

Curriculum in Context

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Engagement in Education



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By David W. Denton, Ed.D.



*A message from
the editor*

Engagement in Education

Engaging students is an essential component of effective teaching. Educators in different places and at different times have considered how to engage students to improve academic and social achievement. Thinkers from each era have defined how this is best accomplished. In ancient times, the Roman orator Quintilian instructed teachers to engage students through thoughtful questioning and encouragement. The eighteenth century philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau directed teachers to appeal to student interest. In the twentieth century, John Dewey advised teachers to ensure “mental attendance” by engaging the “interests, powers, and capacities” of each child.

Engagement holds significant interest for educators today. Searching the Internet for the phrase “engage students” produces more than a hundred thousand results. Titles such as *Productive Group Work: How to Engage Students*, *Academic Icebreakers to Engage Students*, and *WebQuest as a Means to Engage Students* are only the beginning. The list goes on, covering every discipline and grade.

Similar to thinkers from past and present, each individual teacher is on a daily quest to engage students, community, and

colleagues. The tools, strategies, and approaches vary. Some define and promote engagement through general principles, such as on-task behavior, emotions, perceptions, and exercise of personal autonomy. Others rely on specific instructional strategies such as lesson pacing, intriguing questions, novel problems, and mild competition.

Examining principles and strategies for promoting engagement suggests variety, which is an element that often accompanies student interest and attention. Without variety, learning events become routine and predictable, interest fades, and attention drifts.

This issue of *Curriculum in Context* adheres to the principle of variety. Readers will find a wide array of articles from art education, to behavior management, to system-wide efforts for improving subject mastery. Nevertheless, the common thread is engagement.

Classroom teacher Monte Syrie begins the edition by explaining the role of relationships in engagement, followed by Pamela Valentine who surveys strategies for engaging students in art education. John Bond, Arthur Ellis, and David Denton explore reflective activity for promoting

engagement and Professors Jorge Preciado and Debby Hudson identify strategies for engaging students with challenging behaviors. Patricia Kilmer and Brent Osborn share insights for improving student performance in reading and science and David Cooke concludes the edition by using metaphor to elucidate substantive versus impoverished learning activities.

Similar to previous issues of *Curriculum in Context*, the articles in this edition are a sample of the excellent work going on in schools, districts, and institutions all across Washington. Although engagement is defined and achieved differently for each generation of educator, this issue is sure to contribute to our collective understanding and future prospects for engagement in education.

David W. Denton, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor at Seattle Pacific University. Before joining Seattle Pacific, David taught middle school students for ten years. In 2005, David earned National Board Certification in early adolescent mathematics.

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A message from the president

by Ismael Vivanco

Increasing academic achievement is a constant pursuit for educators. Recent reform efforts in Washington have brought this pursuit into sharp relief, specifically adoption of Common Core State Standards and Teacher Principal Evaluation Project. Few educators argue that reform is unnecessary or that pursuing improved academic outcomes is unattainable. Nevertheless, most educators agree that the challenges of effective reform implementation and universal academic achievement are immense. Reviewing these challenges provides perspective about the kind of persistence and fortitude required for ensuring long-term success.

The list of challenges is familiar. It includes poverty, transience, homelessness, language barriers, racism, and lack of student engagement. Educators are charged with assisting students in overcoming these potential obstacles and ensuring all children are provided with the knowledge and skills they need to flourish.

The whole child approach taken by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) addresses this goal by setting high standards, making sure “each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community” (ASCD, 2013). Student engagement produces numerous benefits, not the

least of which is reducing the adverse effects of obstacles students face outside of school. However, student engagement occurs simultaneously as teachers plan lessons, deploy learning activities, and assess results. This means that educators who engage students consider a wide array of factors that influence attention, interest, and relevance. One way to guide these efforts on a day-to-day basis is considering the question, *What will I do to engage students, parents, community, and colleagues?*

At the same time, engaging students is greatly facilitated by the use of specific strategies. In *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), Marzano suggests that “keeping students engaged is one of the most important considerations for the classroom teacher” (p. 98). He also states that “there are many activities teachers can use to capture students’ attention in a way that enhances knowledge of academic content” (p. 98). Some suggestions for capturing student attention include

1. maintaining high teacher energy through enthusiasm, pacing, and intensity;
2. presenting problems, mysteries, or subject matter with missing information;
3. organizing practice of content into puzzles or games;

4. and integrating mild pressure, controversy, or competition for emotional appeal.

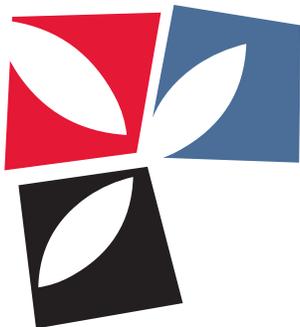
Engagement is an apt theme for this issue of *Curriculum in Context*, especially since pursuing academic excellence is a goal for educators everywhere, regardless of geographic location, grade, or discipline. There are many things educators can do to promote engagement, such as attending to it through daily interactions or by applying specific instructional strategies. Nevertheless, our primary objective should be attending to the whole child, which ensures that each student is “healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged” (ASCD, 2013).

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by Monte Syrie



If We Build Them...

Relationships as a Foundation for Engagement

I like to build. Always have. From a young age, I discovered the satisfaction of turning ideas into realities. And though my first “fort” was little more than some old fence boards held together by straightened rusty nails, it was a product of *my* work — my imagination, my toil, and it became my place, my haunt for hours upon hours the summer before my fourth-grade year. Now, looking back, of course, I realize that my early creations were crude and limited by the tools and materials at my disposal. Indeed, one can only do so much with a hammer, some old nails, and weather-warped boards.

I’m still building. I still enjoy transforming paper plans into solid structures. My latest fort — planned and built collaboratively with my family — is a two-story, multi-deck, cedar board-and-batten affair perched in pines, a feat accomplished with tools and materials far beyond my early building years. Indeed, my toolbox has gotten a little bigger. And, now, in the summer of my son’s fourth-grade year, I hope he, too, finds joy in a place of his own. But I wonder. After all is said and done — after the considerable hours and money spent — I can’t help but wonder if he would not have been just as happy with a wobbly, bent-board deck fastened to a tree. Maybe it didn’t need to be fancy. Maybe it just needed to be a fort.

I build in the classroom, too. Of course, it’s a different type of construction, for my hammer and nails serve no practical purpose in my class. But all building requires tools

and materials, and just as my outside-the-classroom tools and materials have become more sophisticated, so too have my inside-the-classroom tools and materials. But it wasn’t always so. Truly. No one taught me to build relationships. As a pre-service teacher I was led to believe that the key to success was compliance. So I entered the profession believing that if I could keep them quiet and working, then I was successful. And I *was* successful — from the beginning. Indeed, I was the king of compliance my first year. I successfully structured a classroom full of quiet, working kids. I was a master, an expert with but one year under my belt. But it was a lie. In truth, I was as empty as the room, a fraud with a facade. But I did not know that right away. I learned that later. Fortunately, it was only a year later, an invaluable lesson in my early, formative years.

I had the same kids again the next year. I moved with them from seventh to eighth-grade language arts. Though I had a new curriculum and even a new room, I did not expect things to be different. I had the same kids, and I would use the same “successful” approach. I had a blueprint for success, and heck, these kids were already molded into compliant creations of that plan. I was set for Perfect Year 2.0.

But things were different, at first subtly but later quite noticeably. And I wasn’t sure why. But they were. And the kids noticed, too. Now, looking back, I realize that I had come to know the kids and they me, and it started to change the dynamic. I was getting more out of them, and in turn they were

getting more out of me. We were smiling; we were laughing; we were making noise; and we were learning. And before we knew it, we had developed a relationship. And though I still suspect that my first relationships were more accident than skill, I now know that relationships with students are anything but accidents. They are intentional constructs that promote engagement in the classroom, foundations for success. I was lucky to learn this early. I have been building relationships ever since, and it has made all the difference. I only wish someone had told me sooner, before I entered the profession. It would have made a difference for me. And while I cannot change the past, I was recently presented with a chance to help change the future.

Last year I had an opportunity to teach a secondary classroom-management course at Eastern Washington University. And while I was initially intimidated by the higher education venue, I soon discovered that I was prepared, for I had acquired a number of tools — some simple, some sophisticated — over the years that I could now share with the young folks seeking to enter our profession. And so I showed up the first night with my tools newly shined, for it had been some time since I had actually thought — *really thought* — about the craft of managing a classroom, and I was ready to share as much as I could so my college students entered the profession better equipped than I had been so many years ago.

Admittedly, I felt more than a little pressure to establish some credibility, and I

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thought that required sharing an abundance of stuff. So I shared — a lot. In fact, I was amazed at how many tools I had accumulated in my experience. But as the sharing continued over the course of the quarter I was struck by a realization that one tool had become more used, more worn than almost any of the others. And by contrast, others appeared hardly used at all, many simply flashy fads that worked but were soon forgotten or seldom used. Even more, the less-used tools seemed to be more sophisticated, more “flashy” than the one that fit my hand so well. And I panicked, fearing that maybe my walk was not matching my talk. *What was I selling? Was I simply filling my students’ bags with stuff to make myself look credible, to make myself look impressive?* I wasn’t sure. Despite my doubt, time after time, situation after situation, I found myself reaching for the same tool when discussing classroom dynamics with my college students: the

relationship tool. In truth, I was simply selling what I know best, and I’m not sure at this point in my career I can do any differently, for I have come to realize a simple truth to my experience as an educator: any success or failure I have had over the years has had everything to do with relationships. Everything.

I will enter the college classroom again later this fall, and I will share — a lot. I will give my students tools to increase engagement in their classrooms, borrowing heavily from Marzano’s, *The Art and Science of Teaching*, and I will encourage them to Google “engagement strategies,” so they, too, have an abundance of tools to fill their respective toolboxes. But above all, I will hit home the notion that all is less or more depending on the foundation they establish with relationships.

I have already entered my high school classroom, and I am already building. But I

am keeping it simple. As my own children’s fancy tree house now sits empty with the start of school, I daily admire its beauty and seek to show it off. For it is impressive. But it’s empty. And, just as I learned so many years ago, if we are not careful, classrooms, too, can become empty structures full of compliant kids with whom we only complete transactions. Fortunately, now, I know better. And while I will pull out some of my flashier tools at some point this year, at present, I don’t need them. My best tool has found my hand again, and I am building relationships. Simple. Nothing fancy.

Monte Syrie is 2013 ESD 101 Regional Teacher of the Year. He teaches sophomore English at his alma mater, Cheney High School. Monte also serves as an adjunct professor in the Education Department at Eastern Washington University.



WASHINGTON EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE

Engagement: Shaping the Education World

Oct. 21–22, 2013 | Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport

Make plans now to join us for the first **Washington Educators' Conference** being held October 21–22, at the SeaTac Doubletree Hotel. This two-day event is a new collaboration between WASA, AWSP, OSPI and WSASCD. The joint offering is a pilot and replaces the individual events each organization would have held this fall. The conference theme is “*Engagement: Shaping the Education World.*” National and local speakers will cover the hot issues in Washington State education: teacher-principal evaluation, Common Core, technology, Smarter Balanced, and much more.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JAY MCTIGHE
Educational Consultant
McTighe served as director of the Maryland Assessment Consortium. McTighe has also helped lead Maryland’s standards-based reforms, including the development of performance-based statewide assessments.

LAURA LIPTON, ED.D.
Co-Director, Miravia, LLC.
Lipton is an international consultant whose writing, research and seminars focus on effective and innovative instructional practices and on building professional and organizational capacities for enhanced learning

GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE
Washington State Governor

by Pamela D. Valentine



Educate! Engage! Embrace Evaluation!

It's easy to predict that a silent class of glassy-eyed students will learn little or nothing from even the most well-meaning, award winning lecturer, while another group of rambunctious teens immersed in an experiential project will come away with fresh insights and ideas. It isn't the loudness or relative quiet that causes this learning; it is simply the investment of interest, time and energy that makes the difference. In other words, student engagement is paramount to achievement, or quite simply, engagement = learning.

To the casual observer, this engaged classroom may look like pandemonium. However, look closer and see that this is the result of intentional planning and careful classroom management. This attentiveness to the details helps to develop student choice and individual responsibility for learning, which ideally creates the perfect storm for student engagement. This assertion is backed up in Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007). He provides research and data showing that student growth and learning increases with engagement.

This is not news to most practicing teachers and not exactly rocket science either, but it is most definitely brain research. Putting numbers to accepted wisdom about how and why students learn has helped evaluators see that learning can be quantified. If achievement can be measured with charts and graphs then it follows that teaching can be evaluated in the same way. As teachers across the nation enter the brave new world of improved teacher evaluation,

they soon learn that Marzano is one of the researchers at the forefront, leading the charge to increase instructional effectiveness and student growth. Given this new emphasis, on top of other education reform efforts over the last decade, some educators may feel disconcerted.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Marzano and his contemporaries, specifically Danielson (2009) and Dufour (2010), have been researching and writing about student engagement for several years. Their suggestions have been adopted by the State of Washington through new teacher and principal evaluation criteria and frameworks. The models developed by these researchers are currently being used by school districts to improve instruction and learning.

Veteran teachers understand that educational movements come and go but student learning is really the ONLY thing that matters. Taking part in this work, by examining and applying research which leads to positive outcomes, is not scary. Designing effective curricula for your classroom is not frightening. Understanding how to motivate learners, both the reluctant type and the ace student, just makes us better teachers. When teaching continues to improve teachers do well on evaluations and students profit directly from the quest to be the best. However, at the heart of all of this is student engagement, and understanding research findings about it is critically important.

In order to create a successful and engaging learning experience, Strong, Silver, and Robinson, (1995) suggest that students have several needs which must be met.

These include positive perceptions of 1) mastery (success), 2) understanding (curiosity), 3) self-expression (originality) and 4) involvement with others (relationships). Strong et al. summarize this as SCORE and it is one of the models I consider as I plan and teach students in my visual arts classroom. Gladwell (2008) proposes a similar system for success by focusing on autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Considering these ideas is essential to cultivating student motivation that is characterized by stamina and resilience. At the same time, whether students are motivated intrinsically or extrinsically may matter less than previously thought. According to Sternberg and Lubart (1995) highly motivated and creative people rely on internal and external incentives for success.

Nevertheless, given all that is known about motivation and engagement, teachers inspire students in many different ways. For example, some students work for "Gold Stars," but others work from a desire to succeed that comes from within. As Sternberg and Lubart (1995) note, different rewards affect people differently. Kohn, (1995) seems to capture this idea as well by stating that reward systems exist only in the context of the individual. This means that part of the work of effective teaching involves knowing your students and figuring out how they are inspired. For me, this means using a variety of strategies, aligned with research. I have found the following practices effective for motivating students, maintaining engagement, and improving achievement:

Create and Control a Safe and Effective Learning Environment

Creating a learning environment that predictably engages students must be intentional and well planned. In the Visual Arts classroom I work to control that environment. From the u-shaped layout of seating that eases student movement around materials, to the soft classical music that plays during extended work time. I make sure that the setting optimizes student needs. If natural light is required then the blinds are open and the overhead lights are off. If students need to work with others, then I arrange them in triads to maximize eye contact and create more surface area workspace. Physical space is utilized best when the teacher thinks ahead and plans accordingly.

Integrate Student Choice into Every Project

Engagement in a lesson is heightened when students have choices. Whether the goal is to develop skills and techniques in graphite portraiture or clay hand building, there must be opportunities for students to create work that is original and unique. For example, in the graphite unit, students decide who they will draw based on how significant that person is to them in their lives. This makes the drawing, which may take up to three weeks, worthwhile. The detail they develop in bringing this work to life is truly amazing and extremely personal. Most students create a portrait that becomes a family treasure. Another example of the power of choice is when students are learning basic

hand-building sculpture skills. They are asked to choose a theme for their sculpture project and decide on a series of containers they want to make. Integrating elements of choice results in finished projects that show student knowledge of art and that are fun and personal at the same time.

Incorporate Current Technologies

Using technology in the classroom never fails to stimulate students and get their attention. I ask them to use the “computer in their pocket” during class time. Students are encouraged to take their phone out and make it available for the lesson. One of the requirements is to create a project completion album by taking weekly photos as their project develops. Students also search for artists that they are learning about in class and they send both pictures and text messages to parents and friends as the project progresses. It is amazing to see students searching for information about cubism when we study Picasso or digging up facts about Frida Kahlo while we look at her paintings.

There are many ways to promote student engagement in the classroom. Teachers who make an effort at developing this facet of their instruction are sure to observe increases in achievement, along with other positive benefits. Interest and engagement are at the core of meaningful activity, and this is especially true with learning. Nevertheless, engaging students is hard work. I have found that maintaining a safe and productive environment, providing plenty

of opportunities for choice, and incorporating current technologies are helpful strategies toward achieving this goal. The result is a classroom that is vibrant, productive, and fun.

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Pamela D. Valentine, MIT, teaches Visual Arts at Oakland Bay Junior High School in Shelton. She was 2013 ESD 113 Regional Teacher of the Year, 2013 Washington State Middle Level Art Teacher of the Year and she is National Board Certified. She has been a blogger for *Partnership for Learning* and authored the 2006 article, *Thinking Like an Artist*, published in ASCD's *Educational Leadership* magazine.

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An Evening with Dr. Harvey Alvy

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Description

November 19, 2013 marks the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In that speech the president not only captured the meaning of the Gettysburg battle for the soul of the nation; he defined also, America's promise—dedication to the “unfinished work” of a young democracy. Thus Lincoln's words resonate today, just as they did 150 years ago. This evening we will re-visit this historic speech together, celebrating its highlights, some myths, and what the speech tells us about Lincoln's heroic character and leadership capacity. The presenter's co-authored book, *Learning From Lincoln* will help us capture the meaning of Lincoln's speech for today's schools. Please join us to share your ideas and to commemorate this historic day.

For additional [information on Dr. Harvey Alvy](#), visit the ASCD website.

Professional Development

by Jorge Preciado and
Debby Hudson



Supporting Students with Problem Behaviors in Elementary Classroom Settings: Manipulating the Classroom for Student Success

Classroom management plays a critical role in supporting student academic and social outcomes (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Although academic instruction plays a major role in how students learn and behave, pairing academic outcomes with behavioral practices increases the likelihood that students will demonstrate a decrease in problem behaviors (Burke, Hagan-Burke, & Sugai, 2003; Preciado, Horner, & Baker, 2009; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). For many educators, students who externalize problem behaviors are challenging since continuous display of problem behaviors (e.g., talking out, out of seat, low academic engagement, spitting, hitting, pushing, and yelling) disrupts teacher instruction and routines, hinders positive interactions amongst peers and adults, and models or encourages inappropriate behaviors for other students. In short, intertwining good instructional practices with social skills instruction, and teaching students to self-manage their behaviors are logical, useful, and evidence-based practices that promote learning and safe environments for all students (Burke et al., 2003; Preciado et al., 2009; Jensen, Olympia, Farley, & Clark, 2004).

Effective Instructional Practices

This section focuses on critical aspects of teaching since the scope of this article

is not to explain nor explore all aspects when teaching subject matter to students. Rosenshine (2012) outlines several variables related to principles of good instruction that can be generalized when teaching other subjects, such as language arts, mathematics, and social studies. It is important to note, that a primary principle of teaching is to teach to mastery (e.g., proficient level of academic success) therefore, when teaching to mastery we should keep in mind the following: (a) providing prior knowledge of new skill or task to students, (b) provide a review of previous concepts, (c) provide a good pace when delivering the lesson, (d) increase students' opportunities to respond by asking questions, (e) providing immediate feedback to students, (f) teaching skills to mastery (e.g., not introducing new skills if students have not mastered the previous skills), (g) increasing opportunities for students to share information with peers, (h) checking for understanding, and (i) progress monitoring student outcomes and growth.

Of importance is understanding that poor academic outcomes and ineffective instructional practices increase the likelihood of student problem behaviors (Moore, Anderson, & Kumar, 2005). Therefore, a proactive approach is more sustainable and cost effective when instruction is delivered with the intent and purpose to have all students master the concept(s). If mastery of

concepts is accomplished, the odds increase that students are learning and are less likely to engage in escape maintained problem behaviors (e.g., problems behaviors that immerge as a student is trying to avoid an academic task). In short, good academic instruction plays a vital role for decreasing student problem behaviors and increasing pro-social behaviors (Fairbanks et al., 2007).

Social Skills Instruction

Teaching social skills to students is often misunderstood or simply conceptualized as a skill taught to preschool students. In fact, social skills instruction helps to decrease problem behaviors when students are taught acceptable behaviors in the classroom and non-classroom settings (Fairbanks et al., 2007). Teachers can devote time to teaching social skills instruction (e.g., sitting on carpet, passing out paper, working at a desk, appropriately listening to another opinion, appropriately telling a peer to leave them alone, sitting in your chair, waiting for your turn to be called by the teacher, asking for help, waiting to get a drink of water, and the like) at the beginning of the year and intermittently throughout the year. Of importance, is to have the teacher model proactive behavior on a daily basis for students, while teaching the aforementioned skills and reinforcing correct social skills. Of note, the reinforcement of correct behaviors

increases the likelihood that students will do the behavior again, thereby encouraging more pro-social behaviors (Alberto & Troutman, 2013).

Teaching social skills should be done like teaching other academic content so emphasis should be placed on the four phases of learning a skill: (a) acquiring the skill, (b) mastery of skill, (c) maintenance of skill, and (f) generalization of skill (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). For example, time should be allotted for teaching students social skills, such as having students wait their turn to drink from a fountain. First, the teacher needs to model the behavior and allow for students to practice the behavior (acquisition phase), second, upon learning the skill, the students need more practice and opportunities to master the skill (mastery phase), third, upon mastery of skill, the students will need intermittent practice, so that the skill is not forgotten (maintenance phase), and fourth, students will need to perform this learned skill in different settings (e.g., auditorium, playground, hallways, gymnasium) to demonstrate that they have generalized the learned skill (waiting your turn to drink water) to different settings and situations.

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Moreover, it is importance to make sure that students are firm on a skill before implementing the last two phases of learning (maintenance and generalization). Additionally, students will benefit from prompts and teacher feedback while learning the new skill. The prompts and feedback are given throughout the four phases, with the intent to deliver less prompts as the students master the skill. Last, reinforcement of correct behaviors should be continuous when first teaching the skill, with the intent to fade the frequency of natural reinforcement (e.g., good job waiting your turn Liz, excellent job passing our papers Laura).

Self-Management of Student Behaviors

Self-management of student behaviors is a pro-social skill that is necessary for students to master. As stated, society cannot and does not have the mechanisms in place to reward or punish appropriate or inappropriate behaviors on a consistent basis (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). Additionally, students with chronic problem behaviors benefit from behavioral learning strategies that will help them regulate their non-compliant behaviors (e.g., out of seat, talking out, not engaged, disagreeing and hitting their peers, not completing assignments, hit-

ting or yelling at peers to get access to a tangible, and the like). Therefore, teaching students to engage in self-management skills is paramount (Jensen et al., 2004). Like most things done in classroom settings, teaching self-management skills should be modeled and taught by the teacher or nearby adult for the student. While self-management of skills can be done as a whole class, primarily, this skill is mostly implemented for students with chronic or ongoing problem behaviors.

To get started, the teacher teaches the skill like any other subject matter with a focus on the following components:

1. Identify the preferred behavior.
2. Determine how often the student will self-manage their behavior.
3. Meet with the student to explain self-management, identify goals, and establish preferred rewards contingent upon achieving those goals.
4. Prepare a student self-recording sheet.

5. Model the self-management plan and provide the student with an opportunity to practice the behavior.
6. Implement the self-management plan.
7. Meet with the student to determine whether the behavioral goals were attained.
8. Provide the reward(s) when earned.
9. Incorporate the plan into a school-home collaboration scheme by sending the self-recording sheet home for parent review.
10. Fade the intervention by increasing the length of intervals between self-monitoring cues along with fading the rewards (Wilkinson, 2008).

In essence, once the behavior has been mastered, the ultimate goal is for students to reinforce themselves with natural contingencies (e.g., I am happy that I completed

How Am I Doing?



Name: _____

Date: _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Activities					
Sitting on Desk					
Stars/Points:					
Sitting at the Carpet					
Stars/Points:					
Standing in Line					
Stars/Points:					

Total Stars/Points: _____

Points needed for free play: _____ **Points needed for free choice:** _____

Figure 1. Early Grades Self-Monitoring Form

the task, I feel good when I help my friend complete his assignment, It is nice getting a high five from my teacher) since reinforcement with natural contingencies are more sustainable, cost effective, and practical (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). In sum, teaching self-monitoring skills to students with chronic behavioral problems is an effective way of helping students learn social skills and increase academic and social skills productivity. Additionally, peer and adult positive interactions are maintained and nurtured since the student with the problem behaviors is developing the needed social skills to succeed in society.

Conclusion

Like many things in education, combining best practices to meet the academic and social skills needs of students are logical, necessary, and effective (Burke et al., 2003; Preciado et al., 2009; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). In the aforementioned pages we provided information on three evidence-based practices that work well individually or when coupled together to decrease student problem behaviors (Fairbanks et al., 2007). More importantly, these three practices increase the likelihood that students will develop the necessary academic and social skills outcomes to

succeed in the classroom. As many of you know, giving students the skills to succeed is a one of the primary reasons why individuals decide to teach.

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Name: _____
Date: _____

Look at my Good Work!

Activities	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading					
Writing					
Academic Languages					
Mathematics					
Recess					
Silent Reading					
Social Studies					
Science					
Physical Education					
Music					
Computer Lab					
Art					

Total Points: _____ + Bonus Points: _____ = _____

Benchmark Goal for Each Subject: _____

Points for Recess	Points for Free Play	Points for Free Choice	Goal/Points for the Day	Bonus Points	Points for the Week

Figure 2. Intermediate and Later Grades Self-Monitoring Form



By David W. Denton,
John B. Bond, and
Arthur K. Ellis

Reflective Assessment: Providing Alternative Approaches to Student Voice

12

Formative assessment is one of the instructional practices teachers use to improve student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). There are many strategies for deploying formative assessment such as pair share, think aloud, exit slip, journal entry, and two sentence summary. These types of strategies are extensions of broader categories of classroom activity organized around observing, questioning, writing, illustrating, performing, and discussing. As these strategies and categories suggest, there are countless ways for implementing formative assessment. However, effective formative assessment shows some common features (Bell & Cowie, 2001). It directs teacher planning and instruction; it provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of learning activities; it shapes students' understanding of their own competence; and it emphasizes content mastery over content coverage. Effective formative assessment also consists of interaction, characterized by feedback, differentiated support, and reflection (Bell & Cowie, 2001).

The role of the teacher in deploying effective formative assessment is critical, but so is the role of the student. According to Black and Wiliam (1998) "for formative assessment to be productive, pupils should be trained in self-assessment so that they can understand the main purposes of their learning and thereby grasp what they need to do to achieve" (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p.

85). Elements of effective self-assessment include understanding the learning objective, along with knowledge of current and desired performance. It also means that students self-assess with the learning objective as the reference point.

Student Voice and Metacognition

The way many teachers in Washington conceptualize and engage students in self-assessment is through student voice. According to Washington ProTeach (2013), student voice shows evidence of learning from the students' perspective. It also includes a personal assessment of learning process and performance. Effectively evaluating these elements requires a learning target that students can articulate in their own words, without which it is difficult to identify and close performance gaps. Student voice provides a precise definition of self-assessment predicated on standards-based instruction. However, there are alternative theory constructs for defining self-assessment, such as metacognition.

Metacognition means thinking about one's own thinking. The term itself derives from the Greek word *meta* (after or beyond) and the Latin word *cognoscere* (to know or ponder). Students engaged in metacognitive thinking consider subject matter and process, but they also consider affective elements, such as importance, value, and meaning. Similar to student voice, metacog-

niton includes the way students monitor and evaluate their own achievement (Brown, 1978). Unlike student voice, metacognition includes a broader array of self-assessment activities, for example, open-ended questions independent of a learning target which may invite divergent responses.

Including student voice activities in daily lessons serves several functions, not the least of which is improving student understanding of current and desired performance with respect to a desired outcome. However, effective teaching requires consideration of many variables, some of which exist outside of standards-based instructional models. Engagement is one of these and effective teachers understand that maintaining it means considering the full range of emotions associated with learning (Reeve, 2006). Engagement is often elusive and fleeting. Establishing it requires careful planning, and maintaining it requires effort. One way teachers promote engagement is to vary activities. A useful approach for doing this is to apply alternative theories to existing practice.

Reflective Assessment Strategies

Metacognition provides an alternative theory base applicable to student voice, and readily enables educators to extend how they engage students in self-assessment activities. Broadly defined, these practices include elements of self-assessment, and also

self-monitoring and self-regulation. They are identifiable through active participation of students in evaluation of subject matter and learning process. A practical set of methods for integrating these kinds of activities in the classroom is reflective assessment, which consists of eliciting student reflections through writing, speaking, and illustrating, across content areas, both independently and collaboratively (Ellis, Bond, & Denton, 2012). Some examples of reflective assessment strategies follow.

I Learned Statements. The basic characteristics of reflective assessment are shown in **I Learned** statements, which are comments spoken or written by students summarizing whatever they learned from the lesson (Ellis, 2010). There are various ways to implement I Learned, such as having students share their thinking with nearby peers, or writing an Exit Slip. Questions for eliciting I learned statements include

- What did you learn?
- What part of the lesson did you find most interesting?
- What is the value of what you learned?
- What do you think you will remember from today's lesson?

A strategy similar to I learned is **Key Idea Identification** (Ellis, 2010), which depends on larger and broader unit-related goal statements, sometimes referred to as the unit focus, central focus, guiding question, essential question, big idea, or concept. Questions for engaging students to share their thoughts about the key idea of the unit include

- How does yesterday's lesson relate to today's lesson?
- How do you summarize what you have learned from these last few days?
- What is the key idea that explains our activities over the last few weeks?

Clear and Unclear Windows uses comparisons, rather than lesson or unit goals, as its subject matter (Ellis, 2010). Making comparisons is an effective method of instruction (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Venn diagrams, tables, and graphs are visual representations of comparison. A t-chart is a simple table comparing two or more characteristics of things. Marking one side clear and another side unclear turns the chart into Clear and Unclear Windows. Students use the chart for identifying parts of the lesson that make sense and those

that are confusing.

Another visual learning activity is **Learning Illustrated** (Ellis, 2010), which many students find particularly engaging since most school work involves mastering and manipulating numbers and letters. Images, pictures, diagrams, and other visual representations, are just as important, and more readily understood by learners since most brain activity is occupied with processing visual information (Medina, 2008). Some prompts for eliciting illustrations include

- What picture can you draw to show your learning?
- Summarize your learning by illustrating a graphic organizer.
- How can you represent this information as a diagram?
- Assemble a flow chart to show the events or steps.

A final strategy is to have students switch roles with the teacher and instruct a peer through **I Can Teach** (Ellis, 2010). The Latin proverb, *By learning you will teach; by teaching you will understand*, summarizes this strategy. Activities for engaging students in I Can Teach are similar to those effective educators use for planning lessons, and include

- Articulating the learning target
- Designing and deploying an activity
- Assessing the results
- Reteaching if needed

Conclusion

Formative assessment is one of the most effective instructional practices educators use to improve achievement. Self-assessment is a critical part of this process and the way teachers in Washington define it is through student voice. Student voice depends on the same theory base as metacognition. However, heavy emphasis on standards-based models of instruction can limit the range of metacognitive elements deployed in classrooms. One of these elements is engagement, which effective educators cultivate by using varied instructional practices. Reflective assessment strategies provide an alternative set of activities for implementing student voice. Strategies such as I Learned, Key Idea Identification, and I Can Teach enable students to address questions of value, interest, and meaning. Permitting students to address these ideas in divergent ways adds stimulating irregularity to classroom

experiences, without sacrificing alignment between teaching, learning, and assessment.

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By Patricia Kilmer,
Kerri Reed,
Angelique Gourley,
Ryan Fiedler, and
Kelly Neely

Raising Academic Achievement: Strategies for Success

Each year, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) selects several schools for Title I Academic Achievement Awards. The award is given to schools which have significantly raised student achievement in mathematics or reading. In 2012, East Olympia Elementary, in the Tumwater School District, was recognized as an Academic Achievement recipient. Principal Patty Kilmer, along with school team leaders Kerri Reed, Angelique Gourley, Ryan Fiedler, and Kelly Neely share their story about improving student achievement.

How did you begin the process of improving student achievement in reading?

In 2008, East Olympia was in the first year of Step One for not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. The district hired Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) to assist in the improvement of reading instruction. Two TOSAs attended our opening staff meeting. As a staff we made a conscious decision to embrace and trust the TOSAs. We recognized that we could not keep doing what we had been doing and expect to get different results. Some grade levels began *Walk to Read* or *Walk to Intervention* groups and some added both. The TOSAs realigned our pacing guides to reflect state standards and assessment timelines. They also established Common Formative Assessments, data was collected, and TOSAs would then assist with instructional planning based on that current data cycle.

What did you do after establishing these initial systems?

In 2009, as a result of our improved Measure of Student Progress scores, we achieved Safe Harbor status (meaning we had fewer kids below proficient in reading). Our efforts in 2008 were paying off and we added benchmark assessments to monitor student performance three times each year. Our newly assigned Instructional Facilitator (IF) conducted data team meetings with the principal where teams were taught to interpret assessment results. This specifically and significantly informed teacher instruction. The IF modeled and team taught numerous reading lessons that staff found to be extremely beneficial. It was also during this time period that diagnostic assessments were added to our system. Students were assessed using the Diagnostic Decoding Survey and a multisyllabic screener. This enabled more focused grouping and instruction to meet very specific phonemic, beginning decoding, and advanced decoding needs for each learner.

How did your efforts affect teachers?

Teachers began owning and interpreting data and the instructional implications of the data on student learning for both remediation and acceleration. At the same time, the role of the IF evolved from a lead position to a focused support position to assist staff in using assessment data to form reading groups. Teams of teachers also took ownership of all students at the same grade level and met frequently to ensure that student needs were being met. The groups

were fluid and teachers maintained a high degree of communication with one another as well as with parents. Grade level teams also set SMART goals based on fall to spring district benchmark data, which helped overcome deficiencies in focus skills, fluency, and decoding.

What did you do to maintain the momentum of progress that began in 2008?

The staff moved from being merely teams to truly having Professional Learning Communities with a strong interdependence focused on common goals. PLCs then created long range SMART goals as well as multiple short cycle goals throughout the year. The groups presented their goals to all other school members at staff meetings. Progress toward meeting goals was also shared and celebrated. In addition, short cycle goals were discussed every other week at site team meetings. An effective strategy underlying the entire system was frequent presentation of student performance data to everyone involved. The end result was significant increase in student reading performance and East Olympia Elementary received a School of Distinction Award in 2011 and an Academic Achievement Award in 2012.

What are some characteristics of East Olympia that facilitated these changes?

- We have a clear vision, which is *Learning and Succeeding Together*.

This powerful statement is the motivating force behind our decision making.

- We embrace the goal of having 100% of our students meet standards as well as setting goals that are attainable. While we understand that our students may have different challenges, we believe that it is our mission to help all students be successful.
- Our principal makes sure that we have the time required for quality teaching and learning. With the help of the Site Team, the master schedule was crafted to maximize instructional minutes by reducing transitions and interruptions.
- Our Professional Learning Communities unite teachers, the principal, the IF, and specialists on a weekly basis. During this time, staff review student data and make informed decisions guiding our next steps.
- We have a clear pacing guide based on state standards.
- We have a robust assessment system for screening and diagnosis. This has been coupled with short- and long-cycle goal setting for teachers and students.
- We provide professional development based on student performance data.
- We share students across grades, which creates more opportunities for

kids to connect with adults. We also have a high degree of trust with one another and involve families as much as possible.

- We have a positive behavior intervention system, which defines expectations for students.
- We have a shared sense of responsibility. For example, our office staff gathers essential information from families at registration, which is not limited to addresses and phone. They have been trained to administer DIBELS tests, expediting initial reading placement. They also gather information about homelessness, transiency and poverty.

What are some final thoughts you have about raising student achievement?

The system we developed matches our vision: *Learning and Succeeding Together*. Teachers are learning how to work with students based on assessment results; they are succeeding. Students are demonstrating increases in literacy achievement; they are also succeeding. For years we felt like we were behind. However, through hard work, perseverance, and dedication, teachers, staff and administration are transforming East Olympia Elementary into a model of effective practice. Our systems continue to evolve and we are excited about the days ahead, which will undoubtedly bring challenges, but also progress and growth.

Patricia Kilmer is principal of East Olympia Elementary. She has thirty years of experience in the field of education. In 2011, Patricia received the Spirit of Leadership Award from ESD 113. She has also worked in the North Beach and Arlington School Districts.

Kerri Reed has taught kindergarten, first and second grade for a total of 18 years. Kerri is a Trainer of Trainers for Read Well and has served on several district teams, including Data Driven Decision Making, Student Learning Coordinating Council, and Professional Learning Communities.

Angelique Gourley is currently the Title 1 teacher at East Olympia Elementary. She has eleven years of experience working with general education, special education, and title students. Angelique has also worked as an instructional facilitator for the Tumwater School District.

Ryan Fiedler is in his 25th year of teaching. He spent four years in the Bethel School District before accepting a 3rd grade position in Tumwater at East Olympia Elementary School.

Kelly Neely is currently the Tumwater School District Reading TOSA. She has worked in the Clover Park School District as a teacher and at OSPI where she was the Secondary Reading Assessment Specialist. She has also worked as reading coach and TOSA at East Olympia Elementary.

Sumner School District and WSASCD present

Professional Development



Rick Wormeli **Standards-Based Grading:** **Fair Isn't Always Equal**

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Description

In this seminar, Rick Wormeli will explore the burning issues in grading, including what to do about zeroes on the 100-point scale, averaging, late work, alternative assessments and scales, homework, uni-dimensionality, re-do's, grade books, students with IEP's, and other concerns. Don't miss this opportunity to explore your core teaching beliefs as you determine what's fair and leads to the most learning!

About Rick Wormeli

One of the first Nationally Board Certified teachers in America, Rick brings innovation, energy, validity and high standards to both his presentations, and his instructional practice, which includes 30 years teaching math, science, English, physical education, health, and history and coaching teachers. Rick's work has been reported in numerous media, including ABC's Good Morning America, Hardball with Chris Matthews, *National Geographic* and *Good Housekeeping* magazines, *What Matters Most: Teaching for the 21st Century*, and the *Washington Post*. He is a columnist for the National Middle School Association's *Middle Ground* magazine, and he is the author of the award-winning book, *Meet Me in the Middle*, as well as the best-selling books, *Day One and Beyond*, *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*, *Differentiation: From Planning to Practice, Grades 6-12*, *Metaphors & Analogies: Power Tools for Teaching any Subject*, as well as *Summarization in any Subject* and the *Homework* foldout from Incentive Publications. His classroom practice is a showcase for ASCD's best-selling series, "At Work in the Differentiated Classroom," and he is a contributing author to *Middle School Matters* and *Because You Teach*.



Tackling Classroom Engagement: Label It, Measure It, Improve It

16 Eight years ago I reduced my teaching responsibilities at North Central High School and added three periods of instructional coaching. This was a difficult decision, one I made reluctantly since I love working with students. However, after some great discussions and debate with my principal, Dr. Steven Gering, I was convinced that coaching had the potential to improve instruction and achievement. I worked with nine other science teachers and together we decided to focus our efforts on improving student engagement. While I felt very confident in my ability to help lead our department in this area, I struggled with how to tackle this problem, primarily because I was unsure how to measure and assess changes in student engagement over time. I needed an operational definition of the constructs at hand.

After some collaborative deliberation, we developed some definitions and data collection systems. Part of our operational definition included categorizing student engagement as passive, covert, or overt. The definitions we developed follow.

Passive engagement is when a teacher deploys an instructional practice and gets limited feedback in return. For example, the teacher poses a question and listens to the answer from one volunteer. In this scenario the teacher observes that at least one student is engaged and this student provides feedback to inform the next instructional steps.

Covert engagement is when a teacher deploys an instructional practice and observes engagement from all students, but the type of feedback provided is limited. For example, the teacher poses a question and invites students to pair-share or write down answers. These methods enable higher levels of engagement but they may not provide useful feedback if the contents of what students speak or write escapes the notice of the teacher.

Overt engagement occurs when the teacher deploys an instructional practice and observes class-wide engagement. It also includes student generated feedback the teacher uses to assess student performance and inform the next steps of instruction. For example, the teacher poses a question and observes student answers on individual dry boards or Exit Slips. In this scenario the teacher engages and elicits feedback from all students.

After establishing these definitions we created a data collection tool, shown in Figure 1, Engagement Data Survey. The tool shows three columns listing categories of engagement, along with rows identified with types of thinking from Bloom's Taxonomy. I then worked with other science teachers and the principal to ensure inter-rater reliability using the tool. In other words, we made observations together and reconciled our differences. It should be noted that creation

of definitions and assessment procedures were done along with focused professional development. We focused on improving our practice, while we designed systems for observing and measuring engagement (see Figure 1).

Our collaborative efforts influenced other parts of the project and our work together. We decided that observers would collect data using the tool during the first 15 minutes of class, conceding that this was generally the time when teachers either gained or lost student attention. Our initial results showed that teachers used instructional strategies for promoting passive engagement most often early in the lesson. Although this finding was somewhat disconcerting, we used it as the basis for an improvement plan. This plan included frequent use of covert and overt engagement strategies, modeling their use to one another, and continued focus on improving student engagement during collaboration time. Our efforts were rewarded with observable improvements in engagement, according to data shown in Figure 2. Results were not limited to observations, but also emerged as improved student performance on common assessments (see Figure 2).

Although this project concluded six years ago, I continue to glean valuable lessons from it, especially as a third year Principal at Lakeside High School in Nine Mile Falls. Similar to my colleagues across the State, my focus is on improving instruction, with the help of new evaluation frameworks. Nevertheless, student engagement persists

Teacher: _____ Data Collector: _____

Class: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

	Passive <i>choral or individual engagement</i>	Covert <i>class engagement, level known, comprehension unknown</i>	Overt <i>class engagement, level known, comprehension known</i>
Evaluation <i>Appraise, conclude, compare, contrast, explain</i>			
Synthesis <i>Compose, generate, organize, create, relate, reorganize, summarize</i>			
Analysis <i>Diagram, distinguish, identify, relate, outline</i>			
Application <i>Change, compute, discover, relate, outline</i>			
Comprehension <i>Convert, explain, paraphrase, rewrite, defend</i>			
Knowledge <i>Define, describe, label, match, list, name, select</i>			
Notes			

instructional practices, articulate interventions when student engagement was absent, and decide on professional development for making improvements.

There were some challenges and a few missteps along the way, but any worthwhile endeavor includes these. Nevertheless, the implementation process that emerged is clear to me now, and it will likely serve as an effective blueprint for other building leaders. These steps include the following:

1. Define student engagement
2. Assist faculty in reaching consensus about what student engagement looks like
3. Establish a baseline of performance using a tool calibrated for observer agreement
4. Select professional development activities that are informed by observational data
5. Demonstrate instructional practices that increase student engagement with staff

The final step is to coach and support teachers as they set goals toward improving. It is challenging work and it requires thoughtful use of our own teaching and mentoring capabilities, but the effort is worth it.

Brent Osborn began his career in Spokane Public Schools in 1999. He was National Science Teachers Association Innovative Teacher of the year in 2007. Brent has been principal at Lakeside High School in Nine Mile Falls School District since 2011.

Figure 1. Engagement Data Survey

as an area of interest. For example, this past year at Lakeside our focus was improving engagement and all of our collaborative energies revolved around this topic. Similar to the project conducted years ago, our goal was to increase use of covert and over instructional practices to improve achievement. This was also our first year evaluating staff using the Marzano Teacher Evaluation framework.

One outcome of these efforts was naturally occurring overlap between our collective efforts to improve engagement and implementation of teacher evaluation. For example, one teacher in my TPEP support group selected student engagement as a goal. This prompted some productive discussions and we found new uses for the engagement observation tool created several years earlier. However, applying previous lessons from the earlier project required similar steps, just on a larger scale. We adopted operational definitions, reconciled differences in observation, and determined a baseline for making

improvements. We also had to establish norms for having tough conversations about

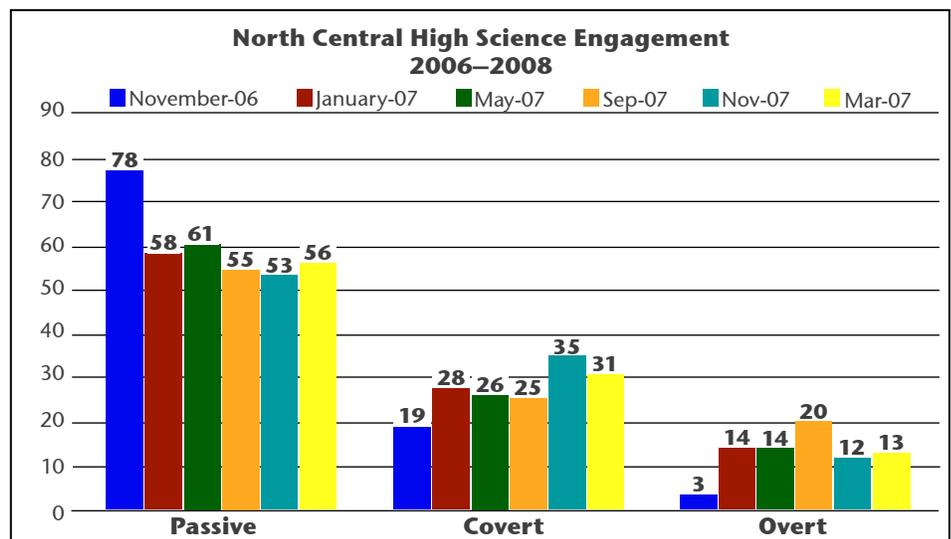


Figure 2. Data collected for science teachers at NCHS from 2006-2008, N = 10 teachers. Each sample period includes at least 30 data collection events, conducted during the first 15 minutes of class.



By David Cooke

Are You Going To Eat That?

I love donuts. I love the way they look, the way they smell, the way they taste. Donuts are my weakness. I will spend an entire summer working on healthy eating habits – resisting all sorts of treats – and then the first autumn meeting arrives and there I am... seduced by a table full of donuts. If I eat one I feel somewhat guilty and generally unsatisfied. After eating two I usually feel awful and wonder why I thought it would be such a good idea to eat any donuts in the first place.

The donut is a useful metaphor for understanding quality instruction. In the quest to engage kids, lessons may be constructed using the same techniques a baker uses – with an eye toward visual appeal rather than substance. The lesson may be colorful and tempt students with “fun things” to do. Everybody gets excited not only by the assignment but by the exuberance and effort put into the lesson by the teacher. Sprinkle in colored pencils and emoticons for a power point and kids are all in.

One example of a “donut” lesson is the “group PowerPoint presentation” where students read their slides to classmates while they stand with their partners at the front of the room. Another example is coloring a map of the United States and then labeling it. Although these types of assignments may be engaging, they rarely provide enduring academic substance. Rather, students are enticed by the prospect of working with friends, or the pace is slower, or the assignment is a break from routine drills, such as vocabulary review. Nevertheless, when these types of assignments conclude there may be little to show by way of subject matter mastery.

So why do we continue to serve “donuts” to our students? One answer is that donuts are easy, comfortable, and quick. However, there are several alternatives to donut lessons and donut activities. One alternative derives from the Center for Educational Leadership 5D+ Teacher Evaluation rubrics. Rubric criteria include elements that promote substance and engagement, such as high-level questioning, ownership of learning, expectation and support for participation, and substance of student talk. Locus of Control is also included as one of the rubric criteria and it deserves special attention.

Locus of control is the belief that we have some control over events that affect us. Improving students’ locus of control starts with how we view our students. My former superintendent used to say “students are not file cabinets that we pour information into.” Our mindset should be that students want to be in our classrooms and that they want to learn, regardless of exterior appearances or circumstances. Believing this means acknowledging the varied experiences that students bring to the learning process.

At the same conference where I indulge my love of donuts, I am surprised by how good the cafeteria salad is. Normally, I will stick with the standard salad of spinach, tomato, and carrot with a little sliced turkey on top. The cafeteria salad meets my needs most every day because it aligns with the larger goal of staying healthy. I’ve found that salads lend themselves to variety. Different ingredients produce different results. Unless your salad starts with the word “taco,” there are nearly limitless combinations of salad ingredients and proportions to maintain interest.

I could talk about food all day but there is an educational point to this metaphor. Educators want what is best for their students just like people want to do what is best for their health. However, we don’t always make the best choices, whether in learning or eating. Nevertheless, a question inferred by this metaphor is, what is the educational equivalent of a thoughtfully prepared salad? The first ingredient is subject matter or content. Very often, substantive content is practiced using higher level thinking skills and collaboration. The sustenance acquired by engaging in initial learning activities supports future growth, and more sophisticated experiences. Variety is another ingredient. On their own, carrots, tomatoes and croutons are somewhat unsatisfying, especially when this is all that’s on the menu day after day. The corollary in education is that effective learning requires integration of challenge and choice. A good place to start is to design lessons using a variety of higher level verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom & Krathwol, 1956). Some examples from Social Studies using the Constitution as subject matter follow.

Basic Vegetables

- Copy a section of the Constitution in your own handwriting.
- Turn your paper into 19th century parchment by painting it with tea water.
- Dress up as one of the authors of the Constitution and recite the Bill of Rights.

Each of these activities might help for securing initial student engagement, but they lack long-term substance. These kinds of activities serve as entry points, but they are insufficient on their own. Effective teachers build upward with their lessons, presenting their students with increasingly sophisticated activities to access higher-level thinking.

Mixed Greens

- Identify the number of amendments to the Constitution and interpret one in your own words.
- List the first three amendments in the Bill of Rights and describe their impact on citizens.
- Define five unfamiliar words from the Preamble of the Constitution and use them in a sentence.

Similar to the first level (or Basic Vegetables), these are useful activities for building subject matter knowledge. Also like the first level, these activities are insufficient on their own. The next step is to have students use information from the Constitution to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate real-world situations.

Dinner Salad

- Describe a scenario where adults disappear from the schoolhouse and students organize rule of law.
- Present authentic legal cases involving questions of Constitutionality. Have students analyze the case and present solutions.
- Identify a controversial issue and have students develop and defend opposing perspectives.

Activities at the third level (or Dinner Salad) are the most worthwhile and engaging. However, students need some understanding of subject matter so that they are analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information that is accurate and truthful. If content is absent, students rely on opinion and prior experience, which may be too narrow for deriving meaningful conclusions.

Be the Change You Want to See

Malcolm Gladwell (2008) suggests that people who are successful have practiced a task for more than 10,000 hours. Success is a journey and successful people are continuously strengthening their abilities. An interesting comparison is that each individual

student will spend more than 10,000 hours in school. The question that emerges is, how are students being prepared day in and day out in the schoolhouse for life-long success? Most educators answer this question by citing common phrases such as critical thinking, productive citizens, responsible adults, along with the ability to speak and write clearly, and calculate accurately. The challenge is consistently creating and deploying lessons that engage students with activities that promote these outcomes. To be sure, there are no easy solutions. However, one step all educators can take is to reflect on the substance of their work and commit to serving dinner salads rather than donuts.

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by Kathy Clayton



A message from the executive director

How do you treat the ‘new kid’ at your school?

Increasingly, as WSASCD provides professional development for teachers and administrators, student mobility and English Language Learners become topics of conversation. With that in mind, I’ve chosen to focus my article on ways to ensure that new students are comfortable in our schools, enabling them to become engaged learners. When a person is comfortable in a setting, students and adults alike, they are far more likely to engage.

As a child born into a military family, I had the opportunity to be the ‘new kid’ at school a number of times, even attending three different high schools. I will never forget the butterflies in the pit of my stomach every time I had to face a new classroom of students. I was terrified! That feeling is something I’ll never forget, and it became the impetus for me to provide a safe, welcoming, and caring environment for new students who came into my own classroom years later. The challenge became even greater when I became an elementary principal, as I tried to help teachers understand that for many students, it is all they can do to muster up enough courage to go to a new school. The last thing they need is to be told that we are not ready for them, so they have to wake up the next day and face that fear all over again.

As a principal, when I talked with students who were moving from my school to a new school, their biggest worry was that they would not have any friends or that people would make fun of them. The prospect of being friendless or getting teased is a concern for many students and can profoundly affect their sense of affiliation with school. Students, new to my building,

would share the pain and anger they felt when they seemed invisible or not included. At the extreme, some students were not only treated with indifference but became targets of bullying.

Families that move frequently, do so for a wide variety of reasons – changes in employment, homelessness, family issues, or military service. Military children get new schools, new friends, and new homes on average about every three years, while the average American family moves once every five years. Most military children will attend six to nine different schools across their K-12 career. According to the National Military Family Association, kids say that next to deployments, moving was the toughest thing about being a kid in a military family.

Research has shown that frequent school transitions can affect a child’s self-esteem and academic performance. However, as a primary social environment for children, classrooms and schools are uniquely good places to learn how to treat others and how to tell others the way we want them to treat us. Dozens of times a day, people in schools negotiate interpersonal exchanges with others from diverse backgrounds, making schools a premier learning environment for social, emotional, and ethical learning, which can translate into more student engagement and increased academic performance. With that in mind, here are some tried-and-true strategies that various schools have implemented:

1. Remember that adults play a critical role in teaching children to be welcoming or rejecting. As a teacher, receiving that note in your mailbox,

“You’re getting a new student tomorrow,” or seeing the classroom door open as the principal escorts a new student into the room can feel overwhelming. Your first thoughts might be “Where am I going to find a desk for him?” or “What about placement testing?” If you let these thoughts shape your responses and treat the child as a bother and a nuisance, so will your students. If you treat each new student as a welcome addition to the community, your students will, too.

2. Establish routines for welcoming new students. Teach your current students that it’s their job to welcome and include others. Show them what that means. Use strategies to communicate with and include children who don’t speak English. Partnering students who speak the same language would be an obvious solution, but without that benefit, a buddy or partner could use signs, pictures and other non-verbal means of communication to connect with the new student. Assigning lunch partners for lunchtime or play-partners at recess is another important way to build connections with the non-English speaking student. The languages of food and play are universal. With a child who is new to the country, as well as to your classroom, share information about the child’s home culture. Honor new students and their home culture by asking them to teach the class words, show pictures, or share their culture.

Children feel more empathetic if they know something about the newcomer's background.

3. Create a link on your website to an online 'Welcome Wagon' with a wide range of topics. Give families the opportunity to e-mail their questions and special student needs to the school or district prior to arrival. Make it possible for parents and students to schedule a visit to the school before the first day. Upon arrival, provide a map showing the layout of the school.
4. Create a peer support system within the classroom where teachers assign new students a 'buddy' to accompany them to classes and that all-important first day of lunch. Provide training and role-playing exercises for the buddy prior to accompanying the new student.
5. Create a parent-buddy system for newly relocated families. Encourage members to hold PTA offices. Having a parent get involved in school serves as a good example for a child to do the same.
6. Create a welcome bag with items such as a 'The Principal is my Pal' eraser, a coupon for a free cookie from the cafeteria, a pencil with a note from the school counselor, and a brochure from a kid's perspective created by older students.
7. Keep on hand a 'welcome wagon' packet of information that you would normally give to new students at the beginning of the year, including the school handbook. Contacts for local resources like the post office, library, popular parks, or after-school programs, help new families get acclimated to the area quickly.
8. Create a morning 'Welcome Room,' staffed by a counselor, social worker, behavior interventionist, or caring parent. This would be a place where any student could go when they arrive at school each day. For some students, the need to start the day with a caring adult can help with their transition to the new school. It's also a place where students, who are not new to the school, can get the socio-emotional support they need to start the day.
9. Create a 'New Found Friend Program' or 'Newcomers Club.' New students become members of the Newcomers Club and meet monthly with the school counselor at a designated time. Club activities vary according to the needs of the members.
10. Encourage new students to join a team, a club, the band, a service organization, or student activities. Especially for older students, having that sense of 'belonging' to a positive group can make all the difference in their outlook on school. Be sure to reserve slots in classes, athletics, and clubs for students who arrive later in the year.

Children who feel welcome and comfortable in the school setting show increased engagement, better school performance, improved health, and more productive behaviors. Schools and educators are in a unique position to create ways to make that happen. I wish you all the very best as you find ways to make the 'new kids' feel like they belong at your school.

Professional Development

Gonzaga University and WSASCD present

A Technology Institute with Jeff Utecht **A New Learning Landscape**

Saturday, February 8, 2014
8:30 am-3:00 pm
Globe Room, Cataldo Hall
Gonzaga University, Spokane



Description

This full day of fast-paced presentations and hands-on activities includes experience with collaborative web-based applications, and inspirational instructional strategies. Our keynote speaker, Jeff Utecht, will share his insights into the emergence of 'A New Learning Landscape' and what that means for our schools, our students, and communities. Technology facilitators will guide participants through practical resources in our 'speed geeking' sessions. Participants should bring their own internet-capable devices. A laptop would work the best.

Washington State ASCD Members - \$100
Workshop Attendee - \$150
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Undergraduate Students - \$75
[Download a PDF registration form.](#)

Institute Schedule

8:00-8:30 ... Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30-10:00 ... Keynote Presentation: Jeff Utecht
10:15-11:00 ... Speed Geeking I
11:00-12:15 ... Lunch (on your own)
12:15-1:00 ... Speed Geeking II
1:00-1:30 ... Interactive Session: Jeff Utecht
1:30-2:30 ... Individual Work Session
2:30-3:00 ... Closing Activity: Jeff Utecht

About Jeff Utecht

Jeff Utecht is an educational technology consultant, educator and author. He holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Technology as well as his administrative certification through Washington State. Jeff began his career as an elementary teacher. In 2001, he was the recipient of a Bill and Melinda Gates Grant called the Technology Leadership Program.

Over the past 10 years, Jeff has taught at International Schools in the Middle East and Asia. Moving from a classroom teacher into technology facilitator roles and administrative positions, Jeff began sharing his passion for learning via his blog *The Thinking Stick*. He also began consulting with East Asia Regional Council of Schools. Continuing to share his vision, Jeff provided regular articles and blog posts for *Tech & Learning* publications, authored chapters in numerous books, worked as the educational consultant for a wiki company, and began speaking at schools and educational events around the globe. He has worked with politicians in Washington DC and participated in *The Educational Project* at the invitation of the Prince of Bahrain. In 2010 Jeff presented at the first TEDx conference in Bangkok, Thailand.



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The editorial staff invites you to submit a manuscript on this topic by March 15th to David Denton (dentod@spu.edu). Manuscripts should follow APA formatting and be 850 to 2500 words.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

March 15, 2014