

**School District 148**  
**Induction/Mentor Program**  
**Protégé Meeting March 1, 2023**

- 1) Welcome and thanks for your support
- 2) Celebrating the complexity of teaching – using quotes
- 3) Check portfolios - complete portfolios by April meeting, assurance statements
  - Coordinator Activities - Observation, Walk-Through, and Stop-By
  - All forms on website at [www.district148.net/mentor](http://www.district148.net/mentor)
- 4) IAR Testing Notes & Insight
- 5) Classroom Management - relationships
  - Covey – emotional bank accounts
  - Pearson X-Rays from the [High Impact ABC Strategies](#)
  - Reinforce the rules, [How Full is Your Bucket?](#)
  - ACEs Classroom Strategies – interest inventories, conversation protocols
- 6) Engaging Activities
  - Jenson 2009 research graphs
  - Remembering your favorite teacher
  - Video clip (Whole Brain Teaching),  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XroJtR9gQc8&feature=related>.
  - Article from ASCD Marzano
  - Discussion skills / Self Esteem examples, Thematic units, technology
  - Technology - [Everfi](#) - finances for students
- 7) Refresher Courses
  - District 148 Balance Literacy: <https://youtu.be/jpdQuQGuZKA>
  - District 148 Balanced Math: <https://youtu.be/Yu1DXjBJSVg>
- 8) Showing Professionalism – EL article
- 9) Reminders
  - Parent/Teacher Conferences April 4<sup>th</sup> = preparation(form), see website under “Miscellaneous”, “monthly meeting resources”, “October”
  - Spring Break April 7<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> = relaxation!
- 10) Evaluations, Evidence of Completion, & Timesheets

## X = X-Ray Vision

Most people see what is and never see what can be.

200

High-Impact  
ABC Strategies

easily help us form mental pictures. The issue here is that the words we focus on may not reflect the speaker's intended meaning. For example, the two words "Don't run!" only one creates a picture—"Run!" Thus, the picture formed by these words is actually the opposite of the speaker's intention.

As teachers, we want to avoid mental images that accidentally direct students' focus toward *negative* actions or consequences. Instead, we need to consciously create images of *positive* actions or consequences in our students' minds (Bayor, 1972).

### The Connection

The generations in today's classrooms have grown up with history's most prolific array of visual stimulation. Plugged in to online and electronic games, their experience is primarily visual. While all human beings instinctively turn words into pictures, never has this been more powerful than the highly visual Y and Z generations.

### The Big Picture

One of the most curious words in the English language is "not," because in terms of visual imaging, the brain *cannot process the word "not."* It is as if, within the human mind, the word doesn't exist. When presented with "not," the brain will immediately create the picture that the person speaking meant to avoid. For example, right now, try to follow these instructions: "Do NOT imagine a huge pink gorilla!"

Most people have a very difficult time following these directions. When they read those words, the very first image that pops to mind is that of a pink gorilla. Once there, it's difficult to remove. Go ahead, try it right now. Can you erase the image of the pink gorilla? If you're having trouble with this, don't be surprised. It takes a while to clear the image from our mind. And, if you successfully avoided imagining the gorilla, you probably first had to see it, then replace it with another picture, and focus all your attention on it instead. The instant you stopped thinking about the other image, what happened? Usually, that big pink gorilla came walking right back in!

Here's another classic example of this situation. A mother has just handed her 2-year-old daughter a glass of milk. She says to the child: "Now honey, don't spill your milk!"

Based on the discussion so far, what image is instantly created in the child's mind? The child immediately sees . . . spilled milk! Now that the

image is clearly embedded in the child's mind, what happens? Of course, she *tries* to keep the milk in the glass, but that picture of milk all over the table keeps coming back to her! Suddenly, apparently without warning, the little girl's arm flies out and knocks over the glass of milk. The mother, horrified, rushes over and says, "I told you not to spill your milk! Weren't you listening to me?"

Actually, the child was listening quite closely to her mother's words. However, the choice of words created an image that influenced the child to spill the milk! The mother would have got a better result by deliberately using language to influence more positive behavior. For example, she might say, "Honey, please be careful to keep the milk in the glass."

Now the child has a picture of the milk in the glass and she is much more likely to replicate this picture in reality.

*Not* isn't the only word that may create an opposite effect from our original intention. Here are some commonly used negative words:

- Can't      ■ Shouldn't      ■ Avoid
- Won't      ■ Couldn't      ■ Stop
- Don't      ■ Wouldn't      ■ Never

To avoid accidentally directing our students in the wrong direction, we need to become aware of when and how we use these words. The more aware we become, the more our brains will trigger useful alternatives.

## Focus on Classroom Management

Suppose we say, "Don't make a lot of mistakes, or you'll fail the test!"

What images are we creating in our students' minds? We're highlighting mistakes and failure—probably not the images we were intending to create. Instead, we might say, "Be sure to get as many correct as possible, so you have the best chance to receive an excellent score on this test." With these words we can focus our students' minds in a more useful direction.

The same idea applies to appropriate classroom behaviors. As teachers our goal is to maintain positive attention and focus. We can achieve this by using words that direction a student's attention toward these actions. Instead of telling them what *not* to do, if we use words that clearly indicate what *is* expected of them, we have a far better chance of seeing that behavior.

For example, if we say "Stop throwing that ball around the classroom," we are telling them what not to do. Instead, we might say, "Please place the ball back in the toy box, and return to your seat." Using these words we've created a clear picture of the behavior we expect.

## In Practice

Consider each example shown here. If spoken as originally shown, the statement may have some unintended, potentially negative results. The examples then offer one possible option for rephrasing so the message has a better chance of registering in the mind of the listener—you can probably think of many others.

Example	Possible problem	Rephrasing option
"Don't look over there."	Where do a student's eyes immediately turn? Right to where we don't want them to look.	"Look over here" or "Keep your attention focused in this direction."
"Try not to be late to class."	These words create a picture of being late.	"Be on time" or "Be early."
"Be careful at recess. We don't want sprained ankles or broken bones."	Students' attention is now firmly focused on spraining their ankles or breaking their bones!	"Play safe" or "Be safe, healthy, and whole" or "Take care of yourself."
"Please complete this assessment without looking at your notes, at the board at the front of the room, or at anyone else's paper."	Now there are three things the students are thinking about, any of which may be strong enough to distract them. Suddenly they find their eyes wandering over to the paper nearest them, or discover that they are fixated on peeking at their notes.	"Please complete this assessment with only the information in your head" or "Keep your attention on your paper as you complete this assessment" or "Keep your eyes on your own paper at all times."
"Be aware of the danger of losing your patience."	This focuses students' attention directly on the danger of losing their patience.	"Stay patient" or "Maintain your cool at all times."
"At no time during an emergency should you allow panic and emotions to overwhelm you."	Look at all those negatives carefully compressed into a single sentence. Scary.	"Stay calm at all times" or "In an emergency, remain calm and focused."
"Avoid exiting this room by that door because you might set off the fire alarm."	These words prompt an awareness of the fire alarm. The second image stays with the students longest. If we have to talk about setting off the fire alarm, we should end with a more positive image.	"Everyone look toward this door. It is connected to the fire alarm and should only be used in an emergency. Now, would everyone please point toward this other door. This is the door we will be using at all other times."

**ASSESS YOUR CURRENT USE OF X-RAY VISION**

- I deliberately and consciously choose my words with the intention of having students create a useful mental picture.
- I sometimes use words that will create the best positive mental image, although this is more by accident than deliberate choice.
- I frequently use words that may accidentally be creating a very different mental image in the student's mind than the one I intended.

**Your Ideas**

Try this idea for yourself. In each case below, change the original, negative statement into one that creates a more positive, useful image in your student's brain:

Negative Statement: "Don't drop your pencil."

Positive Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Statement: "Don't forget your library books tomorrow."

Positive Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Statement: "Stop leaving your litter on the playground."

Positive Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Statement: "Never use swear words at school!"

Positive Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Statement: "Try not to color outside the lines."

Positive Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Now, try some on your own. First, write a sentence in the negative, perhaps something you either hear often at school, or maybe even remember saying yourself! Then, adjust the words so that it creates a more positive mental image.

Negative Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interest Inventories

**Background:**

Research is clear on the importance of supportive relationships in building resilience in students who have been traumatized. One strategy for teachers to strengthen relationships with students is using interest inventories. Naturally, to have stronger interactions with students, it makes sense to know some specifics about their lives and their interests. We would also suggest that it is a great strategy to incorporate students' interests into curriculum and specific instructional strategies.

**Goals:**

1. Utilize student interest inventories to learn more about your students and strengthen personal interactions with them and with each other
2. Utilize student interest inventories in curriculum and lesson planning to heighten students' interest and motivation

**Suggested Procedure for Initial Implementation**

There are many good web resources including samples of interest inventories. Review inventories, particularly at your grade level. Cull essential questions. Think about which items would serve your goals best. In addition to learning about "nuts and bolts" information regarding your students; i.e. favorite sports' teams, number and names of siblings, favorite, subject, etc., you may also want to consider a few conceptual questions, geared to your grade level. (See reference below). Think about such items as "What are three characteristics you have noticed in your favorite teachers? What is your greatest worry about the future? If you could change one thing in school, what would it be? If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?" Gear the number of items in the interest inventory, to your grade level. Regardless, it is probably a good idea to limit to about 15-20 items at most. You may want to do this several times during the year, and can change questions the next time you administer the survey. Consider making a spreadsheet of student responses so you have easy access for all student responses in one document which will foster more sustained use of the information.

**Sampling of Utilization Ideas:**

- Use knowledge you gained from the inventories for informal interactions with students as they enter the classroom ( or in the hall, bus duty, cafeteria line.....)
- Identify a specific student you feel needs a strengthened relationship with you. Use the interest inventory while you implement the 2 X 10 strategy. (2 minute interaction for 10 days in a row - See reference below)
- Use information from the interest inventories to develop class activities and discussion/test questions. i.e. If a good number of students are interested in a particular sports team, develop math projects/activities related to that particular team.

**Practice the conversation protocol by role playing the situation with a partner**

- 1. Listen – paraphrase, ask clarifying questions**
- 2. Reassure – the person’s perspective is important**
- 3. Validate – understanding to the person’s emotional state**
- 4. Respond – explain your perspective of the situation**
- 5. Repair – compliment or apology**
- 6. Resolve – create ways to move the relationship forward**

A. The students in Mr. Long’s class are usually pretty quiet with the exception of Marcus, who blurts out comments constantly during instruction. Other students are entertained and get off task. Today Marcus is again talking and causing a disruption. Mr. Long says to him, “Please Marcus, you are doing it again. Do not shout out your questions, please raise your hand.” Marcus replies, “I know Mr. Long, but I just can’t help it.” Continue the conversation between Marcus and Mr. Long.

B. This morning several students slammed their lockers closed. Mr. Rich sees Sarah and says, “Sarah, don’t slam the locker.” Sarah sarcastically yells, “I’m not the only one who slammed the locker.” She is obviously upset by his accusation. Continue the conversation between Sarah and Mr. Rich.

C. Today, while working in cooperative groups, Ms. Freeze has redirected Tim to keep him on task. As she turns to another group, some students say, “Oooooooo!” She turns to ask what happened and the students tell her that Tim gave her the finger. She asks Tim, who admits he did. Continue the conversation between Tim and Ms. Freeze.

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# The 2×10 strategy: a miraculous solution for behavior issues?

Classroom Management, Teaching Tips & Resources, Uncategorized,



In the eleven years that I've been writing on this site, I don't think I've ever, ever used the term "miracle" in relation to behavior management. But lately I've been hearing a lot of teachers talk about a strategy that might be as close as it gets. If you have a student for whom no other solutions seem to work, read on.

**The 2×10 strategy is simple: spend 2 minutes per day for 10 days in a row talking with an at-risk student about anything she or he wants to talk about.** There's no mystery to the reasoning here, of course—the strategy builds a rapport and relationship between teacher and student, and lets the child see that you genuinely care about him or her as a person.

*The miracle is in how it turns that abstract, overwhelming, where-do-I-start concept of relationship building into something easily manageable with an immediate payoff for everyone involved.*

*And the miracle is in how well it seems to be working in real classrooms, at all grade levels, across the country.*

I heard about this strategy through the **Encouraging Teachers Facebook group**. A member who wishes to remain anonymous shared this story:

**Want more stuff like this?**



## **Suggestions for the 2x10**

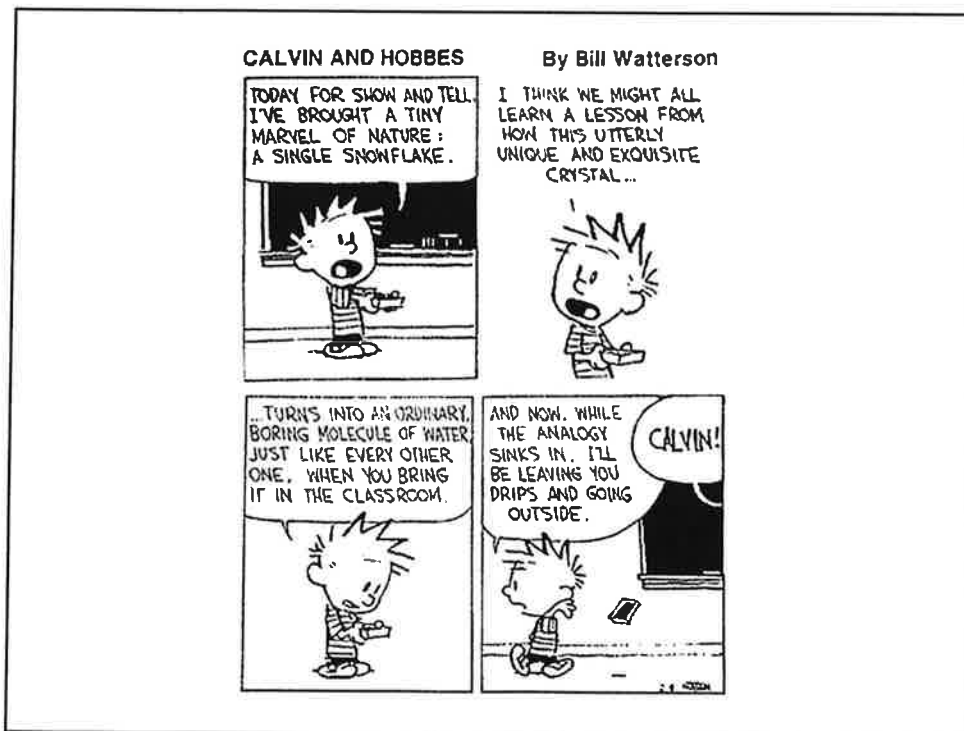
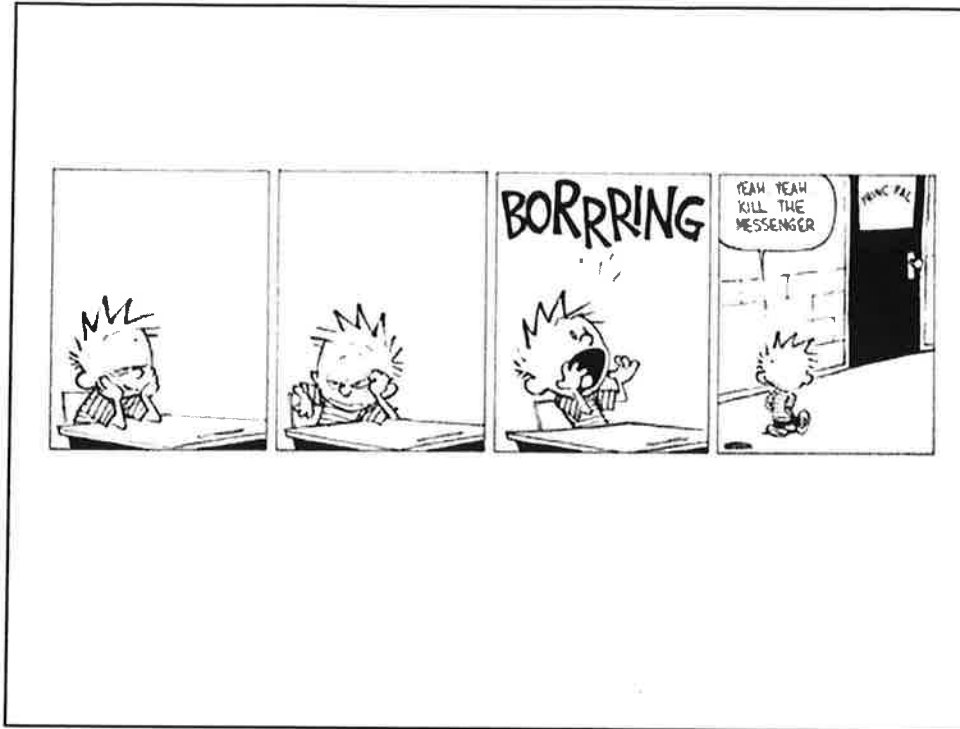
1. Who is a silly or funny person you know? Why is he/she silly or funny?
2. If you would play with a character from a fairy tale who would it be? Why?
3. What is your favorite ride or activity at an amusement park or fair? Why?
4. Which holiday do you like the best? Why?
5. If you could be an animal, which one would it be?
6. What do you want to be when you grow up?
7. What is your favorite food? How do you make it?
8. What is your favorite TV show?
9. Tell me about the silliest thing you ever did?
10. What is your favorite movie or video?
11. Do you have something special you sleep with at night?
12. If you had 3 wishes like Aladdin, what would they be?
13. Do you know anyone from another country? Where are they from?
14. If you could go anywhere on vacation, where would it be? Why?
15. Tell me what you like to do in the car while your parents are driving?
16. What is your favorite place to go out to eat? Why?
17. Have you ever been in an airplane? What was it like?
18. Would you rather play outside or inside?
19. Have you ever ridden on a train? What was it like?
20. What is your favorite dessert? Why?
21. What is your favorite snack?
22. How do you get rid of the hiccups?
23. Do you believe in ghosts?
24. Do you have chores at home? What are they?
25. Have you ever gone on a hike? How long was it?
26. Have you ever been to the country? Big city? Did you like it?
27. Name three things that made you happy, sad, or angry.
28. What is your favorite thing to do at home? At a friend's house?
29. If you were Goldilocks and the three bears came home what would you do?
30. If you were Snow White and the Wicked Queen came to the door and offered you an apple what would you do?
31. What do most people say you are good at doing?
32. What do you think you are good at doing?
33. How do you feel when you win?
34. How do you feel when you lose?
35. How do you treat other people when they lose to you?
36. What is your favorite season of the year? Why?
37. Have you ever moved or have you always lived in the same place?
38. Do you have a favorite color? What is it?
39. Do you know any knock-knock jokes?
40. What are your favorite things to draw? Would you draw me a picture of them?
41. What is your favorite breakfast? Lunch? Dinner?
42. Do you ever help anyone cook? What do you help them do?
43. Do you like to take pictures with a camera? What are your favorite things to photograph?
44. Do you get an allowance? What things do you do to earn your allowance?
45. Do you have any pets? What kinds? What are their names?
46. What would you plant in a garden? Would you rather plant flowers or vegetables?
47. Name the people on your family? Tell me about them.
48. Have you ever used a computer? What do you do or play on it?
49. Name two friends. How are they the same? How are they different?
50. What kind of party do you want for your next birthday?
51. When you go to the movies at the theater, what do you like to eat and drink?

52. Where do you think babies come from?
53. Do you play a musical instrument? Which one? What songs can you play?
54. What was your Halloween costume last year? What will it be this year?
55. Have you ever gotten lost or separated from your parents? Tell me about it?
56. If you could be a character from the Wizard of Oz, would you choose to be Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, the Wicked Witch, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, or Toto? Why?
57. Can you name your neighbors? What are they like?
58. How did you get to school this morning?
59. How do you get rid of a cold?
60. Who is your favorite baby-sitter? Why?
61. What is your teacher like?
62. If the mailman brought you a letter, who would you want it to come from and what do you hope it would say?
63. If you were having a party and you could invite any five people in the whole world, who would you invite?
64. Would you like to stay a child forever and not grow up? Why?
65. If you could have magical powers, what would they be?
66. What does "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" mean?
67. Describe your favorite animal?
68. What is your favorite kind of cake?
69. What is your favorite kind of ice cream?
70. Where do you go when you want to be alone?
71. Which came first the chicken or the egg?
72. What do you like on your pizza?
73. Have you ever been camping? What was it like?
74. If you were the Ugly Duckling and other ducks made fun of you, what would you do?
75. What is your favorite piece of clothing?
76. Describe the best present you have ever received?
77. Did you ever get a present you didn't like? What did you do with it?
78. If someone was looking for your mother, how would you describe her?
79. What is your favorite bedtime story?
80. Do you have a nickname? How did you get it and who calls you by your nickname?
81. Tell me what museums have you visited that were lots of fun. Why did you like them?
82. What kind of things make you cry or upset you?
83. Is it better to be a boy or a girl? Why?
84. What does your father do for work?
85. Tell me your father's favorite thing to do.
86. What is your father's favorite thing to eat?
87. What is your mother's favorite thing to do?
88. Tell me what your mother does for work?
89. What is your mother's favorite thing to eat?
90. What is your favorite toy? Why?
91. What kind of game do you like to play with one other person?
92. Tell me about your favorite game to play when you are with a bunch of friends.
93. Tell me about your last sleep over? Who was there? What did you do?
94. If you were your Mommy or daddy, what would you do to make you clean your room?
95. What does your dad do that you think is weird?
96. What does your mom do that you think is weird?
97. Where is the all-time best place in your house to hide where nobody can find you?
98. What food do you dislike the most? Why don't you like it?
99. If you could ride a flying carpet, where would you go?
100. Do you know any twins? Would you like to have a twin brother or sister?
101. Did you ever get angry with your parents? Why?
102. What happens to the cans and bottles you recycle?
103. Why is it important to pick up your toys after you are done playing?

104. Who is a "grown up?" When will you be a grown up?
105. If you could be one age for the rest of your life, what age would you be?
106. Do you like riding in boats? Tell me about your last boat ride?
107. Do things that happen in movies and on television also happen in real life?
108. Do you think Power Rangers are real? Ninja Turtles? Snow White? Beauty and the Beast? What's the difference between television in real life?
109. When you grow up, would you rather be very tall, very short or in between?
110. If someone said a wish would come true if you ate a sandwich full of bugs, would you eat it?
111. Tell me about the nicest thing your mother ever did.
112. What are some nice things that your father has done?
113. What would you do if you saw a tornado coming? What would you do if there was so much snow you couldn't get out the door?
114. If you could do anything you wanted to tomorrow, tell me what it would be. If you couldn't do that, what would your second choice be?
115. Do you know what makes thunder and lightning?
116. Have you ever told a lie? Why?
117. Do you think there are big lies and little lies? Tell me a little lie and a big lie.
118. If you could go to the jungle, what is the first thing you would do?
119. What do you like more going to school during the week or playing on the weekend?
120. Tell me about a time when you were so sick you had to stay home in bed.
121. What cereal do you like the best?
122. What things scare you?
123. What would it feel like to jump out of an airplane with a parachute? Do you think you would ever do it?
124. If you had to eat the same food every day for breakfast, lunch and dinner, what would it be?
125. If your parents had to eat the same food every day for breakfast, lunch and dinner, what would you pick for them to eat?
126. Do people ever tell you that you can't do something because you aren't big enough yet? How does that make you feel?
127. If you could be beautiful, strong or smart which would you be?
128. Do you know how to swim? Who taught you? Do you want to learn?
129. Can you do gymnastics like tumbling, somersaults or cartwheels? Have you ever jumped on a trampoline?
130. Would you still brush your teeth every night before you went to bed if your parents didn't make you?
131. Why do you think some people have different color skin? Do you have any friends whose skin is a different color from yours?
132. What do people like best about you?
133. What are good table manners? Do you know anyone who does not have good table manners?
134. If a new kid came into your class or neighborhood, how would you make them feel comfortable?
135. If you could talk to an animal, which one would it be and what would you ask it?
136. How does the Tooth Fairy know that you lost your tooth?
137. Have you ever seen grownups dance? Do you like dancing? What is your favorite dance? Who is your favorite dance partner?
138. Is there anything that you use to be afraid of that doesn't scare you anymore?
139. Would you like to have another brother or sister? Would you want them to be older or younger than you?
140. Do you have a lot of cousins? Can you name them? Who are your favorite cousins?
141. Do you ever let someone else win a game if you know they will cry if they lose?
142. Tell me the worst nightmare you ever had. How did you get back to sleep?
143. Tell me the best dream you ever had.
144. What is the worst program you ever saw on television?
145. If you could pick a new first name, what would you choose?
146. Tell me about the nicest person you know. Who is the meanest person you know?
147. Have you ever seen a grownup cry? Why were they crying? How did it make you feel?
148. Which is better - playing at your house or playing at a friend's house?

149. What do you like doing best at school?
150. If you were going on a trip and could only take one thing - what would it be?
151. Should you share your toys with your friends when they come to your house to play? Do you have any toys that you will never share?
152. Name something you don't like about school.
153. If your parents went on a long trip and you could live with someone else for a month, who would you like to live with? Would you like to live in their house or have them come live with you?
154. Have you ever gone horseback riding? Would you like to? Why?
155. Tell me the worst thing you ever smelled.
156. What is something you do that you know will make your parents angry? What do you do that makes them happy?
157. What are your grandparents like?
158. When you are sad what do you do to make yourself happy?
159. If someone wanted to make you happy what would you like them to do?
160. Have you ever traveled to another country?
161. If someone gave you \$10 what would you do with it?
162. Tell me what you would like to learn about more than anything else in the world?
163. Can you make sounds like animals? Make some sounds and I'll guess which animal it is.
164. When you go to the zoo what is your favorite animal to visit?
165. Have you ever been to an aquarium? What is your favorite fish?
166. What do you think clouds are made of?
167. How does it make you feel when people hug and kiss you?
168. Do you know how to sing any songs? O.K. let me hear one.
169. What kind of bugs have you seen? What is the biggest bug you ever saw?
170. Who do you think is the smartest person in the world?
171. What do you think is the strongest animal in the world?
172. If you could take a trip to the moon. tell me what you think it would be like up there.
173. Are there any smells you really like - such as when a cake is baking, or your parents are cooking dinner, or your mother's perfume?
174. Most people have cats and dogs for pets - which do you like better? What kinds of pets do you have? What kind of animal wouldn't make a good pet? Why?
175. Do you think a fish can hear? How do they hear? They don't have any ears.
176. What's the largest trip you ever went on?
177. What sort of things do you like to do during the winter? What about summer, spring and fall.
178. What do you think it would be like to be a snake and not have any arms or legs?
179. Would you like to play with just one favorite toy, or would you rather play with a lot of toys?
180. Have you ever played in the snow? What is the best thing about the snow?
181. What sports do you like to watch? Which ones do you like to play?
182. Do you have more fun when you are playing with boys or girls?
183. What is your favorite fruit? What is your favorite vegetable?
184. What makes boys and girls different? How are they the same?
185. Why do you think girls wear dresses and skirts? Are there countries that boys wear skirts?

From: McSweeney, J., & Leocha, C., (1995). *Getting to Know the Kids in Your Life*. Boston: World Leisure Corporation.



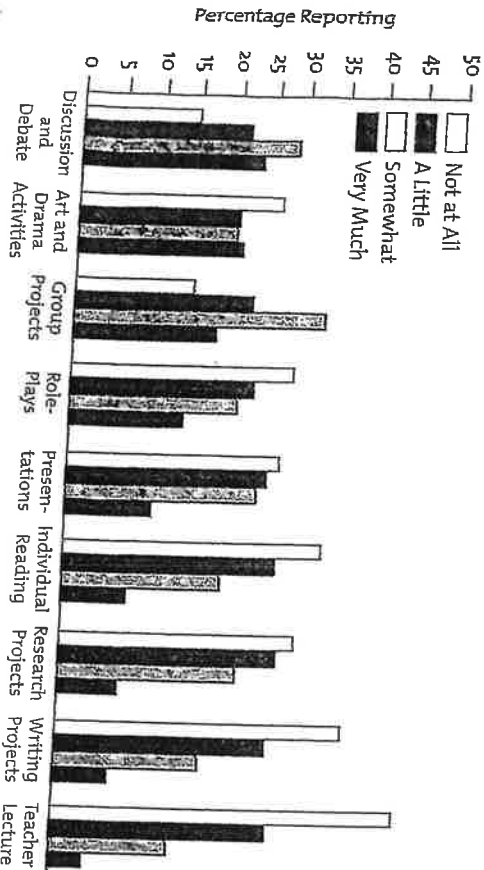
discussions and debates, the arts, group projects, and drama (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

Although the everyday experiences of elementary kids are typically far more engaging than those of secondary students, there are still concerns. The NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development was conducted over the course of three years in more than 2,500 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade classrooms and based on live observations of more than 1,000 children around the United States. Pianta, Belsky, Houts, and Morrison (2007) discovered that 5th graders spend 93 percent of their time sitting and working alone (see Figure 5.3)

Here, according to Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, and Rasmussen (1994), are the principal indicators of student engagement:

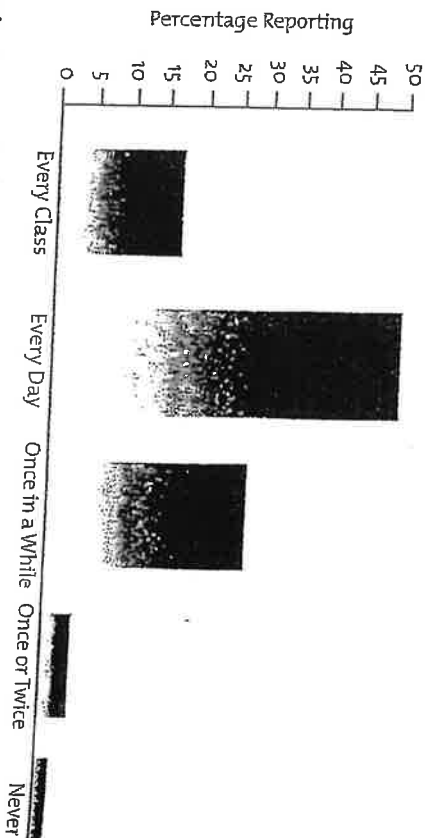
- Students volunteer for class assignments, to complete chores, or simply to answer questions.
- Students do things the first time they are asked and do not have to be nagged.

### 5.1 What Do Students Enjoy Most?



Source: Adapted from *Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement*, by E. Yazzie-Mintz, 2007, Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University.

### 5.2 How Often Are Students Bored?



This bar graph depicts student responses to the question "Have you ever been bored in high school?"

Source: Adapted from *Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement*, by E. Yazzie-Mintz, 2007, Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University.

- Students participate in after-school activities, such as clubs, sports, or social events.
- In cooperative groups, students listen actively, ask questions, and make contributions.
- Students actively participate in their own learning, get involved in making decisions in the course of their study, conduct vigorous research, think of ideas for projects, and use technology to make discoveries based on their choices.

Student engagement speaks volumes about teachers and schools' academic climate. Engagement happens when students are choosing to attend, participate, and learn. Every one of the schools I have profiled in this book makes engagement a high priority, but let's take a closer look at a few that epitomize the principles and benefits of engaged learning.

# Art & Science of Teaching

## Ask Yourself: Are Students Engaged?

Student engagement is strongly influenced by what teachers do in class.

**T**he term *classroom engagement* suggests a range of concepts. Some researchers talk about emotional engagement, some talk about cognitive engagement, and some talk about situational engagement.<sup>1</sup>

In considering how they might foster student engagement, teachers should ask themselves four questions, which encompass these various types of engagement. Teachers can use the questions—along with the powerful strategies they suggest—as a planning framework that has student engagement at its core.

### Question 1: Do I provide a safe, caring, and energetic environment?

Regardless of whatever else teachers do, if they don't establish a safe and caring environment, student engagement will be minimal. Safety begins with well-developed rules and procedures that all students understand. Teachers need to continually revisit and update these rules and procedures to meet students' changing needs and the classroom's changing environment. For example, a teacher might change the procedure that calls for students to raise their hands before asking a question on the basis of student feedback that it's too restrictive and doesn't encourage interaction.

Teachers communicate caring through daily actions that show students the teacher likes them and is there to help them learn. For example, a teacher might pat students on the back when appropriate and make comments like "nice job" and "thank you for doing that."

Teachers can establish an energetic environment by maintaining a high energy level themselves as well as by incorporating physical

movement into daily classroom activities. They might ask students to move to various parts of the room to signal their position on an issue or their answer to a question.

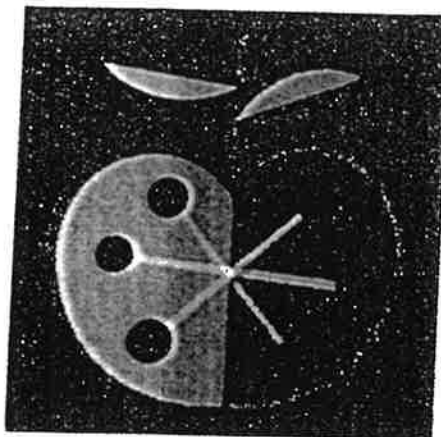
### Question 2:

#### Do I make things interesting?

Psychologists refer to two types of interest: *triggered* interest and *maintained* interest. Triggered interest occurs when a teacher does something out of the ordinary, such as singing in class or

hopping on one foot to demonstrate a scientific principle. Although such activities might be fun to do occasionally, they don't sustain students' interest for long.

A preferable goal is to cultivate maintained interest. Activities designed to do this play on the natural curiosity of the human mind. In general, we humans are interested in anything incongruous to



what we expect. Providing unusual information about a topic capitalizes on this tendency.

For example, the fact that the sun is much cooler at its core than on its surface is incongruous with our expectations and might stimulate students' desire to learn more. Activities that require students to produce missing information in an atmosphere of mild competition also stimulate maintained interest. Gamelike activities are perfect strategies to this end.

For example, a teacher might include important academic content in games similar to *Jeopardy* or *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*? Moreover, students are likely to stay interested if the game is structured so that students aren't sure when and if they'll be called on. If students believe that the teacher might ask any of

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them to participate at any moment, they will more likely attend to the activities at hand. A teacher might call on students randomly or use techniques, such as response boards, that require every student to respond.

Finally, interest is maintained when we disagree with someone. Consequently, teachers might set up formal or informal debates regarding controversial topics, such as global warming.

### Question 3: Do I demonstrate why the content is important?

Even if teachers make classroom activities interesting, students won't be deeply engaged unless they think the content is important to their lives. This, of course, can be a significant challenge because students might not immediately see how right triangles or reading a spe-

cific novel can be of use to them.

Of course, the most straightforward way to address the importance of content is to demonstrate to students how they can use it in the future. For example, a math teacher might ask students to identify ways people use polynomials in real life. A student who's a fan of football might discover that quarterback ratings in professional football are computed using complex polynomials.

Teachers can also indirectly communicate the importance of content through their enthusiasm. If the teacher is genuinely excited about content, the tacit message to students is that it contains useful information. Teachers can also share their excitement by recounting how they became interested in the content when they were students themselves.

### Question 4: Do I help students realize that personal effort is the key to success?

Feeling safe and cared for, experiencing high energy in the classroom, being interested in the activities, realizing that the content is important—although these components are essential, they can't sustain student engagement if students believe they can't accomplish the work. The best safeguard against this possibility is to cultivate what Dweck refers to as the *growth mind-set*—the belief that individual effort is the key to success.<sup>2</sup>

Teachers can build this mind-set in students by teaching them about the elasticity of the human brain and how hard work and focus can actually change the brain's physical aspects. In addition, they can continually remind students of the importance of effort, particularly when students engage in challenging tasks. Teachers might also ask students to track their levels of effort for a short time so they see the relationship between how hard they try and how well they do in class. Finally, teachers might provide students examples of people who've accomplished great things through their effort. Bringing in guest speakers from the community who've grown up in circumstances similar to those that students face is a powerful technique to this end.

### It's Not Serendipitous

Student engagement is strongly influenced by what teachers do in class. With preparation and planning, every teacher can use these techniques to heighten student engagement. ■

<sup>1</sup>Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Hellebower, T. (2011). *The highly engaged classroom*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

<sup>2</sup>Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

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## A Letter to New Teachers

*Chase Mielke*

**Tough teaching conditions affect us. But they don't have to define us.**

Here you are, a first-year teacher, standing in your own classroom (or pushing your own cart). Maybe you've had all summer to plan, prep, and Pinterest. Maybe you just got your placement minutes ago and are reading this through hot tears of panic.

Either way, you've accomplished something significant. You've developed your résumé, skills, and passion to engage in the most necessary trade in society: Education. But though you may have overcome significant adversities to get here, the greatest challenges lie ahead—conflicts that will test your resolve and resilience.

The biggest challenge of your teaching career will be staving off burnout. And your students probably *won't* be the main contributors to your burnout. Adult negativity. Societal pressures. Diminished resources. Debilitating legislation. The dichotomy of over-involved and under-involved parenting. These are the rains that will threaten to extinguish your flame.

You may already be experiencing some of this as people question your decision to teach and advise you to look elsewhere. Your newsfeed may be bristling with caustic stories about educator despair. But beneath the dust clouds of discontent, there are millions of educators who still love what they do. Our passion for teaching is no accident, nor are we freakish outliers. Thriving teachers know that conditions matter but that our actions matter most for preventing burnout.

It would be naive to think that conditions don't affect our passion for teaching. They do. But they don't *define* us. For example, according to a meta-analysis of well-being studies, researchers Kennon Sheldon and Sonja Lyubomirsky (2007) found that circumstances account for just 10 percent of the variance of individuals' well-being, compared with 40 percent coming from our daily actions (and the other 50 percent from genetics).

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Over the last decade, I've come to rely on a few daily actions that keep my teaching passion alive. Some of these I learned from research in positive psychology. Others I learned the hard way, by initially doing the opposite. All of them stem from a core philosophy: My well-being, passion, and ability to thrive are within my control. Yours are, too. If you want to continue being a passionate teacher, practice these "Passion Stokers."

## 1. Find a Positive Tribe

Why is it that in every single school, there are both teachers who love their work and teachers who have grown bitter? These teachers often work with the same students, in the same conditions, for the same number of days each year.

One of the best things you can do as a new teacher is look for the colleagues in your building who still love what they do. Seek out the veterans who haven't grown embittered (trust me, we are there; but we probably don't hang around the teacher's lounge or go on tirades in staff meetings). Surround yourself with these people, learn from them, and ask them questions. When I feel drained, I grab a drink with colleagues or strike up a conversation with Darlene, a veteran teacher who still loves her job after 40 years. Who we spend time with is who we become. Choose wisely.

## 2. Curate the Good, Don't Hoard the Bad

Teaching is built around improvement: We build knowledge that students don't have. We recognize deficiencies in skill sets. We seek growth. To do this, we have to notice what isn't good enough, what's wrong, what's missing. And so we add to our natural human negativity biases and wire our minds to focus on problematic issues, thus eroding our well-being.

But here's a distinction: Passionate teachers don't ignore the problems of education, but we don't hoard them, either. We don't spend the scarce seconds of our days ruminating about past wrongs and rambling about current frustrations.

We are curators, not hoarders. We still notice and address the bad. But we only collect and strengthen memories worth keeping, like a struggling student succeeding or a comment from a kid that made us laugh. We *choose* to spend our time talking about what's going well and what growth we are seeing, no matter how meager. We rekindle the sense of moral purpose that led us into teaching. And we do this for good reason: Resilient individuals draw from positive emotions to overcome challenging experiences (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Want a specific action step? Go 24 hours without voicing a single complaint. If you lapse, start the clock over. Of course, addressing an injustice or speaking up for change is fair game as long as you're taking action rather than complaining. This challenge will not only reveal how well you curate positive emotions, but it will help you identify (and avoid) negative contexts that try to bring you down.

### 3. Forgive

Education requires us to hone in on what could be better. As a result, teachers may deal with frequent mismatches between high expectations and learners who are, well, still learning. Sometimes this builds resentment—a ruminating anger we hold onto when others don't act the way we want.

For years, I held onto resentment. I ruminated about students who were unkind to me and others. I stewed when a parent told me I was in the wrong profession because—wait for it—I gave her daughter homework. I lost sleep over passive-aggressive comments from colleagues who called me "golden boy" in a demeaning tone.

Resentment is the acid that erodes the container, and the container in this case was my well-being. Finally, I learned the value of forgiveness: reappraising my feelings toward a transgressor or transgression to reduce anger. I realized that the only person suffering from my resentment was me. So I worked on mental reframes, reminding myself that I can't control other people or the past. I took the time to write out what upset me and why—and then threw the paper away so I could move on.

Moreover, I learned to forgive myself, for my own mistakes, by practicing mindfulness meditation.

### 4. Own Your Present and Future

One of the most important shifts a new teacher can make is the move from idealism to realism. We assume that realism means resigning to complacency or crotchiness. But the type of realism I'm referring to is the reality that we are ones most responsible for our well-being.

A major part of this shift is adopting an internal locus of control—an understanding that our conditions can be influenced by our actions. Multiple studies show that individuals who adopt an internal locus of control are more likely to use problem-solving strategies, experience less psychological strain at work, and have greater job satisfaction (Dijkstra, Beersma, & Evers, 2011; Judge & Bono, 2001). Teachers with an internal locus of control have better relationships with students, administrators, and parents and fewer discipline problems and conflicts (Parkay et al., 1988).

Thriving teachers catch themselves when they blame others or justify with excuses. Early in my career, my colleagues at the Quantum Learning Network showed me how to adopt an internal locus of control via three mental shifts:

#### **Autonomy: What is within my control?**

Thriving teachers reframe difficult situations to focus on our choices. For example, I can't control what happened to my students before my class, but I can control how I greet them at the door. I can't always control the curricula I teach, but I control my choice of strategies for helping students learn. Focusing on things beyond our control drains us. Focusing on what is within our control (which is often more than we think) empowers us.

### **Cognitive Flexibility: What are my options?**

Thriving teachers are great at brainstorming. We generate multiple options for positive action rather than self-victimizing. For example, if your efforts to help a student engage with a text aren't working, do you give up? Or do you research five new strategies to try next week?

### **Ownership: What action am I going to take right now?**

We don't settle for watercooler musings on how we wish our circumstances were better. We own our mistakes, then follow up with efforts to repair. We take action—whether it's asking for support or proposing a passion project. We *do* rather than stew.

## **5. Craft Your Calling**

I recently read an article about a state teacher of the year who announced that he and his wife were leaving the United States to teach overseas. Many commenters focused on what this said about the downfall of American education. I focused on how this teacher was taking his passion into his own hands. He was doing what thriving teachers do: Making a change *before* he burned out.

One of the greatest factors of job satisfaction, engagement, and performance is what researchers call "job crafting"—the intentional choices workers make with their tasks, their relationships, and their perceptions (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Engaged workers do three things to take ownership of their work and well-being:

**Craft the Who:** Change the amount and type of interactions with others.

We love people. But we don't always have to *like* all of them. It's okay to be strategic about relationships. Spend more time with the people who build you up and make teaching worthwhile. Or mentor a student.

I've also learned the value of minimizing certain interactions. I give my inner-introvert permission to eat lunch in my classroom while I decompress. I avoid the teacher's lounge and find excuses to quickly escape conversations before they turn into gripe sessions. If I can't bail on a negative conversation in a department meeting, I strategically change the topic or pose solution-oriented questions.

**Craft the Why:** Change how we view our purpose of work.

It's easy to lose sight of our purpose and get consumed by conversations over data, drama, and decisions that don't put kids first. Thriving teachers guard and revisit the "why" of teaching often. A couple ways to do this:

- **Post your teaching thesis:** Write out a succinct reason for why you teach. Put it somewhere you can see it often. Mine, for instance, is "Use education to help students cultivate purpose, perspective, and perseverance." My thesis is the lens that guides my interactions and reminds me why I do this work.
- **Look beyond the moment:** Reframe draining tasks to focus on service. How will this task help someone else? How will it allow your students and colleagues to have a better educational experience? Similarly, shift your perspective from the micro to the macro. We aren't just teaching

students where to put a comma in a sentence. We are helping them understand the structure of language so they can better communicate. Our actions as teachers go far beyond the moment. Remember that.

**Craft the What:** Change the approach, scope, and type of task.

One of the most important actions I've taken to avoid burnout is to pursue passion projects. For example, I worked for years to build a positive psychology program in my high school. I volunteer to run after-school fitness and music clubs. I write and lead districtwide professional development workshops throughout the summer. At the same time, I say *no* to committees or tasks that drain me.

It is especially helpful, as a beginning teacher, to organize your time around your gifts and gaps. As a new teacher, I wasn't any good at organization. So when a student noted that my desk was messy, I enlisted him or her to help me clean it up. On the other hand, I thrived with one-on-one instruction. So I shifted my assessment strategies to do more conferencing with students. What are your gifts and how can you use them more? What are your gaps and how can you outsource those?

## Passion in Action

Be proud that you are in a meaningful profession. But be prepared to fight every year—and every day—to keep your passion alive. Remember that the conditions of teaching matter, but your actions matter most.

I would wish you luck in your future, but I don't believe in luck, and you don't need it. All you need is the resolve to curate the good, to forgive, to own your future, and to embrace change. And maybe more dry erase markers.

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