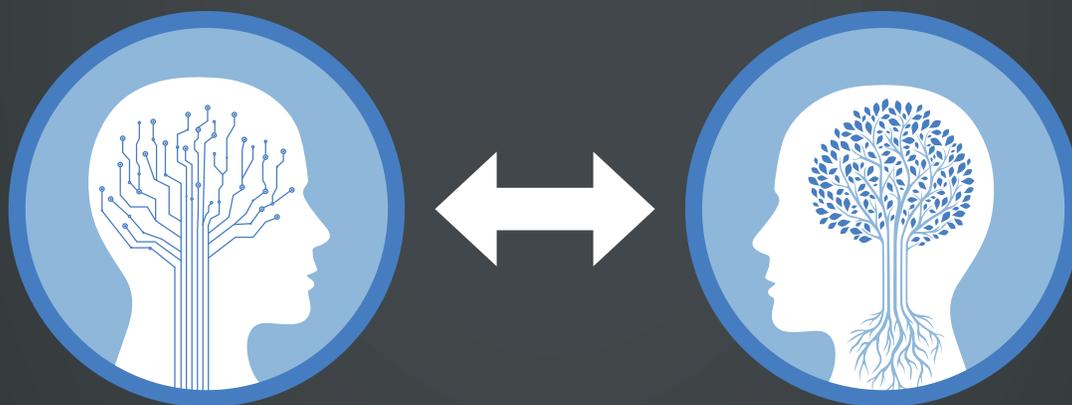


How Digital Learning Contributes to Deeper Learning

by Tom VanderArk & Carri Schneider



Executive Summary

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We believe that over the next five years there is an opportunity to significantly improve the preparation of American students. The implementation of college- and career-ready standards, the shift to next-generation assessments, the rise of blended learning and the prevalence of affordable devices has laid the foundation for a national shift to personal digital learning.

These shifts have the potential to engage young people as scientists, writers, producers, inventors, collaborators and problem solvers in ways that provoke deeper learning. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation suggests that [deeper learning prepares students](#) to master core academic content, think critically and solve complex problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively and learn how to learn.¹

We agree with the Hewlett Foundation's assertion that all students must have access to educational opportunities that foster deeper learning in order to be successful in college and their careers. Creating these opportunities for every student in every classroom can be achieved by using personal digital learning tools that customize the educational experience and serve the individual needs of each student on his/her own unique learning path.

This paper identifies three primary ways that digital learning promotes deeper learning:

- [Personalized skill building](#) in preparation for deeper learning (e.g., adaptive learning in the Learning Lab at Rocketship Elementary);
- [Schools and tools](#) that foster deeper learning (e.g., project-based learning networks like New Tech); and
- [Extended access](#) (e.g., access to quality courses and teachers online).

To meet these deeper learning objectives, there are 10 recommended next steps for state, district, network and philanthropic leaders:

1. **Write the Common Core:** encourage more writing and explicit writing instruction
2. **Do science:** model instruction to match next-generation science standards
3. **Good tests:** support quality PARCC and Smarter Balanced tests and sound implementation
4. **Coherent state policy:** build upon frameworks such as Digital Learning Now! 10 elements for high-quality digital learning
5. **Intellectual mission:** support statewide authorization of deeper learning networks
6. **Extended reach:** support school models that use technology to leverage great teaching
7. **Deep, not shallow, blends:** provide incentives for school models that promote deeper learning
8. **Deeper learning platforms:** sponsor the development and adoption of platforms that promote deeper learning
9. **Leadership development:** support individual and cohort learning experiences for leaders
10. **Convene:** collaborate in person and online to share resources and form networks

Great teachers and innovative schools are finding ways to foster deeper learning for their students. However, without the necessary technology, it will not be possible to bring these opportunities to scale. The adoption of college- and career-ready standards—and the coordination of next-generation assessments—create an unprecedented national opportunity to advance readiness that can be realized by linking digital learning and deeper learning.