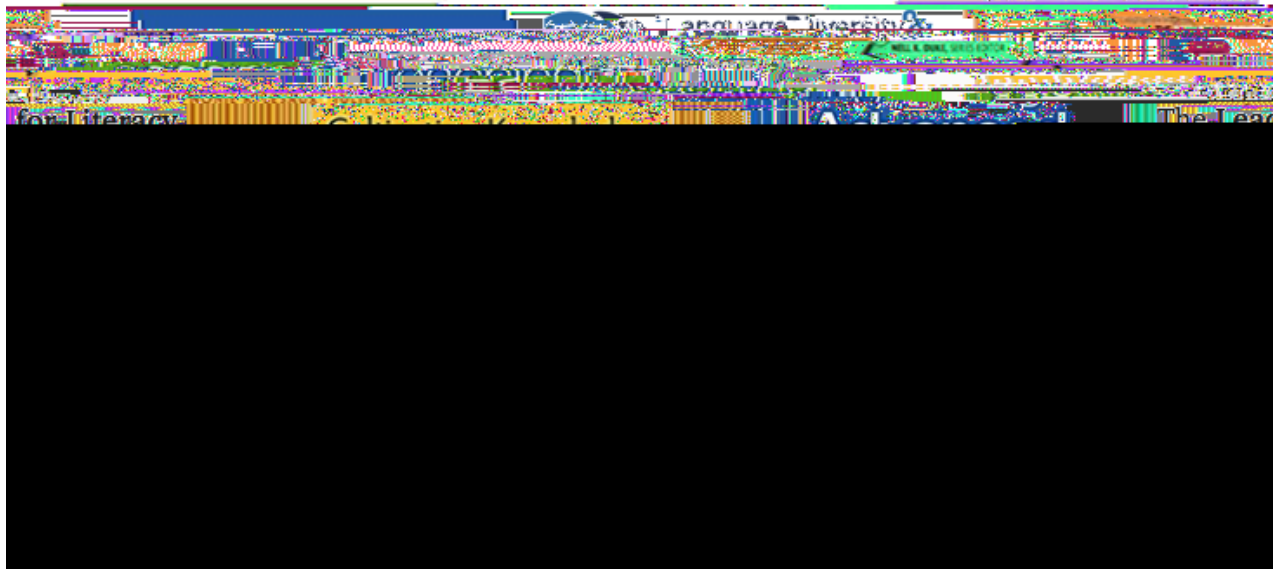


Selecting a range of text implies selecting texts that differ by modality (spoken, written and digital), that are of various text types or genres (descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative), and that represent a range of perspectives and authors from different historical periods, cultures, and belief systems. It is through using a range of texts and working to integrate the information and



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**For more on this, see...**



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