One thing we educators can do—and it is free but not easy—is to examine our assumptions about students living in poverty. When I did that, I was shocked and ashamed of what I found. I grew up in a church where we often collected money for the "poor," and I learned to pity "poor" people. These teachings seeped into my classroom instruction. For many years, my unexamined assumptions were a trap that possibly led to inequitable instruction and lowered expectations for students living in poverty.

We must consciously fight against stereotyping students as poor students, feeling sorry for them and lowering expectations for them. All students need to be held to high standards. At the same time, we know different children have different needs. One child may have a learning disability and another child may be living in poverty, but that does not mean that either deserves pity. Instead, it is our responsibility as educators to provide a rigorous curriculum, along with the scaffolding each child needs to achieve at high levels.

If you want to understand the impact of generational poverty on student behaviors and achievement, examine the schools of high poverty that are closing the gap. These schools do exist. Some poor schools in Harlem, as well as in other urban and rural areas throughout the United States, are closing the gap. These are schools that have examined their school culture, improved teacher quality and expectations, provided additional resources for students, and addressed the needs of their specific populations. Check out the work that School Improvement Network is doing: they are filming in high-poverty schools that have closed or are closing the learning gaps (Linton, 2011). After examining schools of poverty in which children academically achieve at high levels, we must conclude that "perhaps it isn't poverty, or racial/ethnic background in and of itself, but rather our response to it" (Johnson, 2002, p. 6).

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

- Teach social skills to students.
- Teach the emotions.
- Change educators' mind-sets (study Jensen's [1998] and Dweck's [2006] work on mind-sets).
- Interview students about their mind-sets and sense of self-efficacy.
- Teach goal setting.
- Gather data.
- Learn about how the brain works.
- Pair students with mentors.
- Offer students authentic assessment, provocative lessons, and meaningful tasks.
- Support students in eating healthy meals; offer healthy snacks and water throughout the day.
- Include exercise and outdoor time with students.
- Read about and study the effects of poverty.
- Take part in a poverty simulation to better understand the stressors of living in poverty.
- Shadow a student and visit a student's home.

ACADEMIC COURSE WORK

Rigorous academic course work makes a difference, and studies show that compared with White students, a disproportionately small number of African American, Latino/a, and Native American students take challenging courses. Some schools rigidly track (group students according to ability), and by high school, students in the lower track may have no possibility of taking an academically challenging class (Johnson, 2002). Some minority students opt out of academically challenging courses because of peer pressure; some students don't want to do the work. Some urban schools do not offer calculus or advanced physics or chemistry.

Even today, some educators, sadly, steer some Students of Color, particularly African American and Latino males, away from academically challenging courses, thinking that the students need to take more "practical" classes or classes in which they will not fail. My son encountered this: when transferring from a highly academic high school in his junior year to a new school, he was told by the well-meaning counselor he should take "shop" instead of continuing in the honors track where he had been placed in the previous school. The counselor told him he should "enjoy" his senior year, and not work hard on academics. Would this man have said that to a White male with a high grade point average coming into the school? I don't know. My African American and Latina educator friends have shared personal stories of how high school educators told them they did not "need" to go to college or they would not be able to succeed in college. Now they hold advanced college degrees.

Another phenomenon I find in some schools is an unrealistic notion of what rigor is. Students think they are being rigorously challenged until they are asked to compete against students from high-achieving schools or take advanced placement tests and score a 3 or below. It is so important for teachers to remain apprised of what rigor entails and to compare their students' work not only with their colleagues but with students from high-achieving prep schools in order to know what students are capable of achieving. I learned this when I changed school districts and found students working at least two years ahead of what I thought students at their ages were capable of doing. I had low expectations and didn't know it. Added to this, some high school students have expectations of becoming a "doctor" and don't realize they need to take challenging courses. When a student does not understand the pathway of classes he or she needs to meet the entrance requirements for their chosen career choice, there is a problem. If schools are not providing rigorous and advanced classes for students with quality teachers, there is a problem. I talk to too many high school students who do not understand what classes they need in order to achieve their dreams.

What can schools do to encourage Students of Color to take academically challenging courses? Try the following strategies.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

- Take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that each child reads at grade level.

- Give each student a goal sheet for tracking the classes needed in high school to achieve his or her dream career. Explain clearly to students what they need to know and be able to do to achieve what they want.
- Offer students positive role models. Post throughout the school posters of minority engineers, scientists, writers, doctors, judges, and so on. How many steps do you have to take inside your school before you see a picture or poster of role models in a profession other than sports who reflect the ethnicity of your students?
- Hire minority staff.
- Begin "college talk" on day one. Assume each child has the ability to go to college. After high school graduation, the choice is then up to the child.
- Carefully monitor students as they progress through elementary school. Notice their strengths. Inquire about their dreams. Encourage those dreams.
- Begin to offer specialized clubs at upper elementary school levels, such as science club, math club, chess club, foreign language clubs, writers club, and academic club. Ensure that diverse learners are central participants in these clubs.
- Take students to visit local universities; start in middle school, if not before.
- Call your students "scholars" (Kunjufu, 1988) when you address them in class.
- Identify local university students who will mentor middle school students.
- Ensure that each high school student has a mentor who encourages him or her to take a rigorous academic course of study. This means one adult must continually check in with the student to encourage him or her to take honors and AP courses, and then be ready with support when students take the leap into rigorous courses.
- Find teachers who really want diverse learner students in their advanced classes and who will support their success.
- Organize a student support club (see Chapter 17 for one model) so that the students will have positive peer support.

What can you do in your own classroom or school to ensure culturally diverse learners enroll in your most academically rigorous courses?

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How can you shape your instructional practices to ensure that you offer the most academically rigorous work to all students?

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TEST BIAS

Test bias is a complex issue. Many researchers now say that test bias has been largely eliminated. Much has been eliminated, but often bias remains because of the cultures in which we live. Even though test makers scrutinize tests, the playing field is far from level.

Teachers have shared personal anecdotes about their students and the tests. Some students are tested over things they have not experienced in their lives. One teacher said a recent test had a passage about grasshoppers, but her students did not know what grasshoppers were. In addition, particular words can hold different meanings for different children, such as the word *weave,* which may mean a kind of stitchery to one child and a hairpiece to another.

Studying the language of test taking is relevant for educators. If we want all of our children to close the academic achievement gap, we must teach all children the language of test taking. If children lack knowledge of the language of test taking, they may be unable to interpret the test language.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

To eliminate further test bias, do the following.

- Get involved in the test-making process in your state.
- Write test items for the ACT.
- Teach students to read critically.
- Use a wide variety of reading materials to build background knowledge.
- Select old test items to use as opening activities in class. Do one a day for practice.
- Teach your students the concept that language gives them power, and give them numerous examples of how language empowers their lives. Tell them that they must learn standard English in order to succeed in college.
- Work with your entire staff to determine areas of concern on state tests.
- Have your students create test passages and items.
- Teach your students the art of test taking.
- Brainstorm with your students ways to create a positive test experience.
- Do everything you can do to make the test-taking experience a positive one—several books in the marketplace provide numerous strategies to address test taking.
- Look upon the testing situation as an opportunity rather than a negative experience for you and your students.
- Use test data to improve your instruction.

Are you a good test taker? Why, or why not?

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What things can you do to improve the test-taking abilities of all of your students?

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In what ways can you use standardized test data to improve your instructional practice?

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TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

In her book *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children,* Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) states that successful teachers treat students as competent, use a *no-deficit* model, provide instructional "scaffolding," focus on instruction with a sacrosanct reading period, extend students' thinking and abilities, and possess in-depth knowledge of both subject matter and the students.

What are teacher expectations?

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In the learning process, teacher expectations include teacher engagement. In *Closing the Achievement Gap* (B. Williams, 1996), Karen Louis and BetsAnn Smith write about teacher engagement as integral to teacher expectations. Students must believe their teachers are engaged with the content and care about them as individuals. Unless this occurs, students fail to engage with the content. Teachers must believe that their students are engaged with the content. Unless this occurs, teachers do not teach at optimal levels of instruction. This creates a catch-22.

This catch-22 appears to be especially true for schools with a high concentration of lower income and minority students. Compared with teachers of more affluent children, teachers who work with students from poorer families are more likely to believe that they have little influence on their students'

learning. Over the past three years, I have worked with Students of Color in six high schools in one district where there is a high poverty rate. Throughout the time, I interviewed students about their teachers' expectations of them. Time and time again, they shared that their favorite teachers expect them to do the work and help them when they need help.

Angela Estrella, a teacher at Monta Vista High School, Cupertino, California, shared that when she was in eighth grade, her language arts teacher, Mrs. Griffin, raised her expectations for her future by telling her: "I do not want you to invite me to your high school graduation; I want you to invite me to your college graduation." Angela said that this was the first time anyone had ever expressed the belief that she could get a college degree, and eight years later, she proved Mrs. Griffin right by being the first person in her family to graduate from college (Estrella, 2012). We can never underestimate the power of our words!

Think about your teacher engagement. How engaged are you?

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What influences your teacher engagement?

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What can you do to ensure that you remain engaged throughout the school year?

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Write out your expectations of your students. Do they vary, depending on which students you consider?

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Do you truly believe that your diverse learners can achieve at the same levels as White males? What proof do you have that you believe this?

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What concrete steps can you take to ensure that your teacher expectations are high enough for all of your students?

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HOW-TO STRATEGIES

How do you find out what your students are capable of achieving? Try the following.

- Use formative assessment throughout your instruction to keep track of student learning.
- Examine student work with your professional learning group to ensure your expectations are high enough.
- Examine district benchmark tests for student learning and areas where students need support and reteaching.
- Examine your state tests. They offer one standard of judgment.
- Visit a school, public or private, that graduates students who have achieved academically at top levels. Examine the curriculum and student work.
- Read award-winning student literary magazines for examples of high-quality writing.
- Attend science fairs and view winning projects.
- Attend conferences to network with educators and participate in sessions.
- Examine your subconscious prejudices and perceptions.

A book that clearly demonstrates how teacher expectations create a classroom of excellence is Erin Gruwell's (1999) *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them.*

TEACHER QUALITY

What does teacher quality mean to you?

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For the past several years, Kati Haycock has researched teacher quality, and she asserts what she has known all along: "No matter what measure of 'quality' you look at, poor and minority students—and not just those in inner city schools—are much less likely to be assigned better qualified and more effective teachers" (Haycock & Hanushek, 2010). In searching for the causes of the achievement gap, she and her research colleagues ask adults why there is a learning gap. They hear comments from educators that the children are too poor, the parents don't care, and they come to school hungry. The reasons, she adds, are always about the children and their families. Yet, when she talks with students, she hears different reasons. Students talk about teachers who do not know their subject matter, counselors who underestimate their potential and misplace them, administrators who dismiss their concerns, and a curriculum and expectations that are so low level that students are bored.

Haycock (2001) agrees that poverty and parental education matter, but she states that we take the children who have the least and "give them less of everything that we believe makes a difference" (p. 8). High school students who take more rigorous course work learn more and perform better on tests (Haycock, 2001; Johnson, 2002). The more rigorous the courses students take, the better they perform. Also, the rigor and quality of high school course work determines success in college. By giving the honors work to all children, we create exciting, rigorous classrooms set for achievement.

The research of Haycock, Johnson, and others (Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Johnson, 2002; Johnson & La Salle, 2010) shows that all students can achieve at high levels if they are taught at high levels. Recent research has turned upside down the assumptions previously made about why students did not achieve. Those assumptions included the belief that "what students learned was largely a factor of their family income or parental education, not of what schools did" (Haycock, 2001, p. 10). We now know that what schools do matters and that what teachers do may matter most of all.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

- Read professional journals.
- Attend professional conferences and meetings.
- Participate in professional learning groups.
- Read professional books on rigor and teacher quality.

Do you agree or disagree with Kati Haycock's findings?

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Describe your teacher quality.

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In what ways might you improve your teacher quality? Design a plan for yourself.

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This chapter covered ways that poverty, test bias, academic course work, teacher expectations, and teacher quality affect the learning gap. The strategies listed in this chapter have been implemented in schools at every level. Consider the strategies and choose some you believe will work for you. You may also consider working with your colleagues in a professional learning community in your school to examine the gap and ways to mediate and close the gap in your district. Chapter 2 includes a list of questions to consider about your professional experiences. Those questions can be used as self-reflective tools, journal prompts, and discussion starters. They are yours to keep, think about, use, and add to as we continue our inquiry into classroom instruction and how to support the academic success of diverse learners.

Throughout the early chapters in this book, we examined culture, racial histories, the impact of race, research on culturally diverse learners, and sources of learning gaps. The remaining chapters in the book examine classroom culture and expectations for students, relationships, classroom instruction, and a focus on the strategies we can implement to improve student achievement, ending with a chapter on wellness just for you.

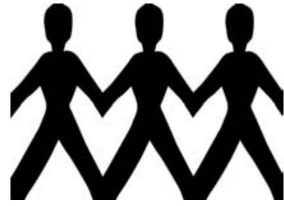
SUGGESTED READINGS

Jensen, Eric. *Teaching With Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2009).

Johnson, Ruth S., and Robin Avelar La Salle. *Data Strategies to Uncover and Eliminate Hidden Inequities: The Wallpaper Effect* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2010).

Linton, Curtis. *Equity 101: The Equity Framework* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2011).

Tileston, Donna Walker. *Closing the RTI Gap: Why Poverty and Culture Count* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2011).



10

How to Build Relationships With Culturally Diverse Students and Families

Have you noticed that students just love some teachers? What is their secret? What do these teachers do to build relationships with individual students? This chapter offers you an opportunity to ponder your relationship-building skills and suggests numerous strategies based on the research to build relationships with your students.

When is the last time you learned something new outside of your comfort zone? Perhaps you bought a new cell phone, installed a new computer program, or adopted a new curriculum. What did you notice about yourself as you tried to learn to use the new material? Were you often frustrated or even angry? Did you need time to practice the new material more than once? Did you need someone who knew more than you and who would give you uncritical support? Was there a guidebook with clear directions?

Learning something new gives us the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and fears our students face daily: the stress and threat of failure, peer or teacher criticism, material presented outside of student learning styles, and grades given before the material is mastered. In addition, if you are a student who often experiences failure, you may lack the self-confidence in your ability to master the new task.

CLASSROOMS THAT WELCOME STUDENTS

Therefore, students need classrooms where there is a strong sense of community and no fear of ridicule, and where the teacher not only cares about them but refuses to allow them to fail. Students need to be welcomed to class. Recently, I observed in a class with a young, new teacher who sat behind her computer as students entered her high school English classroom. Her first eight comments to the students were commands or reprimands; not once did she offer a welcoming invitation to the students. I listened as she hollered: “Sit down; the bell is going to ring.” “You know what you’re supposed to be doing.” “Get away from the computers.” And so on. Even when she began the lesson, she failed to say “hi” to the students and welcome them. Hopefully, this is rare, yet I observe far too many teachers in classrooms across the country who jump into their lessons without acknowledging the learners in front of them, much less welcoming them at the door. How do you feel when someone begins a meeting without acknowledging you? How different is it when someone looks you in the eye and simply says hello before beginning the work?

In your classroom, it might look like this: You welcome each child, each day, into your classroom. You may do this with a hello at the door, using the student’s name or a variation of it.

Consider this strategy: Give each student a 4" × 6" index card. Have students print their names on the cards. Laminate the cards, if possible. Each day, lay out the cards in alphabetical order on a table inside the room. Students enter the room, pick up their cards, and greet you with a “Good morning, [teacher’s name]” while shaking your hand. You reciprocate with a “Good morning, [student’s name]” as you look into the student’s eyes. After you enter the attendance, you recycle the cards to the table, ready for the next day. The young teacher who shared this strategy said that using this procedure has cut down on tardies, built classroom community, and allowed her to learn quickly a large number of students’ names. Her students were ninth graders, but this strategy would work with students once they were old enough to recognize their names, as well as with graduate students.

However you decide to welcome your students, this initial contact with them sets the tone for the class. Until you acknowledge the visibility of each student, you may find that particular students refuse to acknowledge your lesson. They may not care about what you are teaching until you demonstrate that you care about them.

Some classrooms use a strategy for students who are tardy that alleviates the stress and tension of the moment. There is a sign-in sheet right inside the classroom door and students sign in, marking the date and time. A local preschool uses this procedure beginning at age three, so our older kids can surely do this. It eliminates the dreaded question “Why are you late?” Instead, the student can quietly enter the classroom and take his or her seat. Questions about tardies can happen at the end of class. This respects the learning, the teacher, and the student.

Write below how you welcome students to your class.

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If you are not satisfied with your procedure, reflect on and create a new positive welcoming ritual.

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Welcoming Every Student

When we belong to a group that makes us feel welcome, these are some of the behaviors the members exhibit toward each other:

- They greet each other warmly with a big smile and eye contact.
- They ask questions about what has happened in each other's lives since the last time they saw each other.
- They listen intently with both their minds and their body language.
- They ask probing questions to demonstrate they really care.
- They share their personal lives.
- They sit as if they want to be in each other's presence.
- They warmly say goodbye and let each other know how happy they will be to see each other again.

How does your list compare?
These seem like simple things:

- Greet
- Listen
- Share
- Engage
- Respect
- Give feedback
- Say goodbye

When educators do these things with students each day, they create an inclusive and powerful learning environment. When educators

- Greet students at the door;
- Listen to their stories;

- Share something about themselves with them;
- Keep close to them as they learn;
- Respect their brain's functioning by allowing time for thinking, talking, writing, and processing;
- Listen to their learning output;
- Give feedback to their learning; and
- Tell them goodbye, letting them know they are anxious to see them again,

they are responding to learners' needs.

Child or adult, we would respond to this paradigm of learning. Brain to brain, we would feel safe in this environment if the teacher and the other students all responded in kind.

In addition to being greeted, we need to see images of ourselves in the environment. Do you see images of yourself in your educational setting? If so, what kinds of images do you see?

When walking into a school, students need to see themselves. Ideally, they will see themselves reflected in their teachers. However, if there are no teachers who look like the students who need role models, there are other ways to provide images for the students. There might be images posted throughout the school; persons from different cultures can volunteer in the school; role models from diverse ethnic groups can be part of the student lessons; students can take field trips to businesses, neighborhoods, or campuses where there are members of diverse cultural groups. This is not to say that role models can't come from a different cultural group than the students; nonetheless, all students need to see themselves projected visually in some manner in their school setting.

Post pictures of your students in your classrooms and school. You can take a class picture and post it on your classroom wall. You can ask students to bring in their favorite pictures and post them in the room. You can have students draw self-portraits and post them on the walls. When a group of struggling ninth graders were asked what would tell them that their teacher cared about them, one young male said, "My teacher would have a picture of me as her wallpaper on the computer screen." This young male was serious about wanting to see himself projected in the classroom where he needed to learn. Educators have the power to project their students' images in their classrooms and throughout the rest of their schools. An inclusive environment is one where all students succeed at high levels within an equitable school culture.

RESPETO

Gary Howard (1999), author of *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know,* suggests we show our students *respeto*—a Spanish word that goes beyond respect. It means that I, as an individual, will deeply honor you both as a person and as someone different from myself. It is often translated to mean deference and esteem, in addition to simply respect. In practice, because I respect you, I will change who I am to become connected with you, despite our differences. As teachers do this, they overcome difference and ensure that all students achieve because they have built a foundation of respectful relationships with their students. With *respeto,*

educators truly engage the equity framework, holding high expectations, implementing rigor, creating relevancy and building powerful relationships.

Here are some strategies to help you learn about and develop *respeto* for other cultures:

- Attend art events given by or about people of other cultures.
- Truly listen to what persons from other cultures have to say.
- Become friends with people of other cultures.
- Live in integrated neighborhoods.
- Read the literature of other cultures.
- Travel to other countries.
- Place value on students' home languages and cultures.
- Invite persons from other cultures into your home.
- Study a foreign language.

You can use these strategies in your classroom to develop *respeto* for other cultures:

- Talk about the important contributions of cultural groups.
- Bring in positive articles about people of different cultures to share with students.
- Post simple phrases in multiple languages throughout your classroom and school.
- Post positive pictures of people from other cultures throughout your classroom and school.
- Schedule home visits and observe your students with their families.
- Include class projects that allow students to get to know each other as individuals.
- Ask your students to write about family customs and share with the class.
- Respect the traditions of other cultures and don't make assumptions about their rituals and practices.

BODY LANGUAGE

Once you have welcomed your students and connected with them, does your body language continue to connect with your students? Is your body language congruent with the words that come out of your mouth? A professor at UCLA, Albert Mehrabian (1990), did research on how people communicate their feelings and concluded that 38 percent of the meaning communicated is based on how it sounds—tone, volume, and speed. With that knowledge, think about your classroom tone. Is your tone appropriate and congruent with the words you say? To demonstrate the importance of tone, try this exercise: Stand in front of a chair and pretend it is a dog. Pet it lovingly as you say something like this: "I hate you; you are evil and I don't want you." What would the dog do? Wag its tail and nuzzle up to you. Now kick the chair and scream these words in anger: "I love you, you sweet doggy." What would the dog do? Recoil in fear. The tone conveys your message (and notice how much more difficult it is to say nice things in anger than to say mean things in a pleasant tone). Think about your students. Does

your tone of voice often communicate displeasure, disappointment, or frustration as you say something such as "We are going to try this again"?

Ask a colleague to give you feedback on your tone of voice after he or she observes you teaching a challenging class. Does your tone of voice work against you? Perhaps you were socialized to ask rather than tell, and this plays out in your classroom management. Do you tell students to do something by asking a question? For example, "Mary, are you ready to start your work, Sweetie?" If Mary is an English language learner, she may hear the tone of your voice asking her if she "wants" to do something rather than hearing the direction you think you are giving. Mary's mind may think she has a choice to either do the work or not, and no, she does not want to. She needs to begin her work. Check how you give directions. Make sure you are using declarative or command sentences, not questions, and use strong nouns and verbs, cutting out the adverbs and extraneous words when speaking to learners' brains.

Once you are convinced that your body language conveys an assertive, caring teacher, you may want to examine how you continue to build relationships throughout your school day. Students often come into class wound up or tired, certainly not focused on the lesson you are ready to teach. Yet the opening moments of class are tremendously important and offer countless opportunities to build classroom community and relationships. Think about your opening class procedure. How do you effectively begin your time with students?

GREETING YOUR STUDENTS

Have a colleague videotape your morning welcomes several days in a row so that you are unaware of it after the first few days. If you can't videotape, ask a colleague to observe you and provide feedback.

- Do you lean in to some students as you greet them and lean away from others?
- Is your smile more genuine with certain students?
- Do you joke around with some and not others?
- Do you tend to compliment the same students day after day?
- Do you privilege some students and slight others?

It is usually necessary to have outside eyes help with the monitoring of our body language. Body language is often unconscious, so we may not know what subtle cues we are sending to our students. After you have been observed by a colleague or by using a camera, examine what you see. Do you notice you tend to give more attention to the students who look like you or the students who perform better? Do you tend not to use small talk with your "trouble makers" or students failing your class? Self-examination is a courageous thing to do; you can learn so much from the feedback.

A middle school teacher did an action research project with her students, greeting one class at the door, and then observing changes in their behavior and class work. Within days she saw changes in both classroom behavior and student engagement. Her other classes remained the same. Consider trying this

with one of your classes. Stand at the door. Make eye contact with each student, greet them, and make a pleasant comment to them.

Describe your perception of the body language you use with your students.

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Think about a person you enjoy being around. Probably that person's body language is welcoming. Can you articulate what she or he does to make you feel welcome? Describe the person's body language.

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What changes might you make in your body language?

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THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

Assess the vibrations of the class. This may make no sense to you, or you may be a person who knows exactly what this means. But look at each of the students as they walk into the room. Look at their faces. Are they relaxed? Are they angry? Is the tenor of the class anticipatory? Is it belligerent? Assess the tenor of the class as a whole. In the book *You've Got to Reach Them to Teach Them,* educator Mary Kim Schreck (2011) writes: "Educators must take seriously the fact that how a student *feels* about a learning situation will determine how much attention and effort that child will expend" (p. 26). When learners enter our classrooms, we need to do a quick assessment of how individual students feel and use a strategy to connect all students to the learning. If you use a check-in question at the beginning of the class (discussed later in this chapter), you will have the opportunity to check the emotional state of each student.

If a fight has just occurred in the hallway, students may come into class in a heightened emotional state and be physically unable to begin class work without transition time. Some students take much longer to transition than others. Consider allowing kids transition time. If you need quiet in your classroom

immediately for behavior control, use writing in a journal as a transition. You can write a prompt on the board or overhead and have students respond to it in their journals. You can tie the prompt to the material to be studied in the class, or not. You can choose several avenues for sharing: students can share with a class buddy, with the whole class, or with the teacher.

If you have a class that can talk without losing control, let them talk a minute while you take attendance, assess their feelings, and move throughout the classroom addressing students and making connections.

LEVEL: ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE/HIGH

Rituals

Some teachers have an opening routine that functions as a positive ritual. A ninth-grade teacher begins each class hour with a Venn diagram on her board. Over each section of the diagram is a word from the ACT/SAT vocabulary lists. When students enter, they go to the board and write their names in the section of the Venn diagram that best describes them. For example, if the words are *loquacious* and *reticent,* they decide which terms best describe them and write their names in the appropriate space. The teacher then uses the words throughout the lesson that day and incorporates them into the word bank of the class. You can also use terms from your lesson. Let's say you are teaching about inlets and fjords. Write those two words on the sections of the Venn. Have students decide if they would rather be an inlet or a fjord and write in their journals why. This kicks up the exercise to the metaphorical level. This opening ritual sparks conversation centered on literacy and focuses the class, as well as gives feedback to the teacher about how each student perceives himself or herself. If your class is particularly large, you might designate a row of students for each day of the week who might participate in the activity.

Check-In Questions

Begin class with a check-in question. Ask the same question of each student in the class and give students an option to say "pass." The question can be related to the lesson or it can be personal, such as "Where would you most want to travel?" or "What is your favorite food?" Once again, the teacher receives feedback on the preferences of the students; the students learn something about each other; the students' focus changes to the classroom; each student's voice is valued; there isn't a right or wrong answer; and each student fulfills the teacher request, even if he or she declines to answer. As students answer the question, note whether each student looks relaxed and ready to learn. If students are not ready to learn, then you need to do something to get them ready. This may be energizing movements or even an individual check with students who appear unfocused or unhappy. Offering a personal comment tells the student you are aware of his or her current state and are ready to give the support needed.

An elementary teacher shared that she uses this questioning strategy each Monday in her fifth-grade class. One morning she was absent for a workshop, so

before she left, she asked the substitute to perform the opening class ritual. The substitute did, yet when the teacher returned after lunch, her students asked to do the activity again because, they said, "We didn't get to do it with you!"

High Five

Another teacher gives her students a high five when they enter her room. In her absence, her students complained that the substitute did not do the high five. So the teacher made a picture of her hand on the school copy machine and taped it to her door. She told her students that if they wanted to, in her absence, they could high-five the copy of her hand on the door as they left the room. Many did.

You can use a simple signal that tells the students it is time to learn. For example, you might say, "Turn your brains on," as you forward snap your hand at brain level. Even though high school students may laugh when you do this, it is a cognitive reminder to focus on what is to come.

Music

Use music to affect mood. One teacher shared she used the theme from the *Cops* television program in her middle school classroom. Learners knew they had to be in their seats when the theme stopped. She then used Bach piano concertos in the background as students wrote in their journals and calmed down, getting their brains ready to learn. She followed this with a check-in, and then a choral reading of classroom procedures posted on a poster at the head of the room.

Student–Teacher Relationships

Relationships profoundly affect student readiness to learn (Sousa, 2001; Sylwester, 2000; Tomlinson, 2003). Whether they are ELs, students from different cultures, students living in poverty, or students with learning disabilities, students need to know that teachers care about them (Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Tomlinson, 2003). Below are several brain-friendly strategies to show your students you care and build relationships in your classroom.

Level: Elementary/Middle/High
Subject: Cross-curricular

- Select a difficult student and find a way to connect with her or him about something unrelated to school. Do this daily, outside of instructional time, until you see a change in the student's attitude toward you. This works! Try it over the next two weeks with one of your students. You may be amazed at his or her reaction to your caring conversation.

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- Student as expert: Learn what your students know and incorporate it into your lessons. For example, students at the high school level who live in the inner city could explain to students who live in the outer suburbs directions to many cultural and sporting centers. The suburban students will be impressed with the urban students' knowledge of and ability to navigate the city.
- Try a "Friday Final Five" strategy: choose topics such as sports, music, hobbies, and special interests. Students who are experts on a topic sign up to do a Friday Final Five. They share their expertise with the class during the final five minutes of class on Fridays. They are allowed to bring preapproved props and demonstrate their expertise to their classmates.
- Snaps and taps: During class time, allow students to write positive comments about other students on slips of paper and drop them into a bowl. During the last minute of class, one student pulls out a slip of paper and reads the positive comment aloud to the class. The class gets five seconds to tap or snap. *Snap* consists of snapping the middle finger and the thumb, modeling the beatnik applause. *Tap* consists of drumming on the table or desks as loudly as they want—five seconds of controlled motor activity. Since one teacher began doing snaps and taps in her special education classroom, she reports that students are reserving their tapping for the end of class rather than tapping pencils or feet or hands throughout the class.

(Middle/High)

- Take students to an event that reflects their culture. Just accompanying students to a restaurant that serves food that reflects their culture builds relationships.
- Start a support group. See Chapter 17 for a model for a 4 As group, or start a chess club, a writing group, a book club, and so on.
- Give your challenging students a responsible position in your class. One seventh-grade girl challenged classroom management procedures, so the teacher talked with her privately, complimenting her on her leadership skills, and put her in charge of seeing that the other students followed the procedures. She became a role model. When others began to talk during teacher instruction, she used peer pressure to positively coerce them to reengage with the lesson.
- Take some bananas and muffins and meet with a group of challenging students once a week for breakfast. Within six weeks, you should see a significant change in their behavior.

(Elementary/Middle/High)

- Use authentic projects to drive your curriculum and improve achievement (Sousa, 2001; Tate, 2003). You will build relationships with

students if you conference with them during their work on authentic projects. For example, if they are interviewing veterans and creating a book, you will build a classroom community of learners as well as improve your relationship with each individual learner.

- Attend extracurricular events in which your students participate.
- Create a library in your classroom by shopping at flea markets, book sales, and so on. Invite your students to take books they want to enjoy. Consider it a success, not a failure, if one doesn't come back.
- Do a "walk and talk." One staff member volunteered to take a small group of boys with behavior issues on a daily walk during an extra class designated for alternative instruction. The boys enjoyed the outside, the walk, and the talk, and their behavior issues diminished in not only her class but in the classes of the entire team.
- Use students' names in your examples when you teach. Personalize your lessons in as many ways as possible.
- Send postcards to students when you vacation. Bring back free mementos for your students.
- Create a classroom newsletter. Ask your district to provide professional development in PageMaker or some other software that allows you to easily produce a class newsletter. Include each student's voice. Send it home to parents to foster parent-teacher relationships.
- Create a buzz book and include student and parent interests.
- Have students fill out information sheets at the beginning of the year so that you can have their interests on file. Try to include their interests in your instructional planning when relevant.
- Talk about your interests with your students. By sharing yourself with your students, you build relationships. My fifth-grade teacher taught each student to knit. We made scarves and mittens. What do I recall from fifth grade? I remember it as my favorite year in elementary school because of this teacher. Teachers are interesting people, and you have much to share. Some teachers have shared with their students the following interests: elephants, motorcycles, sports, knitting, the books they read, travel, exotic flowers, hiking, and many, many more.
- Videotape yourself. Analyze your body language. Are you consistently friendly with all children? Do you try to build relationships with all children? Do you move away from some children and lean in to others as you communicate about your interests to your students?
- Investigate Teacher Expectations: Student Achievement (TESA) training. It looks at fifteen teacher behaviors and how they inhibit or promote academic achievement.
- Do some reflection. If 20 percent of your students are into hip-hop and you can't stand it, how might that play out in your class? If you find some students' cultural norms, behaviors, or hidden rules repugnant,

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how might that be reflected in your body language as you interact with them? Note: Recently, in a workshop, a young teacher asked what he should do if he despised hip-hop. When asked what he thought he should do, he said respect the students and do his best. He answered his own question. We can't always bond with student interests, but we can respect that they might have different interests than we do.

- Establish journal buddies with your students.
- Get to know your students through their journal responses. Honestly respond to them. You will see a marked improvement in their behavior and academics using this strategy.
- Smile at your students and smile with them.
- Listen to your students.

Write down your strategies for building relationships with your students and families.

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I hope you found several strategies in this chapter to build relationships with your students and their families. Once the relationship is in place, learning can flow. Chapter 11 offers strategies to build a school culture that honors all staff, students, and families.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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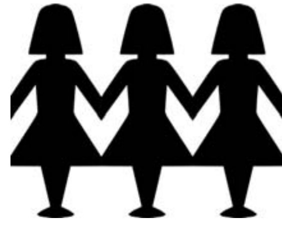
Sylwester, Robert. *A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom: Applying Biological Research to Classroom Management* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2000).



11

Creating a School Culture That Welcomes Students, Staff, and Families

How do we build a school culture that welcomes culturally diverse learners and their families? How do you create a climate of collegiality among staff? These are challenges for every school. We learned from Brenda's narrative in Chapters 3 and 7 that culturally different families may feel isolated and become disengaged from their children's schools. Teachers, too, may feel isolated and disengage. So what are strategies administrators and staff can use to ensure every child's family feels a sense of belonging to the school, and each staff member feels a part of the school family? Fortunately, every school has one or more isolated classrooms that welcome culturally diverse learners and their families with teachers who know how to connect with families, students, and colleagues. However, small pockets of excellence do not create an excellent school. To create a school of excellence, a positive, academic culture must flourish with staff members collaborating together to design instruction, assess student learning, and support learners in a myriad of ways all the while connecting with their families. This chapter examines school culture and its impact on culturally diverse learners and their families and the staff that works with them.

School culture is extremely important. It shapes the norms of the environment. It says what is cool and what is in. If that culture is one of academic rigor, then that's cool; that is the goal. By achieving, students are buying into the

culture, into their environment of acceptance. By failing, they are failures of that culture. A student's perceived acceptance into the school culture directly affects his or her motivation to achieve.

Both teachers and students can be caught in a perceived reality that keeps each individual from attaining his or her potential (Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005). Garcia (quoted in Artiles & Ortiz, 2002) suggests that in order for culturally diverse learners to feel included in the academic school culture, teachers must see their cultural differences as assets to their achievement, rather than as deficits to be modified by the dominant culture.

Describe the current culture of your school.

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How does that culture influence you?

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Read the following scenarios and reflect on how the culture in each of these school districts affects student achievement.

SCHOOL DISTRICT A

In School District A, students are taught and supported and expected to attend the local community college, the state universities, or no college at all. Fewer than half attend college. There seldom is a National Merit Scholar finalist. District scores usually fall just above the median score on state tests. The students are respectful, follow middle-class rules, and mostly do what they are told. Sports are important in the schools, and morning announcements in the secondary schools often center on school sports events. The schools are kept clean and have adequate technology and support help. There is a general mistrust of the administration by the teachers, and an us-versus-them attitude exists. Yet teachers usually have the resources they need and are generally satisfied and do an adequate job. Professional development is viewed with suspicion, with a minority of staff enthusiastically taking part in any professional development not mandated by the district. Others grin and bear it, or don't grin at all. Teachers seldom leave; in fact, several teachers attended as children the very schools in which they now teach. The community surrounding the school is comprised of several generations of families with similar religious and ethnic backgrounds. Diversity usually

is not welcomed in the schools, and newcomers are expected to assimilate and acculturate quickly in order to be successful in their new surroundings. Families usually do not participate or intervene in school affairs, except for sports, and are generally satisfied with their child's education.

SCHOOL DISTRICT B

In School District B, students often enter from the impoverished neighborhoods in a large urban area. The student population primarily consists of Students of Color; however, the majority of the teaching staff is White. Students are expected to drop out, attend local technical schools or a community college, or pursue no advanced schooling. District scores on state tests fall far below the median scores, except at the district college prep school. Schools are kept clean, yet facilities vary from severely lacking to adequate. In some schools, one finds challenges such as nonworking bathrooms, ceilings that leak when it rains, lack of breakfast for every hungry child, young students forced to stand outside in the bitter cold waiting in lines to go through metal detectors, broken desks, inadequate or lack of necessary supplies, and a lack of access to technology. Teacher mistrust is high because teachers are often treated as children, as in a "parent-child" relationship, being told what to do and how to do it as though they lack efficacy. The teachers union is strong, and the administration and the union are often at odds. Teachers often are moved from school to school, and often they teach next door to uncertified staff or substitute teachers. It's not unusual to find teachers teaching core subjects without a college major in the area. Students in the schools are orderly or disruptive, depending on the administration at each building and the teacher in the classroom. Yet even in the most orderly of buildings, students seldom reach high levels of academic rigor. Teacher expectations and student expectations often wane with each passing year, and seniors find themselves unprepared for college and unable to compete with students from districts that lie within five miles of their schools. Families come to the schools to complain; teachers contact families to complain. There is little collaboration or connection among the families, administration, and staff.

SCHOOL DISTRICT C

In School District C, the schools are reputed to be among the best in the state. District scores rank at top levels, and 99 percent of the high school graduates attend college. From kindergarten on, there is an expectation that students will attend an Ivy League school or a private liberal arts college in another state, preferably on the East Coast. Students are challenged from the day they enter school, and the evidence of academic success permeates the entire district. Academic rituals abound in this district. Juniors are involved in a lengthy awards ceremony where alumni of Ivy League schools give book awards to the most promising students. Students usually are involved in several extracurricular academic activities outside of school. Kumon math, music study with

symphony performers, Sylvan Learning Centers, weekly tutors, and additional foreign language classes are common evening activities for the district's resident children. Sports are important, but all-inclusive, so a student can be a member of any sports team, regardless of ability. Schools are clean but not necessarily more modern or better equipped than in School District A. The priority obviously is not on the facilities but on the learning that takes place inside. Teachers usually have master's degrees in their content area and often consider it a failing of theirs if a child does not succeed. There is a high degree of efficacy on the part of the teachers and most students. There is a sense that "we're all in this together." Morning announcements focus on academic successes, and a day seldom goes by when one does not hear of a student or an entire student group winning a prestigious award. Administrators generally treat teachers as equals and as adults capable of making important classroom decisions. Teachers work in collaboration and continuously refine their practice through professional development and self-study, putting in many hours outside the school day to improve. From the moment a student enters the halls of this district's schools, he or she knows that college means another step toward personal and economic success. Students learn how to play the stock market, do out-of-state college visits during their junior year, and are carefully directed by a college counselor. Diversity usually is valued. Students mix in social groups, and many have traveled to other countries and even lived there. African American students who attend this school system through a voluntary, court-regulated desegregation program enter this world of academic expectations. The result? The achievement gap is more narrow in this district than in most other districts involved in the desegregation program. Why? For a variety of reasons, although one is climate, the school culture of academic excellence. Buying into this culture brings acceptance, not alienation. Teachers call families before each school year begins and establish a positive connection. There are several family functions held throughout the school year. Teachers make positive phone calls home, send student work home weekly, and e-mail a weekly newsletter. Families are visible in the schools, volunteering in classrooms and staying connected to their child's education.

Reflect on the three scenarios. List why you think School District C has higher achievement.

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What can you do to establish a school culture of academic excellence?

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HOW-TO STRATEGIES

Level: Elementary/Middle/High School
Subject: Cross-curricular

- Use professional mentors from the community. (elementary/middle/high)
- For role models, post pictures of People of Color in various professions. (elementary/middle/high)
- Ask retired teachers to volunteer in schools to provide time for teacher collaboration. (elementary/middle/high)
- Post visuals of universities in the halls and public places. (elementary/middle/high)
- Organize orientations for students and parents that revolve around college placement and financial aid. (middle/high)
- Encourage staff to share their stories of how, when, and why they attended college. (elementary/middle/high)
- Have staff mentor students. (elementary/middle/high)
- Have college recruiters visit and meet with students during their sophomore year. (high)
- Administer the PSAT to students in English classes during their sophomore year and go over the test with all students, teaching them test-taking strategies. (high)
- Require English teachers to teach the SAT/ACT vocabulary lists as a regular part of their classes. (high)
- Have English teachers assign the college essay as one of their regular assignments during Grades 10, 11, and 12. Have contests celebrating the best. Consider having the students read their essays over the public address system on occasion. (high)
- Have English teachers mentor students through the college application process. Use the English research paper to investigate college choices. (high)

BUILDING A COLLEGIAL CULTURE AMONG STAFF

Just as teachers need to hold high expectations for their students, administrators need to hold high expectations for staff and treat them accordingly, offering them the same respect they expect in return. Professional attitudes of high expectation can develop from being treated professionally by supervisors and peers. For example, consider Nancy's experience. Nancy experienced a big "a-ha" moment when she was "just" a teacher in a district where she thought she was respected. She had worked very hard to bring a Tibetan dance group to the high school as part of the international education project. After the

performance, the central office personnel, dance group, and university people were invited to a luncheon in the school's library. As she stood in line talking with the university folks, the assistant superintendent came over and said, "Nancy, you need to go to the back of the line and wait to see if there is enough food for you to eat with us." After just having introduced the group to the students and faculty in a large assembly, she was now being treated as someone invisible. This made a lasting impression. The hierarchical attitude of this administrator clearly showed her that in the scheme of things, she was not valued as highly as others.

How many times have you attended meetings for teachers in your building where the food served was inferior to the food served to the administrators in the same district at their meetings? Do administrators have access to free coffee in central office buildings while teachers much pay for theirs? Some may say that cost is a factor, but the way we treat people shows our real attitudes toward them. Teachers have to be treated as equals to administrators, not as inferiors.

What do educators in your building do to encourage professional attitudes among teachers? Below are suggestions you, as an administrator or teacher, may implement to improve professional attitudes among all staff.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

- Greet each colleague daily with a warm smile.
- Keep each colleague's interests in mind and share professional development opportunities with him or her. (Once a department head said he threw away the professional development notices because he knew we, his department, would not want to do anything in our free time—we had to tell him to let us make that decision.)
- Learn about your colleagues, share interesting news articles with them, and other things of interest.
- Consider starting a group that your colleagues could take part in and share, such as Zumba, yoga, a knitting group, hiking group, or volleyball.
- Consider a newsletter about staff interests. This could include school want ads with things the staff wants to sell, find, do, communicate about, work at, and so on.
- Have a weeklong staff presentation to faculty and students alike. Sign up staff to present on an area of interest; then book the library, have teachers bring their classes, and display books related to the interests. Everything is free. When one school did this, several staff members said it was the most positive experience of their years at the school.
- Institute incentive programs throughout the year. This can include meal passes, movie tickets, and other donations from the community.
- Post a bulletin board with staff recognitions, new babies, achievements, and the like.
- Have a potluck luncheon once a month revolving around a different theme. One school did this and said it improved staff morale more than

anything they had tried over the years. Leave the food out for all lunch periods and ask staff to gather and enjoy.

- Have an ice cream social during lunch hour for staff. A student multicultural club did this for a school's staff, and several teachers said it was the first time they had talked with the students in a casual atmosphere. It was a win-win situation.

Most of these kinds of activities can be implemented without additional costs and can be divided among interested staff and open to all. Consider one of these activities at your school over the course of at least a couple of weeks. Report to your group or team how it influenced morale.

Sometimes, the simplest things can build morale in a school and bring educators together so that they can begin to focus on professional attitudes. When teachers feel undervalued and invisible, they tend to hinder change rather than embrace it. Just as students need to feel valued and visible, teachers need this, too.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

Suggestions for administrators to build a positive school culture include the following:

- Honor the history of the school. Every school has a "historian" who knows the history. Value that person and ask for her or his input throughout the year. Value and acknowledge the contributions of the past.
- Use humor at staff gatherings. Begin with jokes, play, or movement that causes staff to laugh with each other.
- Celebrate staff members when they have birthdays, babies, grandbabies, weddings, and so on.
- Conversely, offer sympathy when appropriate. Talk privately to staff members who are going through hard times; put cards in their mailboxes, and so on.
- Involve the staff in decision making. Don't "lay" things on them.
- Hold high expectations for staff, and forget the past.
- Ask advice from staff, targeting the strengths of each, making each staff member feel special in some way.
- Create spaces and times where staff can be collaborative.
- Don't be afraid to take risks.
- Openly share your mistakes and demonstrate you are equal to, not better than, the staff. Make it okay to struggle and make mistakes as part of the journey to excellence.
- Allow staff to have input into their own professional development, understanding that some staff members will want to take more control of their professional development and career than others.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

When we show *respeto* to others, we honor others. When we honor and value others, we listen to them, and this mutual respect builds a strong platform for collaboration. Collaboration works when everybody appreciates the role they play in student achievement and modifies what they do to serve the mission of the school. Strong relationships build successful collaborations, and successful schools begin their collaboration with relationships. Schools succeed based on the collaborative relationships they foster, both academically and personally. Learning occurs when the teacher-student relationship is established and strengthened every day. Teachers realize they can't do it alone, and once the trust and relationships are established, they find ways to do it together. Time is always an issue; however, creative teachers find ways to plan throughout their school day. Even though teachers need formal collaboration time, they also learn to use their time more judiciously, talking in the halls, sharing lunch and talk, and meeting during planning time. Soon the routine of sharing becomes the norm, and teachers accomplish more teaming and planning within the school structures.

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

Suggestions for building collaborative relationships among staff include the following:

- Celebrate staff member birthdays.
- Create school rituals.
- Drop positive notes into staff mailboxes.
- Have staff share positive things about their colleagues at staff meetings.
- Surprise staff with a chair massage on staff work days.
- Have parents bring family dishes for a special staff luncheon.
- Set up a cadre of volunteers to help staff with menial tasks.
- Set up a cadre of volunteers to help staff work with students in small groups.
- Say hello each time you see a staff member. Too many teachers tell me their administrators walk right by them in the halls without acknowledging them.
- Get local businesses to donate services, gifts, and coupons for staff.
- Set up a one-on-one discussion with staff members and meet with each one once a month.
- If you are an administrator, do a "walkthrough" each day. At midmorning, walk through each staff member's room and acknowledge the teacher and the students. Make this a daily routine, and you will reap amazing benefits from it.
- Add humor to your staff meetings, your faculty room, your classrooms, and your hallways.
- Approach the most unapproachable staff member and ask her or him for advice on creating a more pleasant school culture.

- Create a pleasant room where staff can share ideas, relax, and regenerate. Too often, schools have unattractive, windowless staff rooms that are cluttered with old papers and machines that no longer work. Or there may be an ancient refrigerator that is too dirty to hold food. As a teacher, I believe that what the administration creates for its staff says a lot about how they value staff. A fresh coat of paint, a clean refrigerator—with a system for keeping it clean and fresh—attractive furniture, and no clutter tells staff they are appreciated and valued. Add a free hot beverage machine, a book lending library, healthy available snacks, and art on the walls, and you will make your staff feel special. Consider using students and the PTO or other parent groups to create the room for staff, thus building community among all the stakeholders in the school.

CONNECTING TO FAMILIES

In a school that values collaborative relationships, the staff knows that collaboration goes beyond working with other staff members. It also means the collaborative efforts between the staff and the community, the families, the parents, and the caretakers. Mutual respect for families is shown in numerous ways: when parents are included on school committees and councils; when educators speak the first language of the parents; when staff do home visits; and when schools provide parent and guardian centers.

Family Centers

One way to connect with families is to have a family center at the school, where families can congregate and share their joys, concerns, and ideas. Often these centers are staffed by volunteer parents who offer other family members refreshments and opportunities for volunteering in their child's school. There is often a library of books of interest to families, as well as other items of interest. There may be, as observed in a school in a high poverty area, a closet of clothes to give away to children who need them.

These centers need to be warm and welcoming, and when they are, you find parents congregating and collaborating with the schools. The room can be decorated like a coffee shop or a garden room, something to appeal to adults. The money to create these parent centers may come from various sources: vending machines, local or state grants, business donations, community donations, and families themselves. At one school, a local furniture store donated furniture for one center. At another, a food supplier gave free coffee and tea for the year. With a little imagination and creativity (and you can bet some of your parents can provide this), you can equip a center for your parents and guardians that will welcome them into your school and build collaboration with the entire community.

Some parents and guardians are not comfortable coming to school. If this is the case, it is best first to meet where families are most comfortable. This might mean having the meeting in a church hall or tribal center near their home, in a community center or library in their community, or in a coffee shop.

Whatever it takes to form that collaborative relationship with the parent will pay off later in the child's achievement. When parents unite with us, the child has a much better chance of excelling in our class.

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

Ray Chavez, principal of Apollo Middle School in Tucson, set up a community school where community members can learn about computers, take English classes and classes in other areas, and exercise. His College Academy for Parents, which lasts for nine weeks, is a place where parents learn how to save for tuition, how to apply to colleges, and other things needed to support their children. Parents also visit local universities. These initiatives go beyond the school walls and are changing the community. In the Webster Groves School District, Webster Groves, Missouri, a new male principal in a largely African American community went to the Black churches to build collaboration between the school and the church communities. When he had his first open house (which had few participants in previous years), he found a room full of community members. He had reached out, changed his behavior, and gone to the community, rather than expecting the community to reach out first to him.

How did these educators reach families and the community using culturally considerate strategies?

HOW-TO STRATEGIES

- Respect all voices and bridge language barriers.
- Send school paperwork home in English and in the families' home languages.
- Develop and sustain a welcoming and supportive community for families.
- Provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to develop skills.
- Ask parents to volunteer to be part of the actual school day, for example by serving meals, tutoring students, or monitoring physical breaks.
- Establish a parent center.
- Offer English as a second language classes for adults.
- Have a family treasures night and invite families to bring and share a special dish from their culture.
- Have an oral history night and ask parents and grandparents to come and share their stories.
- Hold a school rummage sale, car wash, bake sale, picnic, or the like.

- Hold a schoolwide book club for families. Offer it in more than one language. For example, *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1989, 1994) is available in Spanish and in English.
- Create a school families album. Invite families to share a family picture for the album, which can be displayed in the school library or the family center.
- Create a school garden and have families tend the garden. Celebrate with a dinner with food from the garden.

Choose one or more strategies from this chapter you will commit to implementing and write them below.

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This chapter focuses on creating a positive school culture for students, their families, and the staff who teach them. Hopefully, you feel empowered with what you have already completed: you have looked inside yourself, you have learned about and from others, and now it is time to integrate that awareness and new knowledge. Part III jumps into instruction with lessons aligned to the CCSS and being taught with success in today's classrooms.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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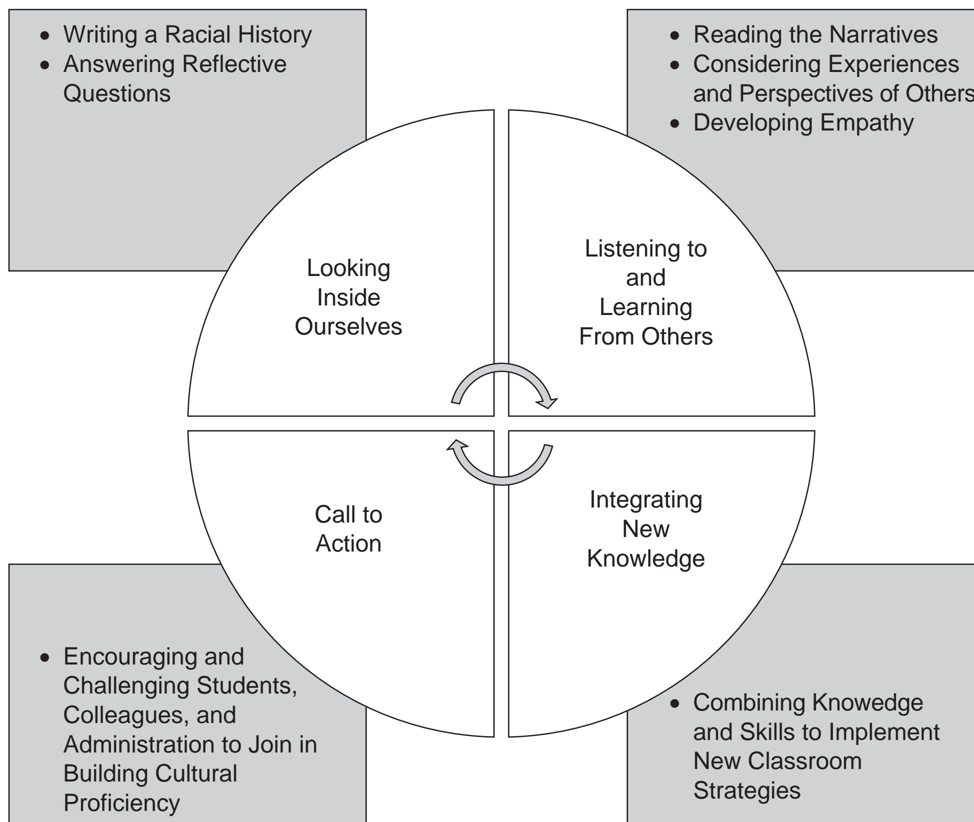
PART III

Integrating New Knowledge



Interracial Model of Mutual Respect
Developed by Bonnie M. Davis, PhD,
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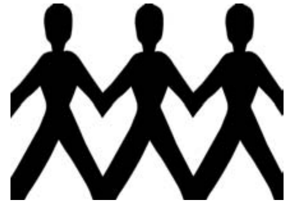

12 Strategies to Teach and Engage Culturally Diverse Learners and ELs

How do you maintain good classroom management, teach to the standards, infuse culturally responsive instruction, do formative and summative assessment, and maintain your sanity? I didn't really mean that last one, but today teachers are being asked to do more and more and hearing fewer and fewer good things about what is done—at least it often seems that way. The teachers with whom I work are tired: they are tired of being criticized, and they are tired of classrooms with more than forty students. They are tired of new "programs" being implemented each year. They are tired of a revolving door of administrators. They are tired of hearing all the great things they should be doing but not being given the time to plan how to do them. They want good, concrete strategies that work with all, or at least most, students, and they want something simple enough they can learn quickly and implement correctly. In this chapter, you find some simple things that work. These strategies are based on what real teachers are doing, and they also are standards-based and culturally responsive.

The integration of culturally responsive instruction and standards-based instruction is "critical to the goal of high achievement for all students. Culturally responsive teaching addresses the needs of students by improving motivation

and engagement (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2000), and standards-based teaching provides all students with the opportunity for rigorous, high-level learning. CRSB (culturally responsive standards-based) teaching means doing both, together" (Saifer et al., 2011, p. 8). The marriage of these two provides us with a framework for good instruction.

When I began teaching more than forty years ago, we thought good instruction was all about the content—what we knew and imparted to the students. Most educators entering the field today know better. While knowledge of content is critical, it is not everything. When students who don't look like us walk into our classes, they expect more from us than a lecture on *The Great Gatsby.* They expect us to establish a safe place for them to learn, to connect with them through passion for our subject matter, and to engage them in the learning by connecting the lesson to their personal lives all the while maintaining a lively instructional pace, incorporating technology, and using a variety of research-based strategies. As we do this, we must assess their learning, and monitor and adjust to ensure they understand the content and learn the skills we are teaching. No small order!

Students may not be able to articulate the how-to strategies they wish their teachers would use, but they will articulate when they feel their teachers do not hold high expectations for them. Jerome says his teacher walks right past his desk when she collects homework, sending him a signal she does not expect him to do it. Jeremy adds that his teacher asks him the easy questions, saving the more difficult ones for the same three students in the class. Of course, most teachers do not do these things, but when our children who don't look like us share what they perceive as low expectations from their teachers, their engagement wanes and their achievement plummets. As a result, we face the challenge of how to maintain high expectations when students don't do their homework or study for tests. If we allow students to think that we don't expect them to turn in their homework, even though that may have been their pattern, they may feel we hold low expectations for them. Rather than assigning homework and assuming some students will not do the work, we must operate from the premise of shaping instruction to challenge students and set them up for success. What does that look like?

What does good teaching look like? How do you teach students who don't look like you?

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What do you expect to see and hear in a classroom when good teaching occurs?

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Think about your students who do not look like you. What is school like for them? What do they find when they walk into your classroom?

If they are with quality teachers, they may experience a class such as the one described below. This is not on an exciting topic—it is on phrases, with an emphasis on prepositional phrases. It is boring to most, but this teacher manages to connect to the learners by using strategies available to anyone.

Imagine you are a freshman at Central High School and your name is Rhonda. Read the following vignette, and as you read, reflect on how you feel.

It's Monday, and Rhonda can't wait to go to Mrs. Smith's English class. Every day Mrs. Smith stands at her door and welcomes Rhonda, saying her name and often offering a positive comment specific to something she is wearing or has recently accomplished. On Mondays, she often asks if Rhonda had a good weekend. Rhonda feels and believes that Mrs. Smith wants her in class. Music with an upbeat tempo is playing as Rhonda enters the room, and Rhonda's mood improves as she sways to the music.

Since Mrs. Smith drilled procedures into the students' minds the first few weeks of class, Rhonda knows exactly what to do as she enters: she takes her writing folder from the plastic crate, sits down, takes out her daily assessment and feedback chart *and marks the effort she plans to expend and her level of background knowledge about today's topic in the appropriate space, as well as writing down the Common Core State Standard, the Language Standard, and the objective for the day, which is clearly posted on the board in the same place every day. She also adds the SWBAT (Students Will Be Able To DO) into the graphic organizer provided weekly. She puts this back into her folder until the end of class, when she will then mark her effort for the day and the degree to which she understands the material taught. Next she takes out her class notebook and dates the page, then begins to write the prompt for the "Do Now" in her notebook. For the first few minutes of class (there is a digital timer clearly displayed on the front white board), she writes her response to the Do Now. The Do Now is a prompt based on today's lesson that connects the learning to Rhonda's life.*

Students are learning how to use prepositions today, and the Do Now asks Rhonda to write for five minutes about all the ways she relates to a phone, using as many prepositions as she can from the word wall posted in the room. A sample sentence is also posted on the board that states, "When the phone rings, I look for it, pick it up, and talk into it by putting the phone next to my ear." When the timer goes off, she puts down her pen, and waits for Mrs. Smith to begin the daily sharing time.

Because Rhonda has been welcomed, knows exactly what will be taught in class that day and what she is expected to learn as a result of that teaching—and she has completed the Do Now prompt that ties into the lesson that will be taught—Rhonda is relaxed and ready to share her answer to the prompt. She knows in Mrs. Smith's class she does not have to worry about being made fun of or ridiculed by either students or the teacher. Mrs. Smith asks for three students to share, but the students are so excited about sharing their sentences that she allows several more students to share. The class laughs several times as they listen

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to students' sentences packed with prepositions. Even with all the sharing, this exercise takes just a few minutes and the class is soon ready to begin the lesson.

Rhonda knows they will laugh during Mrs. Smith's class more than once every day. Rhonda is relaxed. Her brain is ready to learn. She feels good, and she is interested in what is to come because she likes and trusts Mrs. Smith and believes that Mrs. Smith is teaching them things she needs to learn. After the Do Now sharing, Mrs. Smith teaches the new lesson on phrases, specifically prepositions and prepositional phrases. She shares with the students why they need to learn about prepositions and connects it to their lives, stating they need to learn how to use prepositions correctly because they are the glue of standard English, which she calls "money English" and "green English." She emphasizes that for students to be successful in the careers or colleges they choose, they must be able to read, write, and speak green English.

Mrs. Smith has several students come to the front of the room, where they choose a part of speech, including the prepositions, and create sentences by standing in different formations. The students laugh and learn at the same time. Mrs. Smith continually checks for understanding throughout the lesson by using an assortment of formative assessments. She has students call out phrases, and when it is a prepositional phrase, students stand up. They are raising the energy in the room as well as energizing themselves. Next, students go to the class computers and find the news of the current day. They choose an article that interests them and read it, noting the prepositions. They copy one sentence into their notebook, underlining the prepositions. They return to their preassigned cooperative groups and share their work, while Mrs. Smith walks around the room and checks on each student's progress. Music plays softly in the background during the cooperative group work and the writing time. During the final minutes of class, the students use the prepositions to create a persuasive paragraph about whether cell phones should be allowed to be used by students during class time. Rhonda is interested in this topic since it relates to her life.

At the end of the hour, Mrs. Smith asks students to take out their assessment sheet and mark their level of effort and understanding for the day's lesson. Rhonda completes her sheet, picks up her books and writing folder, and places the folder in the crate on her way out of the room. Rhonda knows her homework is to continue reading in her self-selected novel in preparation for the long-term project she is doing. She hands Mrs. Smith her assessment sheet and the paragraph she has written as she walks out the door. Mrs. Smith smiles at each student and thanks them for working hard in class that day.

A feedback and assessment chart like the one mentioned above can be found in Jane Pollock's (2012, p. 23) book, *Feedback: The Hinge That Joins Teaching and Learning.*

Granted, that lesson was mostly lower level thinking, yet Mrs. Smith found a way to make even that fun and enjoyable. If we can engage students around learning something as mundane as prepositions, then we certainly can engage them in lessons involving higher level evaluation, synthesis, and creativity.

What strategies did Mrs. Smith use to engage her students?

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Mrs. Smith uses a myriad of instructional strategies, as well as relationship strategies. She builds relationships with her students and supports learning through the following:

- Offering warm welcomes
- Connecting the Do Now activity to the lesson
- Having students record the objective and write the SWBAT for the day
- Connecting the lesson to students' lives
- Using humor
- Using clear and explicit procedures and guidelines
- Teaching to the CCSS for language arts
- Posting the language standard and incorporating it into her instruction
- Expecting students will meet the objective
- Giving clear and explicit direct instruction
- Using guided practice
- Using a visual timer for discussion, reflection, and other work
- Using graphic organizers
- Using nonverbal commands
- Using direct verbal commands
- Incorporating formative assessment throughout the lesson in the forms of the "white boards," "thumbs-up, thumbs-down," students standing up, and other nonverbal responses
- Incorporating formative assessment by asking questions of the class
- Incorporating formative assessment by the use of the formal self-assessment chart
- Using movement by having students stand at desks when they know the answer
- Using movement by having students create sentences at the front of the room
- Using visual and kinesthetic cues when students tie the parts of speech to certain students
- Having students talking with each other
- Having students using higher level thinking when they begin creating their own paragraphs
- Holding high expectations
- Using good classroom management strategies
- Having students work with others
- Ending with a creative activity to embed the learning and collecting it at the end of class

- Collecting student paragraphs as a "check-out" activity to assess what the students have learned to support her planning for the following day
- Telling the students goodbye by standing at the door, smiling, and making comments

To view videos of exemplary teachers demonstrating the strategies that Mrs. Smith uses in her lesson, go to School Improvement Network's *PD 360 Bonnie Davis Group* (http://www.schoolimprovement.com/experts/bonnie-davis) and check out the following videos.

Formative Assessment

- Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 5, Formative Assessment

Cooperative Groups, Pair/Share (Any Kinds of Student Groups or Collaborative Work)

- Achievement for Students With Special Needs E & S—Segment 11, The Value of Grouping and Working in Teams

Note Taking and Summarizing During Direct Instruction

- Classroom Instruction That Works E & S—Segment 4, Summarizing and Note-Taking

Setting Objectives, Setting Goals, Teaching to the Standards

- Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 5, Formative Assessment (Teaching to the Standards)
- Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 9, Cue Sets (Objectives, Goals)

Brain-Based Strategies Such as Physical Movement, Music, Repetition

- Achievement for Students With Special Needs E—Segment 10, Classroom Practices That Work (Repetition)
- Growing Dendrites: 20 Instructional Strategies That Engage the Brain—Segment 4, Music, Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rap

Making Students Visible and Acknowledging Students (Culturally Responsive Instruction—Your Best Examples of CRI)

- Effective Professional Development—Segment 4, Study Elementary: At the Brink
- Courageous Conversations About Race—Segment 8, Equity in a School Community
- How to Increase Minority Student Achievement—Segment 1, Closing the Gaps

Differentiated Instruction

- Differentiated Instruction Applied E—Segment 8, The Applied Differentiation Map: What?

Questioning Strategies, Higher Level Questioning, Equitable Calling on Students

- Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 4, The Guiding/Essential Questions
- Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 7, Summative Assessment and Backward Design

Individualized Project-Based Learning

- Equity and Innovation: Kihei Charter School—Segment 3, Project-Based Learning
- Teaching Strategies, Secondary, Differentiating Projects in a Science Class

Vocabulary, Writing, and Reading Instruction

- Differentiated Instruction Applied E & S—Segment 7, The Applied Differentiation Map
- Achievement for Students With Special Needs E & S—Segment 4, Strategies—CLC Level 3

In addition to these listed videos, do a general search on the PD 360 Web site and check out videos that demonstrate teachers using the following strategies: Teaching Literacy (all levels); Assessment; Note Taking and Summarizing During DI; Questioning Strategies; Higher Level Questioning; Equitable Calling on Students; and any others that interest you.

Mrs. Smith demonstrates how to teach a "boring" content piece in an interesting way. In no way is this an example of a higher-level instructional class; rather, it is intended to show how even teaching prepositions can be designed to engage and motivate students. In the next chapter are several lesson ideas that depend upon higher level thinking, rigorous investigation, creativity, and individualized project based learning.

USING TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY

If Mrs. Smith is fortunate to teach in a district that honors the use of technology and provides it for staff and students, we would add the use of the iPad or iPod Touch or iPhone to the description above. In *Apps for Learning: 40 Best iPad, iPod Touch/iPhone Apps for High School Classrooms*, Harry Dickens and Andrew Churches (2012) suggest using technology to extend learning and embed content and skills into long-term memory. Dickens believes "we must embrace mobile technologies as a teaching tool, as well as a delivery mechanism for relevant content for classrooms" (p. i). In fact, "it is no longer enough that we educate only to the standards of the traditional literacies. To be competent and capable in the 21st century requires a completely different set of skills—the 21st-century fluencies" (p. vi). With the lesson described above, Mrs. Smith might have learners use the following Apps: iThoughtsHD; Skype (for interviewing authors); and StoryKit (for creating stories). In the book are scores of

others to use with lessons across the disciplines. This is an area where students love to be involved and suggest uses for the apps they find.

In her book *Transformers: Creative Teachers for the 21st Century,* Mary Kim Schreck (2009) tells us that "in the past decade, educators have shifted from emphasizing learning *about* technologies to learning *with* technologies" (p. 157). She suggests that if you don't already have the standards for teaching technology, you can obtain copies of the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for students and for teachers from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) at www.iste.org. Schreck's suggestions for using technology in the classroom include the following:

- Increase engagement with the curriculum by incorporating complex, real-world problems and investigate them learning with technology.
- Provide access to information and tools that professionals use to create high-quality work. Third graders can create professional looking PowerPoint presentations. Students can use the same search engines, such as Google or Yahoo!, as professionals. Students can compose their own music using sequencers and notation software and perform it using Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) software.
- Scaffold learning using technologies such as calculators, spreadsheets, databases, data visualization tools—such as InspireData from Inspiration Software, Geometer's Sketchpad, Google's free SketchUP solftware—and the role-playing Decisions, Decision software.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on student understanding and identify changes in student learning using concept maps and graphic organizers, and digital journals or portfolios.
- Collaborate and communicate with others using e-mail and the range of online pen pal programs, such as ePals, Skype, Weblog, iChat, MySpace, and Facebook. Be sure to follow your district guidelines for social media! (pp. 161–170)

Granted, this book does not focus on technology, yet we acknowledge the importance of infusing technology into instruction, and we cite Web sites and examples of lessons that infuse technology in Chapters 15 and 16. In addition, for your own professional development, there are Web sites listed throughout the book pertaining to the material presented in the chapters, and we suggest you go to School Improvement Network's site (http://www.schoolimprovement.com/experts/bonnie-davis) and watch the PD 360 videos provided that align with many of the strategies described in this book.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: USE OF RITUALS AND ROUTINES

One of the strongest teachers I recently observed is Jessica Jones, a high school English teacher in California. With classrooms of more than forty students, she is like a conductor of a symphony: always in control and leading the way. She says she does it through her use of daily rituals and routines. She shares below:

RITUALS AND ROUTINES

Jessica Jones

I have the same basic routine every day, regardless of the class or grade level.

The first one to three minutes after the bell rings I stand in the middle of the room, with my clipboard in hand, thanking students (individually and by name) who have already started the Do Now. For example: "I see one, two, three, wait . . . four students working already. Thank you James, thank you Melissa, thank you Melanie, thank you Thomas." Once I begin thanking students, the room usually quiets immediately because everyone wants to be acknowledged in front of the class.

The next four or five minutes, I circulate the room as students silently complete the Do Now. This is probably my favorite time of day; everyone is quiet and on task! After I have circulated the entire room, I write down the names of two students as the "positive role models" for the day.

The next five or six minutes, we read the objective for the day's work, the class rules, go over the Do Now together, do a vocabulary/grammar sentence on the board, and complete the infamous check-in.

By this point, everyone is engaged and "checked in," so I proceed with the day's agenda. I spend a moment to remind students of upcoming assignments and quizzes, and then we review whatever was discussed the previous day. I ask students to look back at the notes from the day before as I ask general questions; they receive points on the clipboard for participating. This generally takes three to four minutes.

Next we read whatever selection we're currently discussing. We read for no more than twelve to fifteen minutes (with reading check questions and discussion as we go). After reading as a group, I let students pair off to complete whatever partner assignment I have prepared. It may be under-the-surface questions or some type of graphic organizer based on the selection. They usually have seven to ten minutes to complete the task. I circulate the room, frequently announcing how many minutes are left to help students stay on task. At the end of the allotted time, I walk around and stamp their work (most work is completed in their notebooks).

At this time, we review the reading and partner tasks together. This usually takes about five minutes.

Depending on the depth of the discussions, we may have about five to seven minutes left of class. I use this time for "one-minute speeches." I pull four student names from a stack of index cards, while another student chooses four topic cards at random. Each student chosen has one minute to stand to talk about whatever comes to mind with that particular topic (such as food, sports, movies). I love this activity because not only do we utilize every minute of class, it's a fun way for students to practice public speaking skills and also to learn more about each other. Even my name is in the stack of cards, so occasionally I'm chosen to speak as well.

OK, there it is—a day in the life of H622!

The check-in mentioned above is a community-building exercise in which the teacher asks a question and each student has the opportunity to give a one-word answer or say "pass."

Jessica uses the same basic class framework every day with every level, ninth grade through twelfth grade. Students come in knowing they will

- Be respected and treated fairly
- Be involved in several different activities within the class period, which makes the time go faster and maintains a lively pace
- Be working with peers
- Have a chance to hear from peers during the check-in and other activities
- Receive proximity and be noticed by Ms. Jones
- Receive help when they need it
- Be expected to work, participate, and follow the class rules

Jessica is successful with all learners. She uses a framework of rituals and routines that reduce stress and threat, build community among all class members, and set the stage for learning. Her consistency, calm demeanor, and clear expectations support all students. In her classes, African American males have their hands raised and can't wait to participate. Over the three years I observed her classes, I have yet to see a student who was not participating. In addition, her daily vocabulary and grammar exercises and repetition of expectations support ELs as she includes language goals in her daily practice.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

After the publication of *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You* in 2006, an educator who worked with teachers of ELs contacted me. She complimented me on the strategies to teach ELs in the book. I was happy to hear this, but I had no training in this field and was surprised to hear her comment. Yet now after reading about and working with ELs in a large urban district on the West Coast for the past several years, I understand better what she meant. The strategies we need to use with ELs consist of good teaching practices we learned in brain-based workshops, cooperative learning, culturally responsive workshops, and other professional development work. These strategies work, yet there are also additional strategies we need to use when we are working with ELs. Determined to learn what these are, I read several books on the topic and worked with EL teachers. I learned that we all need to be teachers of English and reading. This can be daunting to teachers in other content areas, but we can employ concrete strategies, such as teaching vocabulary before one begins the lesson (sometimes called *frontloading*). You can find other strategies throughout this chapter. In addition to these strategies, we need to keep in mind the diversity of our ELs.

Because students with limited English proficiency come from 400 different language backgrounds and number more than 5 million, there is an immense diversity among ELs. However, nearly 80 percent of these are Spanish speakers (Kindler, cited in Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010, p. 11). Surprisingly, "recent statistical trends in U.S. secondary schools indicate that 80% to 90% of ELs in middle and high school are actually born in the United States" (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2011, p. 1). The challenge then is in understanding how ELs learn best. What works and what doesn't? Fortunately, Claude Goldenberg and

Rhoda Coleman have done much of the work in the field to find the answers for us, and they published them in their book, *Promoting Academic Achievement Among English Learners,* in 2010. In their book, they list many recommendations for working with ELs, including the following:

- Use reading and other instructional materials students recognize.
- Use interactional styles students recognize and are familiar to them.
- Involve parents and families in students' education.
- Make home visits to get to know families and the community. (pp. 132–133)

They conclude their studies by offering a final set of recommendation, ones that speak to teachers in the classroom:

- Remember that the foundation of effective practice for ELs is the same as effective practice *in general*.
- ELs receiving instruction in English will need additional supports.
- Choose strategies based on an understanding of research-based practices.
- Focus on academic language.
- Take advantage of professional development.
- Provide instruction for ELs throughout the school day.
- Administer uniform and consistent assessments of student outcomes in literacy, content areas, and English language development.
- Work with colleagues to identify important academic goals for ELs.
- Use peer coaching. (pp. 168–170)

Their list is comforting because so many of their suggestions are what good teachers already do. Understanding that EL students will need extra support, we can take advantage of professional development, work in collaboration with our colleagues, and choose research-based strategies for ELs such as those found in *Classroom Instruction That Works With English Language Learners* (Hill & Flynn, 2006). The strategies identified in this book are the result of a meta-analysis, a combination of "the results of many studies to determine the average effect of a technique or strategy" (p. 6). The researchers at McREL identified, as a result of the meta-analysis, nine categories of instructional strategies that proved to be exceptionally effective in increasing student performance:

1. Setting objectives and providing feedback
2. Nonlinguistic representations
3. Cues, questions, and advance organizers
4. Cooperative learning
5. Summarizing and note taking
6. Homework and practice
7. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Identifying similarities and differences (p. 6)

This list of research-based strategies is one place to begin with your professional learning community to study what can best support your ELs. You might choose one strategy, all practice implementing it for three weeks, and then share results. In this way, you will keep the focus on your EL students, and that can improve your relationships with them.

Many other strategies and suggestions can be found in books for teachers with ELs in their classes. In their book, *Preventing Long-Term ELs,* Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2011) have the following recommendations for teachers. These recommendations come from the Carnegie Panel on Adolescent EL Literacy (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). The panel of thirteen recommended the following for teachers:

- Integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills into instruction from the start.
- Teach the components and processes of reading and writing.
- Teach reading comprehension strategies.
- Focus on vocabulary development.
- Build and activate background knowledge.
- Teach language through content and themes.
- Use native language strategically.
- Pair technology with existing interventions.
- Motivate adolescent ELs through choice. (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, p. 8)

Looking over this list, the only ones that are not part of a strong teacher's repertoire are teaching language through content and themes and using native language strategically. The others are integral to good teaching that uses a strong literacy focus of writing and reading across the content areas, as well as the brain-based strategies such as choice and activating background knowledge.

When classroom teachers express that they don't know how to teach ELs, you can remind them that if they are using good instructional strategies, they are already part way there. Learning additional strategies to specifically meet the needs of ELs is the next step. In *Implementing RTI With English Learners,* professors and practitioners Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg (2011) suggest that to effectively teach ELs, teachers need to view themselves as language teachers and know the proficiency levels of their students. (I sometimes find teachers who cannot tell me the country a particular student is from—"Oh, he's Asian"—and they don't know the learner's proficiency level.) After examining the available models for instruction, Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg find the following standards of teaching practice embedded within all of them.

- Teachers and students producing together
- Developing language and literacy across the curriculum
- Making lessons meaningful
- Teaching complex thinking
- Teaching through conversation (p. 25)

They emphasize that these standards can all be taught in Tier I of Response to Intervention (RTI), or taught in the general classroom by the teacher.

After reviewing the research and reading several books on teaching ELs, I learned the following:

- Use research-based teaching strategies with ELs.
- Go over vocabulary deliberately before the lesson and use it repeatedly throughout the lesson.
- Use culturally responsive relationship building strategies.
- Explicitly teach the "mental models" of your discipline. For example, for English teachers, this means we teach the model of a plot line explicitly.
- Assess often in order to remain aware of the learner's needs.
- Know the country of origin of each EL, something about that country and culture, and what level of English the student has mastered.
- Care about your ELs and express that to them by calling on them in class, keeping your expectations high, building a community that welcomes all learners, and smiling and enjoying what you teach.

Returning to the example of Mrs. Smith, we find that she meets the needs of her ELs by also embedding language standards into her lessons. She addresses each of the standards of teaching practice for ELs suggested by Fisher et al. (2011) in the example at the beginning of this chapter.

In Mrs. Smith's lesson, she works with her students throughout the class to develop language and literacy skills that will be used across the curriculum. She makes her lessons meaningful by connecting them to students' lives and by stressing their importance. She frontloads the vocabulary for her ELs and checks for comprehension, making sure they understand the work. She teaches complex thinking by having students practice using the new information to create their own paragraphs, and she has the students work together in groups, thus practicing their learning during conversation. She also understands the importance of connecting with each learner and makes sure she greets each student at the door.

RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

These practices show Mrs. Smith's students she cares about them and expects them to succeed. Some educators find it a stretch to connect relationship building to actual instruction and student achievement. Yet as learners we usually perform better when we feel safe and comfortable, and that occurs when we are surrounded by people we enjoy and we believe care about us. Think about a time when you were asked to do something with a person you didn't like, versus a time when you were asked to do something with someone you cared about and liked. Didn't you find yourself dreading doing the first task but not as hesitant to work on the second? The environment, both physical and emotional, affects the engagement of students, and when students feel they are liked (or loved), they respond in kind.

Also, when students believe they are being held to high expectations of material that is neither too difficult nor too easy, they respond in kind. Mrs. Smith, who

does not look like her students, relates to them in ways that demonstrate she holds high expectations for them, and she engages students with connections to their experiences showing she respects them. She knows she must learn about her students' cultures, and she devotes time and effort to study the cultures of her students. She has participated in professional development focusing on building relationships with students and learning the cultural homogeneities (norms of a culture reinforced by the culture) of her students' cultures. Putting into practice what she has learned has given Mrs. Smith a knowledge base from which she draws as she confidently interacts with students who don't look like her. Her body language is relaxed and respectful, and her students sense her respect for them. Throughout this book, you will find how-to strategies to build relationships with students that connect to their ethnic and racial cultures within the context of standards-based instruction.

FEEDBACK

In Jane E. Pollock's 2012 book, *Feedback: The Hinge That Joins Teaching and Learning,* we find an answer to engaging students and improving student achievement. Pollock writes: "The hinge factor to improving student learning in schools is feedback. . . . When we address feedback as a strategy that teachers can teach students to use, student engagement increases and so does student achievement" (p. xi). This was a new idea to me, and even though I have had students do reflections, I have never embedded it as a strategy within instruction. I am so excited about the possibilities for doing this that I've spread the word about this book, with its simple charts, to use to teach students to self-assess their engagement and their learning. Several teachers are using Pollock's work to do just that and are beginning to see results. From AP classes to struggling readers, this feedback strategy works.

It only makes sense. We know most engaged learners achieve more, and when we engage, we want feedback. Pollock writes that high-achieving students have learned to seek feedback, thus staying more engaged with the work. Therefore, if we can teach our disengaged learners techniques for seeking feedback, this will also keep them more engaged.

Pollock coauthored *Classroom Instruction That Works* with Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering (2001), a seminal text in the area of classroom instructional strategies. In that work, the authors

> posited that teachers at any grade level in any subject area could significantly improve learning if they deliberately taught students to use high-yield strategies in order to retain knowledge better, or learn better. One of the strategies, setting goals and providing feedback, showed a strong effect on learning ($d = 0.61$, or a 23 percentile point gain, considered to be very high). (quoted in J. E. Pollock, 2012, p. 3)

Pollock continues to research the effectiveness of feedback as an instructional strategy, and her findings were published in the 2012 book *Feedback: The*

Hinge That Joins Teaching and Learning. In this book, she expands on the role of feedback in instruction, stating that feedback "tied to a criterion or goal also clarifies relevant prospects for learning more information or for acting" on that goal. This action, whether learning or acting, "intends to improve outcomes and as a result, provides the opportunity for a newly advanced goal." As a result, feedback "can be the hinge factor for improving student learning" (J. E. Pollock, 2012, p. 3).

Why have we not recognized student self-assessment and feedback as an answer for engaging students and improving achievement? Pollock points to two reasons. First, most feedback has been from the teacher to the student, mostly as an assessment of student progress, and asking teachers to do more feedback elicits negative comments from those already feeling overworked. Second, most teachers

> provide a curriculum goal (and objectives) to students, but not deliberately for explicit interaction (setting objectives and providing feedback), so students have not typically learned to self-evaluate or self-regulate their progress using curriculum objectives, thereby reducing the gaps between what they know and can do and the desired goals for their grade level and subject area. (J. E. Pollock, 2012, pp. 3–4)

Therefore, if we can teach learners the tools they need to self-assess, we mediate the first concern; and for the second concern, if the teacher provides "curriculum goals and objectives daily, with a strategy and time for students to interact with them," they teach learners how to engage and achieve (p. 4).

Consider using Pollock's (2012) book *Feedback: The Hinge That Joins Teaching and Learning* with your professional learning groups. You and your colleagues can use the charts found in the book to do your own action research. For example, use the charts with one of your classes, or if you teach in elementary school, use it for part of the day, and then notice if you see improved student engagement and learning after a month. Pollock's research states that in just weeks, teachers see a marked difference in effort and achievement. Marzano writes: "Having students track their [own] progress using [a] rubric is a hidden gem. This strategy involves multiple types of assessments, increases interactions between teachers and students, and provides students with clear guidance on how to enhance their learning" (quoted in J. E. Pollock, 2012, p. 87).

The feedback strategy may well be the most important instructional strategy you can use, for you are having learners attend to the standard and what is to be taught that day, assess their effort and build self-efficacy through the practice, and stay focused on the lesson, thus engaging student brains. When learners do this, they are goal setting, and that is research-based practice.

Feedback strategies for formative and summative assessment are also available in Kay Burke's 2010 book, *Balanced Assessment.* In this book you will find dozens of tools to use for assessment that support you in creating assessments leading from formative to summative. These are excellent tools to share with your professional learning groups.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO ASSESS ENGAGEMENT

Secondary teachers often voice their concerns about the lack of student engagement in their middle and high school classrooms. Fortunately, Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering (2011), in their book *The Highly Engaged Classroom,* offer a perspective with a strategy to mediate this concern. They "articulate an internally consistent perspective on engagement that K–12 classroom teachers can use to plan and execute specific strategies that enhance student engagement" (p. 3) and offer teachers four questions to use when planning instruction: "How do I feel? . . . Am I interested? . . . Is it important? . . . Can I do it?" (pp. 1–2). We presented these questions in a professional development session at an urban high school. Teachers were intrigued, and a week later during their next collaboration, several teachers said using these four questions supported them in understanding which parts of their instruction they needed to focus on and improve. Most acknowledged they need to begin class with a positive-feeling tone, such as Mrs. Smith did in the earlier vignette. Next, a department of math teachers said they get caught with "Am I interested?" because their students are not interested in math. Therefore, they need to work on strategies to interest learners. The science department at the same high school said they can usually interest students with demonstrations and labs, but they get hung up on "Is it important?" and need to find ways to connect the learning to students' future lives. Finally, the question "Can I do it?" was a wake-up call for the entire staff as they realized that in their school many students believe they can't do the work, and the staff needs to work in collaboration to find ways to support student success and empower the belief systems of their students and staff. To address this, one professional learning group elected to do a bookstudy on Carol Dweck's (2006) book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,* and report back to the staff. This book addresses the challenge of working with learners who possess a fixed mind-set and gives ways to support changing mind-sets or belief systems.

In the past decade, we have been blessed with a body of research and thoughtful practices that have made teaching more of a science, while our understanding of its art continues to expand. Sometimes we teachers complain that teaching is hard work. It is! It is a profession that demands long hours, emotional give and take, and just about everything else one has to give on a job.

When good teaching occurs, you usually will find the following:

- Good relationships between students and the teacher
- High expectations for students
- The classroom bonding as a community of learners
- Good classroom management
- Lesson plan design based on research; the use of a model
- Standards-based instruction
- Goal setting for instruction
- Explicit instruction
- Graphic organizers; nonlinguistic representation
- Rubrics before instruction or completion of assignment
- Assessment and accountability
- Goal setting for future achievement

- Support from professional personnel such as counselors, special education instructors, nurses, administrators, and so on
- Good relationships with colleagues
- Valuable feedback from evaluators
- The belief that teaching is a profession, not just a job
- Professional development opportunities
- Opportunities to practice the discipline you teach—if you teach English, the opportunity to write for publication, and so on

When there is engagement between the teacher and the content, and students believe the teacher cares for them, the students will engage with the content and with the caring teacher.

Think about your teaching. What are your instructional strengths and challenges?

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How does the research inform your instructional practice?

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How would you like to improve your instructional practice?

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Set three goals to improve your instructional practice.

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This chapter examined powerful instruction and offered practical strategies for you to include in your practice. Once again, to see these strategies in action, go to PD 360 (http://www.schoolimprovement.com/experts/bonnie-davis) and check out their videos.

Do you like to read and write? Hopefully, you said "Yes!" Far too often, we find students, particularly secondary students, who have lost their love of reading and writing. How do you get that back? The next chapter tells you how and focuses on moving learners from apathy to passion and supporting them in learning to love reading and writing.

SUGGESTED READINGS

English Language Learners

Calderón, Margarita E., and Liliana Minaya-Rowe. *Preventing Long-Term ELs: Transforming Schools to Meet Core Standards* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2011).

Fisher, Douglas, Nancy Frey, and Carol Rothenberg. *Implementing RTI With English Learners* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2011).

Goldenberg, Claude, and Rhoda Coleman. *Promoting Academic Achievement Among English Learners: A Guide to the Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2010).

Hill, Jane, and Kathleen Flynn. *Classroom Instruction That Works With English Language Learners* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2006).

Saifer, Steffen, Keisha Edwards, Debbie Ellis, Lena Ko, and Amy Stuczynski. *Culturally Responsive Standards Based Teaching: Classroom to Community and Back,* second edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2011).

Soto-Hinman, Ivannia, and June Hetzel. *The Literacy Gaps: Bridge-Building Strategies for English Language Learners and Standard English Learners* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2009).

Engagement

Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).

Pollock, Jane E. *Feedback: The Hinge That Joins Teaching and Learning* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2012).

Marzano, Robert J., and Debra J. Pickering. *The Highly Engaged Classroom* (Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory, 2001).

Schreck, Mary Kim. *You've Got to Reach Them to Teach Them* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2011).

SUGGESTED WEB SITES

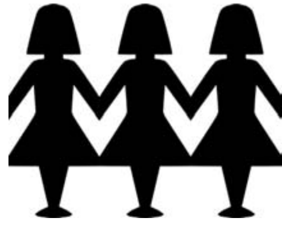
English Language Learners Resources (www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/english-language-learners-resources.aspx

Focus on Effectiveness: Current Education Challenges (www.netc.org/focus/challenges/ell.php)

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (www.tesol.org)

Teaching Long-Term English Language Learners (http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/teach-english-language-learners/english3d.html)

Teach-nology.com (www.teach-nology.com)



13 Moving Students From Apathy to Passion

Learning to Love Reading and Writing

How do we teach diverse learners to love to read and write? Students should love to read and write. Reading takes us to other worlds, offering us excitement, solace, understanding, and companionship. Writing gives us power—the power to influence and change our world, the means to ameliorate friendships through written communication, the tool to understand our inner selves. Yet, all too often, our students resist reading and writing. This chapter discusses ways to encourage students to fall in love with reading and writing.

Do your students resist falling in love with reading and writing? Why? There are several reasons.

- They may have had teachers who were not readers and writers themselves.
- They may be in schools where a culture of reading and writing is not valued.
- They may not see themselves in their assigned texts in schools.
- They may never be offered the opportunities to write about themselves and tell the most important story—their own.
- They may not know how to read or to write.

What can you do to motivate all of your students to love reading and writing? Reading is a complex, recursive thinking process (Fielding & Pearson,

1994; Ogle, cited in Tovani, 2000), and successful readers use the following strategies to navigate the process (Pearson et al., cited in Tovani, 2000):

- They use existing knowledge to make sense of new information.
- They ask questions about the text before, during, and after reading.
- They draw inferences from the text.
- They monitor their comprehension.
- They use strategies when they don't comprehend.
- They decide what is important.
- They synthesize information to create new thinking. (p. 17)

Knowing that students need these strategies, what do you do to encourage your students to develop these skills and learn to love reading? For too many students, reading is just "eating" words with no time to savor them, thinking about the text, and connecting it to their world (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997). And for diverse learners, who may not find themselves represented in the required texts, this can be an even more formidable task.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The CCSS for Reading Literature are K–12.RL.1 to K–12.RL.10. And the ones for Reading Informational Text are K–12.RIT.1 to K–12.RIT.10.

TEXTS THAT REFLECT CULTURES

It is important for students to read texts that reflect their cultures and reflect them accurately. Students need to recognize stereotypes, either by omission or by caricature (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Finding ways for students to make connections to their own lives and to other texts can build motivation in the most stubborn of readers. For example, finding the "right" text for the unmotivated reader can open him or her to the world of reading. Hispanic students can perhaps find themselves reflected in books such as *Mother Goose on the Rio Grande* by Frances Alexander (1997) or *My Name Is Jorge on Both Sides of the River* by Jane Medina (1999). The Bluford Series has hooked scores of readers in our metropolitan area. These books are short, with compelling covers illustrated with African American adolescents, and the stories relate to young lives. You can buy them online at www.townsendpress.com, and they are offered in a kit with a teacher's guide.

You can find additional books that teens enjoy in *I Hear America Reading* by Jim Burke (1999b). Burke lists books that teenage boys enjoy, such as *Always Running* by Luis Rodriguez (1993), *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card (1985), *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien (1990), and *Way Past Cool* by Jess Mowry (1992). He includes lists of books such as *Books for a Small Planet: A Multicultural-Intercultural Bibliography for Young English Language Learners* by Dorothy Brown (1994) and *Great Books for Girls: More Than 600 Books to Inspire Today's Girls and Tomorrow's Women* by Kathy Odean (2002).

A school that reflects a powerful reading and writing culture invariably has a powerful librarian who builds, influences, and nourishes that culture. This librarian is a gatekeeper; he or she can impede students in their reading journeys or open worlds of possibilities for them. I was fortunate to work with Marti Gribbins, a librarian who opened these worlds of possibilities for middle school students at Wydown Middle School, one of the highest achieving middle schools in the state of Missouri. Marti knew the reading interests of each student, and she always had a book to hand them as they searched for their next reads. The seventh graders read a book a week, or 36 books a year, and we posted our book list on the walls of the school for everyone to see. However, this reading culture did not begin at the middle school; it existed in the elementary schools in this district, and most probably in the homes of the students.

Another powerful librarian is Nancy McCormac, librarian at North Glendale Elementary School in the Kirkwood School District. Nancy builds a reading culture, along with reading specialist Roberta McWoods, by individualizing learning and knowing each student as an individual. Students see themselves reflected in the book covers that line the shelves of the library and are posted in the hallways. Librarian Nancy suggests the following books for elementary students:

Whoever You Are by Mem Fox (2006). Illustrated with Leslie Straub's folk art style painting, the book celebrates the similarities and differences of the world's many diverse cultures.

All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka (1999). Colorful paintings and text describe children's skin and hair colors, referencing such phenomena as nature, animals, and flavors.

Being Wendy by Fran Dreschler (2011). Wendy learns to follow her dreams and not be limited by what others think she should be.

The Sandwich Swap by Queen Rania Al Abdullah and Kelly DiPucchio (2010). Lily and Salma always eat lunch together, Lily having her peanut butter sandwich, and Salma, hummus. In this story, they and their classmates learn that friendship is more powerful than their differences.

One of Us by Peggy Moss (2010). Roberta struggles to find her place in a new school until she discovers a group of kids who accept her because they, like her, are all different and "perfect" that way.

The Colors of Us by Karen Katz (2002). Lena learns that brown comes in many shades and begins to see and appreciate them as colors of her favorite foods.

Drita, My Homegirl by Jenny Lombard (2006). The story of two girls, one a refugee from war-torn Kosovo, who become friends in a very unlikely way.

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler (2005). Rhyming verses and colorful illustrations look at diversity and focus on skins, differences, and similarities.

Yo! Yes? by Chris Raschka (1998). In just thirty-four words and with vibrant illustrations, this book tells of a beginning friendship between two very different boys who meet on the street.

Shades of People by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly (2009). Minimal text and wonderful photos of children with different hair colors, facial features, and skin tones, emphasizing that you can't tell from their features what someone is like.

Skin Again by Bell Hooks (2004). A powerful reminder that helps children understand that we are more than the color of our skin.

Chamelia by Ethan Long (2011). A little girl chameleon learns that she can be different in her own ways and still fit in.

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman (1991). Grace loves stories and has a vivid imagination. She's determined to win the role of Peter Pan in her classroom production even though she's a girl, and black.

It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr (2009). This book inspires kids to celebrate their individuality with important messages of understanding and acceptance.

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA: www.yalsa.ala.org) recommends the following books published in 2010 and 2011 for readers ages twelve to eighteen:

Where the Streets Had a Name by Randa Abel-Fattah (2010). Hayaat wants to get soil from her ancestral homeland to save her dying grandmother, but to get it, she must illegally cross the wall dividing Jerusalem's West Bank.

I am J by Chris Beam (2011). The story of J., a genetically assigned female, who struggles to become the man he is.

Bronxwood by Coe Booth (2011). Tyrell confronts his dad, searches for equipment for his DJing gig, and pursues his love interests.

Hush by Eishes Chayil (2010). A girl's ultraconservative Jewish community will not listen to a young girl who tries to share another's secrets.

Where I Belong by Gillian Cross (2011). A Somalian girl goes to England in search of work for money to send to her family.

My Name Is Not Easy by Debby Dahl Edwardson (2011). Alaskan Inupiaq young people are forced into boarding schools away from their families.

Under the Mesquite by Guadalupe Garcia McCall (2011). Lupita's mother has cancer, and this tightly knit Mexican American family faces many changes.

Akata Witch by Nnedi Okorafor (2011). American-born Sunny, an albino, lives in Nigeria and discovers juju and magical powers to survive being a misfit.

Guantanamo Boy by Anna Perera (2011). Fifteen-year-old Khalid Ahmed visits family in Pakistan and ends up being arrested and sent to Guantanamo accused of being a terrorist.

YOUR READING LIFE AND HISTORY

Finding that right book for each reader is an art and a skill that we continue to refine as we share our own love of reading with our students. Who we are as readers is important. Take the following survey to check your love of reading.

- ❒ Are you a reader?
- ❒ Do you love to read?
- ❒ Do you always carry a book with you?
- ❒ Do you read a daily newspaper?
- ❒ Do you know what books are on the bestseller lists?
- ❒ Do your students see you reading?
- ❒ Do your students hear you talk about what you are reading?
- ❒ Is your voice passionate when you talk about reading?

- ❐ Are you expecting your students to do and love something for which you show no passion?
- ❐ Can we really ask another human being to do what we are unwilling to do?

Write a short reflection about what these questions say personally to you.

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Think about reading in your life. Did your parents read to you? Was your childhood home filled with books? Did you observe your parents reading? What is the first book you read? What was your *favorite* childhood book?

Answering these questions can reveal just how important reading is to you. Do you think your students will think reading is more important than you think it is? Unless you are a voracious reader who speaks passionately about reading to your students, you may find that your students are less than passionate about reading.

Write your reading history in the space provided below.

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Let me share my story.

I grew up in a home where my mother read a story to my sisters and me each night at bedtime. I kept lots of children's books in my bedroom. I don't recall ever seeing my parents read a book, but both of my parents read the

daily newspaper. On Sundays, my dad would read the funnies to me from the Sunday newspaper.

I remember learning to read in first grade. I remember practicing the letter sounds. I loved reading from the start. I checked out library books whenever I could, and I read every spare moment. During the summer, I would pride myself on reading a book a day. By fifth grade I was reading mysteries and historical fiction. I read the Nancy Drew series and remember them as my favorites for those middle years. By junior high I was reading biographies, and I remember my mother begging me to go "outside and play" instead of sitting inside on summer days reading a book.

In high school I began to read serious literature, and I was blessed to have an outstanding English teacher, Sister Francesca, for my last three years of high school English. She laughed often and loved literature. When I commented to her that I liked Robert Frost, she handed me a paperback copy of his poems. I still have it today. It has the price clearly marked on the front cover—35 cents. I continued to read for hours each day.

Needless to say, I became a good reader, and when I didn't know what major to declare when I began college, I chose the subject in which I had made an A—freshman honors English. I didn't grow up wanting to be an English teacher. Loving to read led me to that vocation.

My love of reading continues today. I am always reading several books. Usually I am reading a couple of nonfiction texts, one text of fiction, several magazines, a newspaper, and several periodicals. I tear articles out of newspapers, magazines, and periodicals weekly and store them in my categories of interest. Several of my friendships revolve around reading; we discuss and love books.

Books are my friends. You can show your students who search for companionship how books can be their friends too.

When you have a reading life that you passionately share with your students, you build the foundation for a classroom of readers. How does that work? Try these strategies.

Level: Elementary/Middle/High School/Adult
Subject: Cross-curricular

- Share daily with your students the book you are currently reading. You can do this during those empty final three minutes of class or as an opening positive ritual to begin each class day. Read a short passage to them. Do a think-aloud activity for your students. During the mid-1980s, researchers studied the merits of thinking out loud or "mental modeling" (Pearson, Rohler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992). When you model for students your invisible reading process, you empower them with reading strategies. Students who can think aloud about what is happening in their minds are better able to summarize information (Silven & Vauras, 1992). When you model aloud your thinking and the act of summarizing, you actively show students how to do it. As you

read aloud, tell your students to ask questions about the book. Ask them to predict or infer about the plot based on what you share with them. Ask them to compare this book with others. (elementary/middle/high)

- Post your book list in the room along with theirs so that students can see what you are reading. Post yours near the door entrance or light switch. (elementary/middle/high)
- Take students to bookstores. If your school is close to a bookstore, you might do this during the school day. One teacher walks her high school students to the book store (ten minutes), lets them peruse (twenty minutes), and walks back (ten minutes), all during their assigned English hour. Walking to and from the store gives the teacher an opportunity to interact informally with students and builds classroom community. (elementary/middle/high—though the lower levels may require an aide or parents to accompany you.)
- Check out books from the local library. One middle school teacher checks out 100 books at a time. He keeps them on a cart in his classroom, and students use them for sustained silent reading (SSR). The local librarians now know him, and they suggest books and help him load them into his car each trip. (elementary/middle/high)
- Arrange for a storyteller to come to your class. Survey your parents. You probably have at least one parent who tells stories. Check your local cultural institutions for information on local storytellers. (elementary/middle)
- Ask an author to come to your class. Once again, check with your cultural institutions for local authors. Publishers usually have a list of authors who present. Check with your PTO or district to find a funding source to support author appearances. (elementary/middle/high)
- Make reading, writing, and thinking, not lecturing, the focal point of your classroom. Begin units with literally piles of books that cover your topic. Give students one class hour to peruse and find something that interests them to share at the end of class or the following day. This works especially well with poetry. Students read poems during the class hour, and then find a poem they are willing to read to the class the following day. Students have an opportunity to hear twenty or more poems read by peers. This builds an interest in and acceptance for the study of poetry. This works with topics as diverse as dinosaurs (in elementary school), historical periods (in middle school), and universities (in high school). Try it with your discipline. (elementary/middle/high)
- Give books to students. Occasionally surprise a student with a book after he or she expresses an interest in the book or related topic. (elementary/middle/high)
- Have students order their own books from student book clubs. (elementary/middle/high)
- Allow students to choose some of the books you order for your class library. (elementary/middle/high)

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- Be sure that your classroom books reflect all the students in your classroom. (elementary/middle/high)
- Make SSR an integral part of your instruction. (elementary/middle/high)

Imagine a classroom where all of your students love to read. What would it look like? What sounds would you hear or not hear? How might you create that classroom?

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COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The CCSS for writing are K.W.1 through K.W.8, beginning with kindergarten to grades twelve, 12.W.1 to 12.W.10.

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN WRITING

Many of us are readers, but we may not think of ourselves as writers. Yet we are called upon to teach students to write. Do you eagerly anticipate teaching your students to write, and do they enjoy writing in your classroom, no matter what the subject or grade level?

If our students are to be effective writers, they need certain conditions. Donald Graves (cited in J. Burke, 2003) identifies seven conditions for effective writing: time, choice, response, demonstration, expectation, room structure, and evaluation. In addition, students need to feel comfortable in the classroom community in order to write and share, and possibly even to feel motivated enough to try to write and share. Writing teachers also must feel passion about their own writing in order to instill the passion to write in their students (Tsujimoto, 2001).

Take this survey to check your love of writing.

- ❒ Are you a writer? Do you write letters, notes, or grocery lists?
- ❒ Do you have regular e-mail correspondence with others?
- ❒ Do you keep a journal?
- ❒ Are you a secret poet?
- ❒ Do you keep scrapbooks with annotations for yourself or your children?
- ❒ Do you carry a notebook with you or in your car?

- ❒ Do your students see your writing?
- ❒ Do you write on the overhead or computer to demonstrate for your students?
- ❒ Do you give written feedback to students beyond correcting their errors?
- ❒ Do you communicate with your students through classroom journals?
- ❒ Do you contribute to a school newsletter?
- ❒ Do you send a classroom newsletter to parents?
- ❒ Is your voice passionate when you talk about writing?
- ❒ Have you submitted any written work for publication? This may be for a school publication, a newspaper, a journal, or other forms of publication.
- ❒ Are you expecting your students to love writing if you show no passion for the task?

Write a short reflection about what these questions say personally to you.

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YOUR WRITING LIFE AND HISTORY

Think about writing in your life and recall your earliest memories. Did you write stories in elementary school? Did you receive positive feedback for your writing when you were young? Did your parents support your writing? Did your teachers provide multiple opportunities for you to write and share with others? Did you enter writing contests or perform your writing for others? Did you do well on college papers? What writing are you working on now?

Unless you are a teacher who writes and risks sharing your writing with your students, you may find your students less than enthusiastic about writing for you.

Trace your writing history.

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Let me share my story.

I learned to write in early elementary school. My father was an accountant, and my mother, a homemaker, wrote copious lists of things to do in addition to weekly letters to relatives.

I remember writing no stories or creative pieces in elementary school, but by high school I was writing long letters to friends and keeping a diary. English classes in the early 1960s were mostly grammar and essay tests, and I don't remember writing a paper to be graded until freshman year in college. As an English major, I wrote numerous papers leading up to a thesis and dissertation. However, I never recall thinking of myself as a writer but rather as a teacher who wrote to learn. It wasn't until I was forty years old that someone suggested I write an article based on my experience. At forty-six, I participated in a writers workshop based on the Iowa Writing Project, and for the first time wrote creative pieces to share with others. Sharing personal stories with others altered the way I saw myself. For the first time, I valued my writing and felt I might have something to share. Even now, believing that I am a writer is a scary thought. For me, writing is so much more personal and difficult than reading.

SELF-STRATEGY

One of the best ways to explore your writing life is to join a writing group. Find a small group of friends who want to meet regularly to write and share. You may decide to meet weekly or monthly. You may rotate locations, using each other's homes, or meet at a local coffee shop. You may include food or simply write and share. Another way to explore your writing life is to keep a morning journal. Save those first precious waking moments for you. Putting your writing life on your calendar is one method of ensuring that you write regularly and flex your writing muscle.

When you write regularly and you passionately share your writing in your classroom, you build the foundation for a classroom of writers. How does that work? Try the following strategies.

Level: Elementary/Middle/High

- Use a journal prompt to begin each class period. Students write in their journals. Choose different students to share each day.
- Write daily with your students. Share your journal entries on a regular basis. Note: In disciplines other than English, you can use journal prompts that refer to your subject matter and current class topics.
- Let the students create 20 journal prompts to be used for one month.
- Enter student work into contests. This can build a groundswell of excitement and pride in your classroom.

- Model your writing using the overhead. Let students see you make errors, correct, and revise. Help students understand that writing is messy.
- Create classroom slogans for student writing. For example, the slogan "When in doubt, take it out" allows students to delete wordiness.
- Spotlight a weekly student author. Allow the student author to share his or her favorite writings.
- Keep student books of writing in the classroom. Allow students to read from these during SSR.
- Invite writers from local newspapers to share with your students.
- Invite staff members who write to share with your students.
- Allow student writers to read their writing over the school's public address system.
- Schedule a writers' showcase monthly. The following is a model we developed in a high school that worked beautifully and continued to grow in numbers. Use student lunch hours so as not to disrupt class time. During lunch, students who want to participate gather in a room where they are allowed to eat. Students sign up the week before the showcase with the teacher in charge. The teacher schedules the students, and students read their poems, stories, or pieces. The audience listens and gives positive feedback. Often, staff members join in and also share their writing. This is a *no-cost* method of building a writing culture in your school. Create your own model.
- Start a writers club. Meet with students before or after school one day per week and let students write and share. Provide snacks, if appropriate.
- Pair your class with pen pals at a different school or even in a different country via satellite. You can build bridges through writing when students communicate with each other and discover their similarities, no matter where they live.
- Do a round-robin story. Have one student write a paragraph and then hand it to another student to write the next paragraph. Continue for as long as you want. Students usually like to write stories with their peers.
- Visit a school where students write often, display their writing, and win contests. Interview students and ask them what occurs in their school that supports their writing successes.
- Post written student work (but not work with errors or inflated grades). Lisa Delpit (1995) points out in *Other People's Children* that we do our students a disservice when we imply that the "product" is not important. In our society, students will be judged on the product. We must teach our students the hidden codes or rules of the product at hand; otherwise, our students from other cultures may believe that there are secrets being withheld from them and that the teacher is not teaching them what is necessary for them to succeed. As Lisa Delpit states: "Pretending that gatekeeping points don't exist is to ensure that many students will not pass through them" (p. 39).

Imagine a classroom where all your students love to write. What would it look like? What conversations would you hear? What would you see posted on the walls? Describe that classroom.

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Decide which strategies you are willing to implement to create a classroom of readers and writers. List them below.

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Teaching students to love to read and write creates an abundant classroom—one alive with literacy. Students rush in for SSR, anxious to delve into their books. They rush to the computers, anxious to continue writing their stories. Once again, when the writing and reading connects to the students' lives, literacy is alive with meaning.

In the next chapter, we find literacy lessons that engage students and are aligned with CCSS. Give me feedback on how your students engage with these lessons. You can e-mail me at a4achievement@earthlink.net or join the conversations online at School Improvement Network's PD 360. Check out the following PD 360 videos on literacy instruction:

- Legacy Videos on Instructional Strategies
- Reading in the Early Years
- Read, Write, Speak, and Listen
- Reading in the Content Areas
- Helping Students Read Beyond Grade One

SUGGESTED READINGS

Dr. Betty Porter Walls, assistant professor at Harris-Stowe State University and member of the board of directors (and former president) of Missouri State Council International Reading Association (MSC-IRA), recommends the following books for us:

Brough, Judy, Sherrel Bergman, and Larry Holt. *Teach Me, I Dare You!* (Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education, 2006).

Hicks, Troy. *The Digital Writing Workshop* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2009).

McIntyre, Ellen, Nancy Hulan, and Vicky Layne. *Reading Instruction for Diverse Classrooms* (New York: Guildford Press, 2011).

Morrow, Lesley Mandel, Robert Rueda, and Diane Lapp. *Handbook on Literacy and Diversity* (New York: Guildford Press, 2010).

The following are books I have used recently in literacy work at the elementary and secondary levels:

Middle and High School Levels

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle,* second edition (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998).

Fisher, Douglas, and Nancy Frey. *Teaching Students to Read Like Detectives: Comprehending, Analyzing, and Discussing Text* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2012).

Schreck, Mary Kim. *Engaging Literacy: What It Looks Like in the Classroom* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2012).

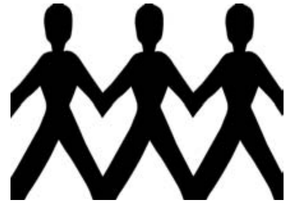
Elementary Level

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3–6: Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001).

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency: Thinking, Talking, and Writing About Reading, K–8* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006).

Graves, Donald H. *Experiment With Fiction* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1989).

McEwan-Adkins, Elaine K. *40 Reading Intervention Strategies for K–6 Students: Research-Based Support for RTI* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree, 2010).



14
Standards-Based, Culturally Responsive Lessons That Engage Learners

Sometimes educators say, "It's the relationship that matters when we teach students who don't look like us." And it is. It is wonderful when we build relationships across cultures. But the relationship is not all. We must teach students content in lessons filled with rigor that prepare them for college and career. It is not enough for students to like us; they must learn from us. We need both relationship strategies and research-based instructional strategies. When we teach lessons that honor cultures, we motivate and engage students who don't look like us. Remember, we learned in Chapter 12 that what is needed is the integration of culturally responsive instruction and standards-based instruction. In fact, it is critical if we want to meet the goal of high achievement for all students. Using culturally responsive teaching and aligning the curriculum to the CCSS is our starting place as we plan relevant lessons to engage learners. In *Aligning Your Curriculum to the Common Core State Standards*, author Joe Crawford (2012) states that the new curriculum that addresses the standards should fit the following criteria:

- Based on and aligned to the CCSS
- Standards based, not content based

- A learnable, not a teachable, curriculum
- Nonprescriptive
- Addresses the *what* and the *when* of student learning
- Encourages creativity and use of alternative learning sources
- Results in common, formative assessments (p. 80)

In addition, there are noteworthy characteristics that describe a standards-based curriculum, such as these:

- Content is not addressed.
- The standard defines the skill(s) that are expected to be mastered.
- The verbs define the level of Bloom's Taxonomy at which students are expected to perform.
- There is no attempt to prescribe an instructional strategy. (p. 8)

The literacy lessons found in this chapter fit these criteria and possess these characteristics. In addition, they include many differentiated instructional (DI) practices, and Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is an educational model that promotes early identification of students who may be at risk for learning difficulties (Tileston, 2011). These lessons are used by a classroom teacher using Tier I of RTI instruction (in the classroom without additional support from a special education teacher in the room) and give her or him the opportunity to work closely with students to identify possible learning challenges. The lessons also naturally lend themselves to DI due to the fact that they are student constructed and filled with choices.

These literacy lessons were used in heterogeneous classrooms with diverse learners, taught by English teachers in Grades 7 to 12. None of the activities was used in an honors class, although they could be—this is important to mention, since some educators are quick to point out that suggested activities might work with honors students but not with "regular" or "at-risk" students. Just the opposite is true: the more authentic and exciting the project, the more it might engage all students (Dornan, Rosen, & Wilson, 1997).

The interesting thing about these assignments, specifically the guidebook, the oral history, and the Cliffs Notes, is that they incorporate far more class work aligned to CCSS than the usual kinds of assignments we often give in an English class. In other words, these are authentic assignments that cause students to develop and sharpen life skills. In *Educating Everybody's Children: Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners* (Cole, 1995), Strategy 4.15 suggests practicing English by solving problems and doing work in cooperative groups. For when teachers organize work into heterogeneous, cooperative groups composed of native and nonnative speakers of English in order to give EL children opportunities to practice their English in problem-solving situations, they learn more (p. 65). In addition, students were engaged, on task, and working cooperatively. With the guidebook and Cliffs Notes projects, you can choose the groups or perhaps ask each student to choose one other student for a group, and then you fill in with the others. The groups for these projects were teacher chosen to ensure a mix of ethnic diversity, gender, ability levels, and diagnosed learning disorders.

EXAMPLE 1: GUIDEBOOK PROJECT

Common Core State Standards

Writing: 9.W.4; 9.W.5; 9.W.7; 9.W.8
Speaking and Listening: 9.SL.1; 9.SL.2; 9.SL.3; 9.SL.4; 9.SL.5
Language: 9.L.1; 9.L.2; 9.L.3; 9.L.4; 9.L.6
TESOL's pre-K–12 English proficiency standards addressed in this lesson: Standards 1 and 2

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- Connecting to the lives of the students
- Goal setting
- Proximity
- Higher level thinking: creating
- Interaction with others through interviewing, peer editing, and sharing writing
- Connecting to families (they were invited to Publication Day)
- Movement both inside and outside of the classroom

DI and RTI, Tier I

- Choice of topic
- Work alone or with partners
- Work at own pace
- Work in general classroom at own pace
- One-on-one interactions with teacher during project
- Peer Support

Technology

Students use the Web to investigate their topic. The guidebook is published on the Web in addition to one hard copy per student, but if cost is a factor in the printing, it could be launched on the Web, forgoing the hard copy.

Armed with a new teaching assignment in an unfamiliar high school and assigned to teach ninth-grade nonhonors students, I realized that my students were also new to this building and perhaps as frightened as I was. How could we quickly learn about the staff, the hidden rules, and the physical places in this school setting? We decided to write a guidebook to the high school.

The students thoroughly enjoyed this, and it relieved stress for both them and me. Following is a brief outline of one way to do this.

Guidebook Outline

- Discuss with your students the need to create a guidebook to interest and motivate and engage them.
- Ask them to select something or someone they want to interview, investigate, and write a chapter about for the guidebook, someone they will be interacting with or want to interact with during their high school career.

- Make a list of the student choices and post it. Each student or pair of students must write about a different person or topic. For example, one student, interested in basketball, interviewed the basketball coach. One student, interested in becoming a nurse, interviewed the school nurse.
- A student interested in art could draw a map of the campus and design the cover.
- Set up interview schedules.
- Students interview staff.
- Begin the writing process.
- Have students write drafts, read aloud to peers, peer edit, revise, proofread, and so on.
- Continue and complete the writing process.
- Do a final proofreading.
- Print and bind at a printing office or have your district print and bind the guidebook. Each student receives one book. In order to find money to pay for the printing and binding of the guidebooks, ask your department head, administrators, district literacy coordinator or curriculum director, PTO, local chamber of commerce, and so on. There is always money out there to support school projects. Finding it is the key.
- Have a Publication Day and invite parents.
- Do something especially nice for yourself the following weekend.

Students loved this assignment because it gave them something tangible they could use in their new life at the high school; they got to work with others; the classroom was active with talking and movement; their families were involved and grateful; they really got to know the other students in the class and built relationships with them, thus reinforcing a positive classroom climate; and they ended up with a souvenir of their freshman year at the school. It definitely was a win-win for me. Our first project was a grand success, and they were primed to go on to more rigorous literary explorations.

EXAMPLE 2: ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Common Core State Standards

Reading: 7.RIT.3; 7.RIT.4; 7.RIT.5; 7.RIT.6; 7RIT.9; 7.RIT.10
Writing: 7.W.3; 7.W.4; 7.W.5; 7.W.6; 7.W.10
Speaking and Listening: 7.SL.1; 7.SL.4; 7.SL.5
Language: 7.L.1; 7.L.2; 7.L.3; 7.L.6
TESOL's standards: Standards 1 and 2

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- Connecting to the students' personal family and family members
- Goal setting
- Preserving and honoring cultural history
- Student talk, working together and individually
- Movement, proximity, respect for space and learning modalities

DI and RTI, Tier I

- Student choice
- One-on-one interaction with teacher
- Peer review and sharing
- Working at one's own pace

Technology

Students research the professions of the people they interview. They film the subjects of the oral histories and post them on the Web. See the following Web sites:

- Best of History Websites (www.besthistorysites.net/index.php/oral-history)
- EMP/SFM Oral History Resources (www.empmuseum.org/education/index.asp?articleID=884)
- Exploring Family Heritage (www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/exploring-family-heritage)
- The New Americans Lesson Plan Index: Immigration Oral History (http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators_lesson_plan_09.html)

Oral History Outline

The oral history project was a favorite of the heterogeneous, seventh-grade middle school students, and it built a new sense of community in the classroom. This was a major six-week project that used a balanced literacy and brain-compatible instructional approach to create a literacy product of which the students could be proud. There were *no* honors English classes at this middle school, so all levels were in these classes.

The following is a condensed version of what occurred in the classroom:

- Experts from a local museum came to the classes to explain the oral history.
- Students read several oral histories.
- Students chose a person for their oral history and completed a letter and contract with that person.
- Students interviewed their chosen subjects.
- Students transcribed their interviews.
- Students shared their interviews in groups.
- Students made decisions about the use of the interview. They were to use the information from the interview to create an oral history. The oral history would not be a word-by-word transcription of the interview.
- Students began the creative revision process. They engaged in the entire writing process: peer editing, revising, editing, proofreading, and writing a final draft.
- The teacher did a final proof and edit. Students typed the final oral history.
- Students created a cover for their oral history.
- Students bound their oral history with a spiral bind on the school machine.

- Students created a class invitation for Oral History Day and gave it to their parents and the people they interviewed.
- Students planned the Oral History Day celebration, including typing the agenda for the celebration and student order for sharing.
- Everyone participated in the Oral History Day celebration. Once again, students participated as *real* writers in an authentic literacy assignment.

Students' oral histories brought tears to the eyes of the audience. One young man wrote about the elderly crossing guard who helped them across the busy avenue on the way home from school. It turned out that in the 1940s, this man was a railroad porter. He shared stories of historical segregation. He attended the celebration.

Another student shared her grandmother's story. She had to interview her grandmother by phone because she was ill and in Burma and under house arrest, for she was the wife of the former ruler of the country. The grandmother died the night before the celebration, and as the young girl read her poem and her story about her grandmother, we were in tears.

Students wrote about their grandfathers, veterans of World War II. Students wrote about their fathers, veterans of Vietnam. Students wrote about their mothers, aunts, uncles, and others. Parents related how the oral history had caused their family to communicate in ways they had not previously done. The Celebration Day found a library filled with families from all the cultures of the learners. We shared food, oral histories, tears, laughs, and love.

This is a powerful, authentic writing experience that allows students to enter the stories of real, living people as they share their stories in their own authentic voices. It's a win-win assignment.

Fortunately, there are several books available that detail how to do an oral history project in the classroom. Find one and use it for this project.

EXAMPLE 3: CLIFFS NOTES PROJECT

Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature: 10.RL.1 to 10.RL.10
Writing: 10.W.2; 10.W.4; 10.W.5; 10.W.7; 10.W.8; 10.W.9
Speaking and Listening: 10.SL.1; 10.SL.2; 10.SL.3; 10.SL.4; 10.SL.5
Language: 10.L.1; 10.L.2; 10.L.3; 10.L.4; 10.L.5; 10.L.6
TESOL's pre-K–12 English proficiency standards addressed in this lesson: Standards 1 and 2

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- Connecting to the lives of the students because they had to read the book
- Goal setting
- Proximity; cooperative learning groups
- Higher level thinking: creating
- Interaction with others through interviewing, peer editing, and sharing writing
- Movement

DI and RTI, Tier I

- Choice of topic
- Choice of specific task in the group work
- One-on-one interaction with teacher during project
- Peer support
- Graded both individually and as a group project

Technology

This project was done back in the 1990s, so today it would be *so* much simpler with the technology to format the book and post it on the Web. See the following Web sites:

- English Homework Tips (homeworktips.about.com/od/englishhomework/a/acliffsnotes.htm)
- Free Essays Links (www.wowessays.com/links.shtml)
- Math and Literature Idea Bank (www.mathcats.com/grownupcats/ideabankmathandliterature.html)

Cliffs Notes Outline

When students could not find Cliffs Notes for Barbara Kingsolver's (1988) *The Bean Trees* back in the 1990s, they gave me an idea for a writing assignment to accompany our study of this required text for high school sophomores in a nonhonors English class.

We formed cooperative learning groups and asked that each group create a Cliffs Notes for *The Bean Trees.* We used a similar process to the ones outlined in Examples 1 and 2.

This project required that each student read thoroughly the entire novel, digest it, and re-create it. Each student in the group selected a task. One student selected to format the book; one student wrote the introduction, consisting of the author information, list of characters, and brief overview; one student wrote the summaries and commentaries; one student wrote the analyses; and one student wrote the bibliography and selected reviews and critical articles. Students used a standard writing process to complete this project with a rubric provided throughout the assignment.

When the students concluded their Cliffs Notes, the class selected the best example. They then composed a class letter and mailed it to Cliffs Notes. In only weeks, the students received a wonderful letter congratulating them and telling them that their Cliffs Notes was selected to be displayed at national conferences. The people at Cliffs Notes also said that other teachers had already done what we thought was an original idea and had sent their students' work to them. But, they added, our students' work was the most authentic that they had received. Even though we had done a final edit and proofread and required the students to do a final revision in order to have a perfectly correct final version, I did not insert my voice or alter the writing of my students. The publisher said that prior models they had received showed obvious teacher intervention. A good writing teacher must not co-opt her students' writing and turn it into her own teacher prose.

This project received acclaim and criticism. One community member wrote a letter saying that I was corrupting students with this assignment. He even appeared before the school board to complain. His children were not in the class.

On the other hand, Cliffs Notes liked the results so much that they displayed the students' work at national conferences, and the city newspaper did a nice story with a picture of the students.

These first three class assignments included the following:

- Standards-based instruction
- Higher level thinking
- Hard work for the students
- Hard work for the teacher
- Authentic writing: writing that students did in response to real-world issues or real tasks, such as writing an oral history or creating a Cliffs Notes
- Balanced literacy: literacy activities that balance talking, listening, reading, and writing in the instruction
- Long-term goal planning
- Backward planning for student and teacher
- Cooperation among students
- Community building in the classroom, school, and community
- Positive interaction with parents
- Student work for display
- Student work for publication
- Working like a real author
- Computer literacy
- National recognition
- Media recognition
- School board recognition (OK, that was negative. But later in the year, several of these same students were recognized for their award-winning writings.)
- Fun and humor
- Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards

Write about a time when a favorite assignment, project, or lesson caused controversy. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

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EXAMPLE 4: POETRY ASSIGNMENT PROJECT

Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature: Upper elementary to high school
5–12 Reading Literature Standards
Writing: 5–12 Writing Standards focusing on creative writing
Speaking and Listening: 5–12 Speaking and Listening Standards
Language: 5–12 Language Standards
TESOL's pre-K–12 English proficiency standards addressed in this lesson: Standards 1 and 2

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- Connecting to the lives of the students because they choose the poems they like and want to share
- Connecting to families by inviting them to share with learners
- Goal setting
- Proximity
- Higher level thinking when analyzing poetry
- Interaction with others through interviewing, peer editing, and sharing poetry they write
- Movement

DI and RTI, Tier I

- Choice of poetry to read and write
- Choice of length and format
- One-on-one interaction with teacher during project
- Peer support through peer editing, sharing, and publication

Technology

See the following poetry Web sites:

- CreateSpace (www.createspace.com)
- Education World: Poetry Lessons (https://www.educationworld.com/a_special/poetrymonth.shtml)
- Kids Poems (www.mywordwizard.com/kids-poems.html)
- Poem Websites for Teens (www.ask.com/questions-about/poems-for-teens)
- Teaching Channel (www.teachingchannel.org)

Poetry Outline

This poetry format works for any class. You can use it at the middle school and high school level in English classes. It works at the elementary level too.

Students love poetry. And why not? Poetry is fun and begs for participation.

- Begin your poetry unit with choice, reading, and relaxation.

- Pile as many poetry books as you can gather from the school library, other classrooms, and your own library into the middle of the room.
- Move the desks to the outer edges of the room and invite the students to spend the hour looking through the poetry books, reading the poems that attracted them, and then choosing one to share with the entire class. This ensures that each student becomes involved and invested in the poetry experience.
- Invite poets into your classroom. Place an invitation into the mailboxes of all your staff members and invite them to drop by on their planning periods to read a favorite poem to your class. You may find that there are poets among your staff. Some staff members may choose to read their own writing. When students see the football coach read a favorite poem, they understand that poetry is something to be shared by everyone.
- Bring music into the mix. Have students bring in lyrics of their favorite songs that are classroom appropriate. Ask them to find poetic devices in the song lyrics.
- Immerse your students and yourself in poetry for several days or weeks. Begin the writing process. My favorite writing prompt for poetry is William Carlos Williams's poem "This Is Just to Say."
- Place that poem on an overhead and have students read it several times and discuss it.
- Model writing a poem for each class. Don't use one you have already written, because you don't want this to be a polished piece. You want to model for students how rough the initial jottings are so that they will model the same process as they write poetry.
- Laugh at your attempts. Invite students to suggest words. Play!
- Then ask students to write a poem that begins "This is just to say . . ."
- Have students write, share, revise, edit, proof, and then type a final draft.
- Have a poetry party and invite teachers to read their poetry to the class. Invite another class. Invite parents or grandparents.
- Read the poems over the public address system. Display students' work.
- The poetry unit (of which this is just the beginning) will continue to build the reading and writing culture of the school. As more and more teachers (even some from outside the English department) share their poetry, writing poetry becomes normalized instead of being seen as outside the norm. Use poetry to build school culture!

EXAMPLE 5: YOU CAN BE IN A BOOK PROJECT

Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature: 10.RL.1 to 10.RL.10
Reading Informational Text: 10.RIT.1 to 10.RIT.10
Writing: 10.W.2; 10.W.3; 10.W.4; 10.W.5; 10.W.7; 10.W.8; 10.W.9
Speaking and Listening: 10.SL.1; 10.SL.2; 10.SL.3; 10.SL.4; 10.SL.5
Language: 10.L.1; 10.L.2; 10.L.3; 10.L.4; 10.L.5; 10.L.6
TESOL's pre-K–12 English proficiency standards addressed in this lesson: Standards 1 and 2

Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies

- Connecting to the lives of the students because they put themselves into the book or the nonfiction piece
- Goal setting
- Proximity
- Higher level thinking: creating
- Interaction with others through interviewing, peer editing, and sharing writing
- Movement; music (played in background as students work)

DI and RTI, Tier I

- Choice of character in fiction and nonfiction
- Choice of nonfiction articles based on reading level
- One-on-one interaction with teacher during project
- Peer support through peer editing, sharing, and publication
- Working with the same novel but writing a different character (themselves) into the book, so differentiated naturally by person

In addition to language arts, you can ask students to imagine what it would be like to live in different periods of history and then to write about it and share with the class.

Students become characters in the texts, both fiction and nonfiction. This works for all ages, kindergarten to college. Ask students to choose a fictional text that they enjoy, or assign one you are studying in class. Tell them to write themselves into the action! Or if they are reading nonfiction texts, have them place themselves into history or current-day events!

A group of sophomores used this strategy while reading *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1959). It was one of their favorite assignments. They keyboarded pages from the text and inserted themselves into the story. They made up dialogue for themselves, and it had to fit the overall style of the author.

This accomplished several things:

- Students who normally don't know how to begin a writing assignment had only to choose some pages and begin typing.
- Students programmed their brains with the style and syntax of a famous writer.
- Students were forced to pay attention to quotation marks and to use them correctly. This kind of exercise worked and was less painful to students than worksheets of exercises on quotation marks.
- Students had to extend the plot through their character yet match the intent of the author. This involved higher level thinking skills.
- Students vicariously lived the adventures of the characters in famous books.
- Students enjoyed this assignment and enjoyed sharing it with their peers.

How can you grade this so you don't go crazy looking for the students' writing within the text of the novel?

- Students highlighted their prose.
- Students were required to write a stated number of words.
- Students were required to use quotation marks and other punctuation correctly.
- Students were required to match the syntax and the writing style of the author.
- Students were graded on completion of the assignment, creativity, and correctness.

These papers were students' favorites. They loved sharing them with peers, "showing off" as they faced danger along with famous literary characters or were actively involved in a historical or current event. This lesson engaged students. When it is about us, it's hard to disengage. Like the art teacher who says he engages his students when they walk in the door by having them draw a self-portrait, this lesson has learners "draw" a self-portrait in writing about themselves.

EXAMPLE 6: THEME BOOKS PROJECT

This literacy activity is appropriate for elementary and middle school students. You can try it with high school students in a creative writing class. Once again, students created a class book as in the first lesson idea in this chapter. But this time, they wrote genre fictional stories. One group of students wrote detective stories, another group wrote mystery stories, and another group wrote romance stories. Also, students who enjoyed art drew the covers, and the writing process followed those previously discussed. Students were expected to write fictional stories in their genre of choice that were a minimum of three typed pages.

Since we did not make copies of these for each student, we simply bound their final typed stories into books with a cover on a machine that the school owned, and these books became part of the library in our classrooms. This library consisted of hundreds of books scoured from garage sales, used bookstores, book order clubs, and student writing. Students *always* want to read their own writing, so when they participated in sustained silent reading (SSR), they often chose a theme book to read. This settled them into reading, since students are interested in what their peers have written.

EXAMPLE 7: WRITING CONTESTS

Submitting students' writing to essay contests is an incredible motivator and way to engage students in writing. It is culturally responsive because students feel special when their work is submitted, and they work harder to improve their writing. If you have not done this before, consider it. You don't have to be a terribly organized person; you just need a system.

Look for contests in student magazines or writing magazines, such as *Poets and Writers,* at your local bookstore. One win will hook your students! You can always begin with an in-house contest to ensure a win.

Consider starting a writing club that meets weekly. Even a twenty-minute block of time in your classroom before school works. Invite at-risk diverse learners. All they can say is no, and most likely, they will be pleased by your invitation, which signals to them that you believe they can write well enough to win contests.

The weekly meetings give you and the students time to share their writing, which is the best motivator for other students. It also gives you time to complete the logistics of submission. Find a student who is really organized who will handle much of this work.

When students win, make sure their names are read over the public address system to the entire school. You will find that success breeds success and winning is contagious. More and more students will want to join your group.

One national contest a local high school writing club entered focused on inner-city students' lives. They submitted six personal stories from males who lived in the inner city of St. Louis and were bused to this school as part of the desegregation program. A woman in charge of the contest called from Houston to tell me that they had the winning stories. She then asked, "Do all of your students write this well?" "Yes, they do," was my reply. When children are invited to use their authentic voices and given the support that they need, they do achieve.

In another incident, there was a notice of a book to be published about African American adolescent girls' stories. I remembered a girl's story I had heard in a class I had recently observed. I called the teacher and told her about it. The girl had to get her mother's permission to submit her story. That was not an easy task, but it was finally accomplished. Doing these things is not always a snap. It takes hard work and extra effort, but this teacher was willing to do it. They sent in the story. The girl was notified that it would be published as a story in this book. Recently, she was invited to read her story at a public book signing when the author was in St. Louis. Will that experience make that girl believe that she is a writer? Yes!

And this is why you might choose to do the messy work to submit your students' stories. Students begin to see themselves as real authors of their lives. Other teachers see them as winners. And they are.

Once you enter the contest circuit, you will receive all kinds of contest information. But one place where your students can submit is *Teen Ink,* a publication written by teens. You can contact them at www.teenink.com. There are contests and competitions in all disciplines, and getting students involved in them increases student interest and creates authentic work.

If you create ways to make your assignments authentic (meaning they write for real audiences and real situations, such as a contest or a newspaper editorial) using authentic student voices, you will find students engaged and academically achieving. Students want to achieve, and it is up to us to offer them opportunities for academic achievement.

Web sites for student writing contests include the following:

- 40 of the Best Websites for Young Writers (http://education-portal.com/articles/40_of_the_Best_Websites_for_Young_Writers.html)
- Creative Communication (www.poeticpower.com)
- Creative Writing Contests (writingcontests.wordpress.com)

- firstwriter.com Writing Competitions (www.firstwriter.com/competitions/)
- Young Writer Contests (www.kimn.net/student.htm)

The lesson ideas offered in this chapter give opportunities for culturally diverse learners to interact with their classmates while they engage in rigorous, higher level academic work. These projects are aligned with multiple standards and can be adjusted to meet your students' needs. They also produce work that you can keep for years to use as models for future students, and in addition, the projects can become part of your in-class library and provide highly motivating reading materials for SSR.

In her book *Active Literacy Across the Curriculum,* Heidi Hayes Jacobs (2006) suggests using speaking rubrics such as those available at www.nald.ca/CLR/Btg/ed/evaluation/speaking.htm#speaking. Using these rubrics offers learners an opportunity to self-assess and self-monitor their pace and volume in the same way that writing rubrics offer learners the opportunity to self-assess their writing.

What lesson ideas might you adapt to your grade level and try in your class?

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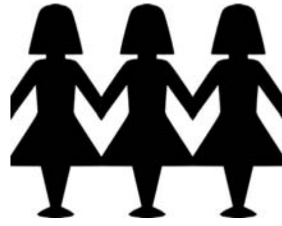
This chapter offered a variety of CRSB lessons. To view PD 360 videos that demonstrate teacher strategies found in these lessons, go to http://www.schoolimprovement.com/experts/bonnie-davis. Check out the following videos:

- Formative Assessment: Learning 360 Framework E & S—Segment 5
- Achievement for Students With Special Needs E & S—Segments 11; 4; 10
- Classroom Instruction That Works E & S—Segment 4
- Growing Dendrites: 20 Instructional Strategies—Segment 4
- Differentiated Instruction Applied E—Segment 8
- Equity and Innovation: Kihei Charter School—Segment 3
- Differentiated Instruction for All
- All Means All: What Is It About Me You Can't Teach?

How do we increase rigor in reading and writing instruction? Consider implementing a readers and writers workshop. The next chapter focuses on a workshop format aligned to standards and filled with opportunities for implementing culturally responsive strategies.



15

Readers and Writers Workshop

A Model for Standards-Based, Culturally Responsive Instruction

In the districts where I have worked during the past several years, I have failed to find working reading and writing workshops except at the elementary level. I find this sad. However, I understand the culture of testing sucked most of the life out of the readers and writers workshop structure, which allows for, and includes with proper implementation, differentiation, Response to Intervention, personal mastery, engagement, and higher level thinking. In its place, we find pacing guides with little flexibility for teachers and learners. With the implementation of the CCSS, this can change. Teachers once again will have more flexibility and freedom to design lessons that challenge students and prepare them for career readiness and college.

With that in mind, I believe there is still a place for this structure that supports working at high levels of engagement with reading and writing. Thus, this chapter offers you a snapshot of how reading and writing instruction in such a structure might unfold in culturally diverse educational settings such as a middle school, a high school, a college class, or a prison. You may be surprised by the commonalities. I was. Teaching in these four settings allowed me to see the research in action. We do know what creates good literacy classrooms, and this chapter spells out what good writers and readers need to be successful. To support the focus of the CCSS, consider having students read more nonfiction during reading workshops and write in genres other than the personal narrative and literary analysis, without abandoning them, during writing workshops.

Several years ago, I took a job teaching seventh-grade English in a diverse classroom. I had never taught seventh-grade students, and in fact, for the previous fourteen years, I had only taught seniors in high school and adults. I naively thought it would be easy. I knew English, and I thought that was all it would take to be a successful English teacher of seventh-grade children.

How wrong I was! The first day was a disaster. I soon found that these seventh graders were not impressed at all with having a new teacher who held a PhD in English. I had always believed that I had good classroom management, but within minutes, these adolescents convinced me otherwise.

I was desperate! I needed to find some pedagogy that would engage these children while maintaining the classroom atmosphere that I found acceptable. I found it in a reading and writing workshop.

A colleague introduced me to Nancie Atwell (1987), and I found my survival guide for the year in her book *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning With Adolescents.* In a foreword to Atwell's second edition (1998), Donald Graves writes that *In the Middle* is for the teacher with a "strong desire to help students make sense of their world through reading, writing, and sound thinking" (p. ix).

He adds that it also is for the teacher who commits to "grow in her own ability to write and read with students" (p. ix). One cannot occur without the other. This book changed the way I taught English, and it supported my students as they learned to love reading and writing. Actually, many of my students came to me already loving to read and to write because of their previous experiences, but Atwell's book allowed me to create a framework for a literacy-rich environment in my classroom.

Impressed by the results of using Atwell's workshop format, I extended the reading and writing workshop to three additional teaching assignments—the community college and the prison, where I taught Composition 101 and 102 one night a week, and then, two years later, to the high school classroom.

What follows is what it might look like in the classroom when you use a reading and writing workshop approach. For middle school and high school, consider arming yourself with Nancie Atwell's books. For elementary school classrooms, try *Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3–6: Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy.* This book, by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (2001), is so comprehensive that it actually spells out day by day (for the first twenty days) what you do to include balanced literacy in your elementary school day. In addition, the differentiated instruction books by Gayle Gregory and Carolyn Chapman (2002) and others offer you a firm base for your planning. Check out these Web sites for additional support:

- A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade K (www.heinemann.com/products/E04301.aspx)
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (tc.readingandwritingproject.com)
- Welcome to Reader's Workshop (www.ourclassweb.com/sites_for_teachers_readers_workshop.htm)
- Writers Workshop (mywritersworkshop.com/writers-workshop/)

INSIDE THE READING AND WRITING CLASSROOM

Imagine a group of individuals writing, some rather feverishly, some more relaxed, yet all intense, writing their stories, writing their lives. Imagine four very different settings: a seventh-grade class in an affluent county suburb, an English class for juniors and seniors at a suburban high school, a community college class in a middle-class neighborhood, and a prison class housed behind razor wire.

What do these four classes have in common?

These four classes share a writing and reading class environment that is almost identically structured, and they share the things that good writing classrooms provide: time, choice (Marzano, 2004), and positive response from teacher and peers (Caine & Caine, 1997).

Josh, a seventh-grade boy, can't wait to share his fourth story with the class. It's about a giant killer peanut.

Jenna, a senior girl, can't wait to share her story about the summer camp where she assisted a terminally ill adolescent in a wheelchair.

Janet, a nineteen-year-old student in my community college class, can't wait to share her first story with the class. It's about an event on her sixteenth birthday that changed her life forever—a rape.

Luke, a lifer for murder in this maximum security prison, can't wait to share his current story with the class. It's about the day his mother came to visit him in prison and died three hours later. (His story won first prize in a national fiction contest and was published in a magazine.) Donald Graves (1989) states that everything we tell is a fiction and a version of our own reality. This student turned his reality into fiction.

Each class sits in a circle as members share their stories. The seventh graders sit in a brightly lit, plant-filled, and colorful room, meticulously maintained.

The juniors and seniors sit in a classroom with bare walls on the lower level of an old four-story brick school building.

The college class chooses to sit in the park next to the class building, sharing coffee and rolls as they share their stories during their Saturday morning class.

The prison class sits in a stark concrete block room with no window, far too little ventilation, and barely enough room between the desks to move.

The four groups work in similar ways. Each student shares a story. Members give positive, specific feedback—and all receive peer response. The writings are rich, revealing, and rewarding.

Common Core State Standards

The CCSS and corresponding college and career readiness (CCR) anchor standards align beautifully with writers and readers workshops. In reading the standards for Grades 7 through 12, there are none that cannot be embedded in a writers and readers workshop format. Readers and writers workshop formats cover reading literature and the CCSS relating to that, as well as those for reading information text, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Consider discussing with your professional learning group or department how

and when you will address each standard. As you read through this chapter, note how the standards are a natural fit for so much of what occurs when students read and write together.

Because good writers learn from reading (Marzano, 2004), these four groups of students are required to read, read, read! The seventh graders read a book a week (or the equivalent of 150 pages), the juniors and seniors read four novels per semester class, the college class reads five classics a semester, and the prison class reads a classic a week. Each student is given a book list of authors from which to choose books. The list includes Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Barbara Kingsolver, as well as William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and many young adolescent (YA) novels for the younger students.

Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature: 7.RL.1; 7.RL.3; 7.RL.4; 7.RL.5; 7.RL.6; 7.RL.7; 7.RL.9; and 7.RL.10 can be incorporated in the reading described here.

Each week, time is spent discussing the students' reading. One student is responsible for leading the discussion or conducting a "book talk." Then all students join in to discuss what they are reading. Shifting from personal narrative and literary fiction involves some adjustment. Consider forming a professional learning group of history or social studies teachers and English teachers. Discuss the standards you plan to teach and then search for the best nonfiction pieces you can use with students. Consider having the social studies teachers or history teachers guide the content, with the English teachers supporting their instruction.

CCSS addressed when students switch from literature to informational text.

Common Core State Standards

7–12.RIT.1; 7–12.RIT.2; 7–12.RIT.3; 7–12.RIT.4; 7–12.RIT.5; 7–12.RIT.6; 7–12.RIT.7; 7–12.RIT.8; 7–12.RIT.9; 7–12.RIT.10.

The Prison Class

In the prison class, a discussion about John Steinbeck so inspired the men that the following classes became a Steinbeck seminar. Steinbeck especially appeals to these men, who share a common denominator: poverty. The past experiences of these men caused them to connect to the lives of literary characters living in poverty, and this commonality inspired rich classroom conversation and writing.

Steinbeck's portrayal of those who suffer from hardships and poverty causes talk to erupt, and the men can't wait to search for copies of *The Grapes of Wrath, Tortilla Flat, Of Mice and Men,* and others. The book talks become a powerful force that causes the group to bond men of different races and gangs who would not speak to each other outside this prison classroom. Both African American and White men talk and share ideas, not a common occurrence in an institution often rife with racial tensions.

Another popular book for these prison book talks is *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1973). Men who came into the class complaining that they did not like to read devoured this book. It is one of those books that motivates students to read

above their grade level or reading ability. Try it with challenging middle school and high school students; it is a high-interest book that motivates students.

Mostly, I stay out of the book talks. Once the men were hooked on books (and Steinbeck and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* hooked them), they controlled the talk. One man, imprisoned in his teens, commented after reading *The Great Gatsby,* "I don't know what I think about it. I think I'll read it again." What more could a teacher ask?

The Seventh-Grade Class

Choice is a must for seventh graders who believe that they must choose their own readings (at least some of the time) in order to prove their independence. Marzano's (2004) research on SSR programs stresses the need for students to have choice in their reading materials. When assigned *Across Five Aprils* (Hunt & Pucci, 1964) to accompany their study of the Civil War, student responses varied tremendously.

Students reacted positively and negatively as they interacted with the literature, bringing to the work their own personal experiences and interpretations. One student said, "I have tried so hard to come up with something good to say about this book, but nothing comes to mind." Then she went on to write several paragraphs in her journal about her interpretation of the novel, proving that she had indeed interacted with the text and had learned from it. (Rosenblatt [1995] stresses that students must interact with the texts they read, bringing something to the text as well as taking something from it, resulting in a transactional interaction. Students who are aware of this two-way relationship with the text both are better readers and comprehend more than those students who do not understand this powerful relationship.) Her journal proved to be so cogent that it was accepted for publication in a national journal. Publication is a powerful motivator to the entire class, so consider any opportunity to publish your students' works both in the classroom and to a wider audience.

Students could honestly respond to the literature, and this created an open atmosphere that motivated students to read beyond their assigned texts. Both the students and I posted our book lists on the classroom walls and added a new book each week. Students eagerly checked to see what their peers and I had read and if the latest book had been recommended. The room was full of lists of recommendations. No student ever wondered what he or she could read; it was simply a matter of which book to read next.

On many Fridays, I came dressed as "Book Woman," surprising the students with a crazy costume and a new book recommendation. (Note: I did *not* do this in the other classes.) After Book Woman disappeared, the rest of the class period was devoted to SSR. It was a wonderful, peaceful way to end the week with a room filled with high-energy seventh-grade students. This SSR also gave me time to keep up with my reading and to model reading for my students.

Common Core State Standards

Reading Literature: 7.RL.1; 7.RL.2; 7.RL.3; 7.RL.4; 7.RL.9; 7.RL.10
Writing: 7.W.1; 7.W.2; 7.W.3; 7.W.4; 7.W.5; 7.W.6; 7.W.7; 7.W.8; 7.W.9; 7.W.10
Speaking and Listening: 7.SL.1; 7.SL.2; 7.SL.3; 7.SL.4; 7.SL.5; 7.SL.6
Language: 7.L.1; 7.L.2; 7.L.3; 7.L.4; 7.L.5; 7.L.6

The High School Class

The high school class had to cover the curriculum, consisting of many familiar classics: *The Great Gatsby, Death of a Salesman, The Scarlet Letter,* and others. Their writing assignments often revolved around their interactions with these texts, yet I offered options as often as possible. For example, after reading *Death of a Salesman,* students were allowed to write plays in cooperative groups and then perform them for the class. This was, by far, the most enjoyable writing assignment of the semester. Other options included the literary analysis (the most dreaded), students writing a first-person journal as one of the characters in the story, creating a curriculum guide for the text, and students inserting themselves into the text as characters and expanding the action to include themselves.

After completing early drafts of their writing, the high school students enjoyed taking part in the "Friday Buffet." This consisted of laying their anonymous papers out on a table on Fridays and using part of the class hour to read the papers of classmates. Stapled to each student paper was a colored sheet of paper on which the author asked a question of his or her readers. For example, a question might read, "Are there any parts of this that you think I should expand or explain better?" The student readers would read papers from the buffet and answer the question on the attached sheet of paper. At the end of the buffet time, students retrieved their papers and read the feedback from their peers. This feedback was then incorporated into next drafts, and the process continued until final drafts and publication, when students shared their papers from the "author's chair." I also participated in this Friday Buffet, sharing my drafts of stories I was writing for a local university writing class, and as in the seventh-grade Friday SSR, this offered a calming and pleasant way to complete the academic week.

Common Core State Standards

Grades 11 and 12 Literature: 11–12.RL.1; 11–12.RL.2; 11–12.RL.3; 11–12.RL.4; 11–12.RL.5; 11–12.RL.6; 11–12.RL.7; 11–12.RL.9; 11–12.RL.10.

Creative Writing: 11–12.W.1; 11–12.W.2; 11–12.W.3; 11–12.W.4; 11–12.W.5; 11–12.W.6; 11–12.W.7; 11–12.W.8; 11–12.W.9; 11–12.W.10.

The College Class

The Saturday morning college class at a local community college was comprised mostly of working women earning minimum wage who wished to better their lives. (Consider reading *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, 2001, for a comprehensive look at the working poor in the United States.) Their reading history also had a common denominator—few had read any of the traditional or new classics or canon, and few were aware of the concerns of women from around the world.

As they read such novels as Mary Crow Dog's *Lakota Woman* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, these women were shocked to find what women suffered throughout global societies.

They kept weekly journals to describe their reading journeys (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Macrorie, 1984). One student, after reading *Lakota Woman* (Crow Dog, 1990), wrote that the book changed the way she looked at others. She said she was determined not to become one of those Americans who thinks his or her way is the best way. Instead, she resolved to open her heart and mind to learn the ways of others.

The content of the novels that these students read opened their minds to worlds they would never have known had they not been required to pick up these books. We teachers have a responsibility to give our students provocative works of literature that expose them to many worlds. Our diverse learners need to see themselves reflected in the literature they read, yet today only 5 percent of the books being published are culturally diverse. Culturally diverse texts accurately and respectfully portray people of different cultures and perspectives. This literature offers all students the opportunity to read and discuss issues of freedom, bias, justice, and equality and has the "power to humanize us and increase our sensitivity, tolerance, and compassion for people and other cultures" (Routman, 2000, p. 75b).

According to Galda (quoted in Routman, 2000, pp. 74–75b), the culturally diverse literature about African Americans continues to increase, and there are some powerful Asian characters in the current literature; however, there are few accessible texts about Latino/a culture and a dearth of literature depicting our indigenous population. This continues to be a challenge for educators as we reach out to diverse learners.

WRITING IN THE FOUR CLASSES

Common Core State Standards

Writing: 7–12.W.1; 7–12.W.2; 7–12.W.3; 7–12.W.4; 7–12.W.5; 7–12.W.6; 7–12.W.7; 7–12.W.8; 7–12.W.9; 7–12.W. 10.

Writing in the four classes was just as important as reading. Using Atwell's (1987) guidelines for writing proved successful for students at all levels. To these I would now add rubrics and an assessment component.

The guidelines for writing in the four classes are the following:

- Student choice of topics using nonfiction and fiction
- Personal conferences
- Teacher writes with students
- Peer response
- Specific, positive feedback
- Publication of student writing
- Student choice of reading
- Shared discussions about reading and writing
- Journal writing and sharing

Journal Response

The journal was an integral part of all three writing classes (Atwell, 1998, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Macrorie, 1984). At the seventh-grade level, it functioned as a procedure to mark the beginning of each class, as well as student writing. Students were asked to respond to questions or prompts written on the board. They then shared responses before they began their daily writing or reading tasks.

At the high school level, it functioned as a resource for future reading and writing ideas, as well as the place where students interacted transactionally on paper about their books.

At the college level, students used their journals for reflection and processing. During the first classes of the semester, students would share their fears and doubts, and that sharing, and the ensuing discussion, would help build the class reading and writing community.

In all of the class discussions, one thing is paramount: the interaction that results from students confronting texts and each other. When students could construct their own meanings through their discussions, a community of readers and writers arose to support the discovery and learning of its members (Atwell, 1998).

THE TEACHER'S ROLE

So what is your role in a literacy classroom? The final component of this learning in a rich reading and writing environment is the teacher. Teachers, like musicians, are artists as well as practitioners (Palmer, 1998). The teacher who creates writing and reading magic in her or his classroom has a distinct voice, a timbre that resonates throughout the classroom. That teacher is not afraid of his or her own voice or the distinct voices of students, whether those students are young or old, Black or White, rich or poor, innocent or guilty. Those teachers allow their students to take risks, and they also take risks.

Teachers must write in front of and with their students and share their failures and successes. Students also must be allowed to fail, but the teacher must offer the scaffolding and needed support that bolsters them to success. Consider allowing students to write and rewrite their papers over and over as often as they want in order to improve their grades. Think of sports. When basketball players begin to play the game, they do not perform perfect free throws over and over. It takes years of practice. When students begin writing, they must practice. Grading the practice shuts down the process. Instead, assess and give specific feedback, yet allow students to revise and rewrite until they believe it is the best they can do (J. Burke, 1999b). You can give points for completing the earlier drafts, but assign a letter grade only to the finished product. This creates a writing and reading environment that supports discovery and change, growth and development.

So what is the challenge for the teacher who wants to create a rich, balanced literacy program that supports reading and writing? Is it to impart a body of knowledge? Is it to get students to regurgitate "important" facts? Or is

it to teach students to be reflective writers and readers who know how to gather information, process information, and synthesize information? The balanced literacy teacher must include all of the above. But if that teacher wants to get the very best from students, the teacher must create a climate of mutual trust and understanding where human beings can come together, no matter what their ages, to share their stories and writings of their lives within a common community (Gregory & Chapman, 2002).

Reflect upon the classrooms described above. How do they match what you already do? What aspects of the reading and writing workshops described above could you use in your instruction?

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Following are some tools for your classroom.

Quick Self-Edit Ideas

- Use a good word processing program that includes a grammar and spell check. It will catch most of your errors.
- Read to the sky: Go outside and read your piece aloud to the sky. (OK, you can read inside and call it "read to the wall." Have students line up, facing the wall, and read their papers aloud, simultaneously). Listen for the parts you like and listen for the parts that sound awkward. Revise accordingly.
- Find the real beginning of your piece. If your piece contains more than twenty pages, consider cutting the first page and a half; if your piece contains fewer than twenty pages, consider cutting the first paragraph and a half. Read your piece aloud to a reader and ask what he or she remembers. What is remembered may be the real beginning of your piece.
- Make people, not things, the subjects of your sentences.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- Eliminate passive voice and use active voice. Following the above often takes care of that. Example of passive voice: "The ball was thrown by Mike." Example of active voice: "Mike threw the ball."
- Eliminate linking verbs. Example with linking verb: "She was tired and fell asleep." Example without linking verb: "Tired, she fell asleep."
- Use active verbs to show the action. Do not put the action into adjectives or adverbs. Example with adverb: "John awkwardly walked across the room." Example without adverb: "John shuffled across the room."
- Cross out your prepositional phrases; then decide which ones you really need. Often they contain wordiness.

Other suggestions? Brainstorm.

REVISION

Donald Murray (1990) tells us that revision is "re-seeing" that allows us to see what we are writing and what it means. Consider these strategies for your students.

Suggestions for Revision

- Read your piece aloud several times.
- Put it away for several days.
- Have others read your piece and give you feedback.
- Change the point of view. If you used a third-person point of view, change it to first person and see what happens. Or try the opposite.
- Begin at a different place in your writing.
- End before you think it is finished.
- Write past the present ending.
- Reorder time in your piece.
- Change the number of words. Take a 3,000-word story and rewrite it in 1,000 words.
- Tighten your language.

In this chapter, you have examined a reading and writing workshop model in practice. What were the successes? When using the workshop model, I found that behavior issues disappeared, except in rare cases, as students found their "flow" in the texts they wrote and read. Another outcome was the creation of a community of learners at all levels. Students listened and respected each other's writings, and our caring community grew. Academic achievement improved overall as students improved their reading and writing skills. Students

became readers and writers, and the school culture of academic literacy flourished. We built on the academic literate environment by using project-oriented instruction throughout much of the year at the middle and high school levels. Finally, this format is a natural fit for the CCSS.

In the next chapter, you will find lessons being taught today in an elementary school, middle school, and high school. These are real teachers' lessons that they designed and want to share with you.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning With Adolescents* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998).

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning,* second edition (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998).

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3–6: Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001).

Gregory, Gayle, and Carolyn Chapman. *Differentiated Instructional Strategies: One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2002).

SUGGESTED WEB SITES

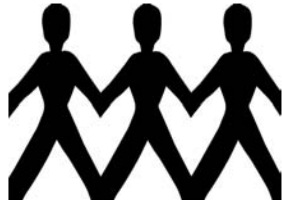
ClassTools.net (classtools.net)

Common Core State Standards App for iPad by MasteryConnect (itunes.apple.com/us/app/common-core-standards/id439424555?mt=8)

Google Drive (drive.google.com)

Piratepad (piratepad.net)

Wordle (www.wordle.net)



16

Teachers in Today's Classrooms Share Their Lessons

Over the past decade, I have been fortunate to work with many wonderful educators. In this chapter, teachers share lessons their students learned from and loved. These lessons embody culturally responsive practices and are aligned to standards, some to the CCSS and others to state or district ones. The teachers practice culturally responsive teaching in their classroom instruction and in their interactions with colleagues. They do this through powerful collaboration and a strong belief in equity. To them, equity means believing all children can learn and doing what it takes to afford all learners the opportunities to do so. In these lessons, you will find many culturally responsive practices. As you read over them, consider the ways in which they support equity for all learners.

Perhaps ironically, I did not think about ethnicity, racial identity, or gender when I asked the staffs at several schools if anyone wanted to share successful lessons for this book. These are the teachers who shared, and they are all women. One is Latina, three are African American, one is Filipino, and the rest are White. They range from new teachers in their first three years to veteran teachers, and some are tiny framed ladies with others being of a more average size (I state this because sometimes a teacher will tell me someone can maintain classroom management because they are physically large, and that's just not true, in my experience). These women engage students, and these women are lifelong learners who continue to learn and grow.

MATH, SCIENCE, AND LANGUAGE ARTS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Dr. Todd Benben is the principal of North Glendale Elementary School in Kirkwood, Missouri. He is a White male who is deeply invested in equity. He not only believes in equitable opportunities for all; he makes them happen. Todd begins each school day by standing outside and welcoming each family to school. Families often walk to school with their dogs, and Todd stops to pet the dogs while remembering names of parents, children, and dogs! He is also there at the end of school, but he does something additional during the day that sets him apart as an effective administrator. During workshops, I often share this powerful strategy with administrators: Todd's *daily walkthrough.* Each day Todd walks through the school and lightly touches each person on the shoulder, including all staff and all children. He has done this for years. This simple procedure takes about thirty minutes a day and offers tremendous payback. Each day Todd grasps the big picture of his school as he walks through each room and acknowledges each human being in the building. He can assess the emotional tone of the classrooms and note if any teacher or learner is having a bad day. There is no invisibility at Todd's school, for he sees his staff and students, and they see him. It took his staff a few weeks to get used to Todd being in their rooms every day, never knowing when it would be walkthrough time, but after the first month of the first year, staff is comfortable and simply continue teaching and students continue learning. Read Todd's words below about the progress at his school, and then examine some of the lessons from his staff.

Dr. Todd Benben

Principal, North Glendale Elementary School

At North Glendale, we believe all students will learn and grow each and every day. Our daily pledge states that as learners we will be cooperative, respectful, responsible, honest, and we will persevere. We take our pledge seriously and every member or our learning community strives to live *our pledge on a daily basis. We have made major strides to build our capacity to be culturally responsive teachers and use what we have learned from each other and from our resources. We are forever indebted to Bonnie for her time and energy encouraging and teaching our learning community members to become effective and compassionate teachers for all students and not just most students.*

Purposeful and engaging work has allowed our learning community to make real progress with our student achievement. Currently 85% of our students were proficient or advanced on the MAP in Communication Arts, which is a 10% improvement over the last three years. Eighty-three percent of all our students were proficient or advanced on MAP in math, which is a twelve percent improvement over the last three years. Eighty percent of our fifth grade students scored proficient or advanced on MAP in Science. A site called SchoolDigger.com currently ranks our school as the #4 elementary school in the state of Missouri.

While I am grateful for Todd's acknowledgment, I must acknowledge his work with his staff. He has an open door policy and continually shares with his staff the importance of being honest and open with him. Todd listens; Todd adjusts; Todd learns, just as he expects all the adults and children in his building to do. He is deliberate in his planning to support the staff journey as they continue to become increasingly culturally responsive in their instruction and interactions with each other and the children in the building.

At North Glendale Elementary, we began several years ago by examining White women's hidden rules that play out among female teachers in an elementary school. All of the classroom teachers are White females. The only African American females are the reading specialist and the social worker. Because the school culture reflects a White female culture, we began studying the socialization of White females in the United States to better understand how we White women might become more effective with students who don't look like us. We began by learning about ourselves. We used the work of Carol Gilligan (1982), Deborah Tannen (1990), and Becky Bailey (2000) to learn about and begin to understand how our language shapes our cultural lens. For the past three years, the staff at North Glendale has been participating in book studies before and after school, using *Courageous Conversations About Race* by Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton (2006), *Conscious Discipline* by Becky Bailey (2000), and *The Biracial and Multiracial Student Experience* (2009), one of my books. As a result of examining *race,* the staff has moved from "not seeing color" to acknowledging their own biases and prejudices and learning what "they don't know they don't know" about the cultures of the students in the schools. Test scores continue to rise as teachers change their practice and refuse to give in to the notion that Students of Color will do less well than White students.

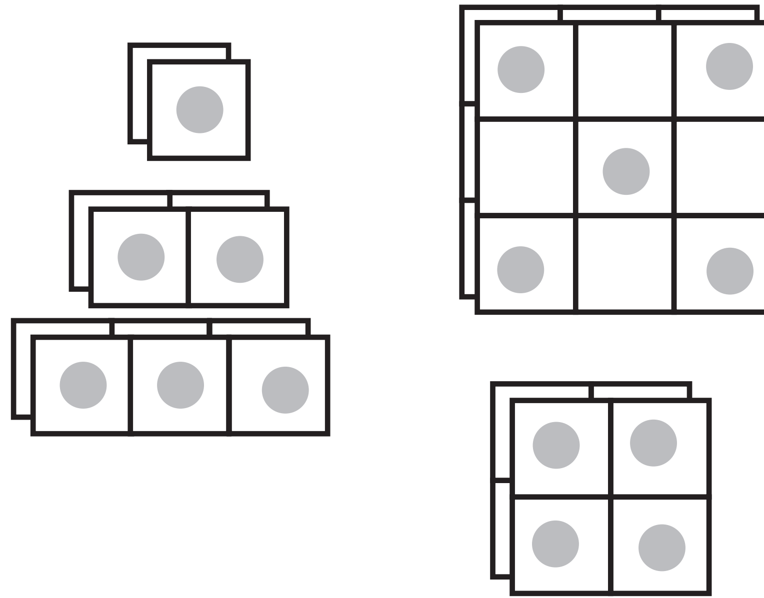
The lessons that follow are from teachers at North Glendale. First is a fifth-grade math lesson by teacher Laura Sammon. Laura is a dedicated veteran teacher who holds the highest expectations for all students. Laura connects the learning to students' background knowledge and lives, and she uses group work to do many activities in her class.

Fifth Grade Math Lesson

Laura Sammon

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Lesson Plan for Fifth Grade Mathematics by Laura Sammon, North Glendale Elementary School
Based on the Three Stages of Understanding by Design</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Stage 1. Desired Results</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Established Goals
1. Relate volume to the operations of multiplication and addition and solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume.
2. Apply the formulas V = l × w × h and V = b × h for rectangular prisms to find volumes of right rectangular prisms with whole-number edge lengths in the context of solving real-world and mathematical problems.
From Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.</td><td colspan="2">Transfer</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Students will be able to independently use their learning to apply the formula V = l × w × h for rectangular prisms in the context of solving real-world mathematical problems.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Meaning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Understandings
1. Students will understand volume is an attribute of solid figures and understand concepts of volume measurement.</td><td>Essential Questions
1. How are area and volume related?
2. Why do we need an understanding of volume in the real world?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Acquisition</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge
Students will know that a unit cube, a cube measuring one cubic unit, can be used to measure volume.</td><td>Skills
Students will be able to measure volume by counting unit cubes, using cubic centimeters, cubic inches, cubic feet, and improvised units.</td></tr>
<tr></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Stage 2. Evidence of Learning</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Students are using factors and multiples of numbers to 24.
• Students are using the area of the cupcake containers to determine the area of the shopping bag.
• Students are combining and breaking numbers apart in various combinations.
• Students are using the formula for area (l × w) and the formula for volume (l × w × h).
• Students are using graph paper to represent the units.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Stage 3. Learning Plan</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Learning Events
This lesson comes at the end of a unit on measurement, specifically the study of perimeter, area, and volume. Students are presented with the following scenario:

A cupcake designer is opening her own small business. Previously, she made cupcakes in her basement kitchen, but now she is opening a retail space on a busy downtown street. She has cupcake containers in the following sizes: 1 × 1, 1 × 2, 1 × 3, 2 × 2, and 3 × 3. The 3 × 3 size holds either five cupcakes or nine cupcakes. (See diagram.)</td></tr>
</table>



The designer is meeting with the vendor of a shopping bag company. From looking at the catalog from the bag company, she knows that as the size of the bag increases, so does the price. Before the vendor talks her into buying bags she cannot use, or a more expensive size for all her cupcakes, she asks her sister's fifth-grade students to (a) Figure out the minimum number of bags needed to fit all her cupcake containers up to twelve cupcakes. (No one buys more than twelve, as the cupcakes are $6.00 each.) (b) Make a chart that shows her high-school-aged employees what bag to use for what number of cupcakes.

Students work in small groups in order to help the teacher's sister know which size shopping bags to buy. Students will need graph paper and pencils, but no other special tools are necessary.

The teacher circulates among the groups and records her observations of students' thinking. Students work in groups until they reach consensus about the answer to the first problem.

Bring the whole group back together in order to share their thinking and reach whole group consensus. Once the bag issue is decided, students work on the chart that shows how to bag the cupcakes up to twelve cupcakes.

After much rich discussion, my class chose three bag sizes with the following bases: 1 × 2, 2 × 3, and 3 × 4. We decided that the bags should have a height of four units, and that the top unit should remain unfilled so that the cupcakes would not fall out of the bag and would allow the handles to come together with ease.

The students in my class came up with the following chart.

Number of Cupcakes	**Container**	**Bag**	**Layers**
1	1 × 1	1 × 2	1
2	1 × 2	1 × 2	1
3	1 × 3	2 × 3	1
4	2 × 2	2 × 3	1
5	3 × 3	3 × 4	1

(Continued)

(Continued)

Number of Cupcakes	Container	Bag	Layers
6 (4 + 2)	2 × 2 and 1 × 2	2 × 3	2
7 (4 + 3)	2 × 2 and 1 × 3	2 × 3	2
8 (4 + 4)	2 × 2 and 2 × 2	2 × 3	2
9 (5 + 4)	3 × 3	3 × 4	1
10 (5 + 5)	3 × 3 and 3 × 3	3 × 4	2
11 (9 + 2)	3 × 3 and 1 × 2	3 × 4	2
12 (9 + 3)	3 × 3 and 1 × 3	3 × 4	2

While the price of the containers is not discussed in this lesson, the same idea holds true for the cupcake containers. The larger the container, the more expensive.

The lesson ends with a debriefing session on the math skills the students used to complete the investigation. The students' list might include their knowledge of factors and multiples and their understanding of multiplication, composing and decomposing numbers, calculating volume, calculating area, and problem-solving skills.

What instructional strategies does Laura use during this lesson? What culturally responsive strategies?

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