

# IMPACT

*Journal*

**Winter 2018**

**UTAH ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

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# Impact Journal

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# Impact Journal Publication Guidelines

Impact Journal is an open-ended theme journal published by the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals (UASSP). We welcome opinion essays, interviews, program descriptions, research reports, theoretical pieces, school climate pieces, reviews of books, humor, satire, poetry, and cartoons.

Impact is published twice each year to correspond with the UASSP annual winter and summer conferences.

## Form

- Impact editors use American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.
- Manuscripts can be sent by e-mail attachment.
- Most of our articles are between 1000 and 3000 words.
- Submit a cover sheet with the manuscript. The cover sheet should include the title, author(s), each author's present position and school (if applicable), each author's academic status (if applicable), each author's mailing address, telephone, and email address.

**Submission deadlines are November 15 and April 15 of each year.**

Manuscripts will be reviewed as to content and acceptability. Authors should assume that manuscripts will be edited to conform to length and clarity.

*Send manuscripts electronically to the editor.*

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**IMPACT**  
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of Secondary **Principals**

# Letter from the Editor

Mary Rhodes, EdD  
Editor

Prague last November was a stunning swirl of light and clarity and genesis of coincidence. The tour guide drove us past a statue of Kafka, and she spoke, of course, of his most famous piece, *The Metamorphosis*, the story of a main character who awakens as a beetle and spirals into isolation. Several weeks later, I asked my 15-year-old granddaughter what she was reading, and unexpectedly, she replied, *The Metamorphosis*, so I reread the surreal story.

While Gregor's metamorphosis is unhappy, or worse, the theme of change fascinates me because of the potential for happy endings. Every article in this journal inspires change to promote better worlds for our teachers and students. Cody Reutzel explains our obligation to students struggling with reading, reminds us of horrible outcomes if ignored, and describes a successful intervention that vaults scores and capacity. Reshma Saujani surveys the grim environment of women in the vibrant technology sector and describes a program that teaches girls to code, and the personal metamorphosis of Sherri Branch as she traveled to China is evident in her article comparing our system with the Chinese.

The next two articles describe programs that move groups of our students from isolation to immersion in a community. Leilani Nerveza-Clark describes the suppression of Maori people in New Zealand and the successful educational programs changing dire



effects into hopeful futures, and the relevance in Utah, with a high population of Pacific Islanders, is explored. Chris Steicher and Chad Wiel are teachers in the adaptive physical education field, and the review of federal regulations and the results of programs in Alpine District are a guide to the delightful changes in students and schools. David Boren transports us again. He describes the threat of dour administrators and their potential to cause heart attacks and tells us how to transform our legacy to one of healthy hearts and joy.

Robert King's cover captures mountains changed by water, and Dave Tanner's photography again captures the enjoyment experienced when we collaborate. Brent Sumner changes the journal from conception to reality. Carl Boyington is a wizard, transforming our mundane professional experiences through exposure to remarkable ones, and Jane Bradbury holds the wand that moves us into position. I thank our vendors, who materialize in our conferences and journal.

Metamorphosis is the essence of our work—inspiring teachers and students to better selves, pulling isolated souls into the collective, and evolving personally. Showing my granddaughter, Miss Saucy and Snapchat Savvy, my review of *The Metamorphosis* on Amazon was fun, and after seeing the theme profoundly reflected in *The Shape of Water* last night, I am inclined to attend to coincidence in a search for exquisite metamorphosis.

# Targeted Reading Intervention: An Intervention System for Struggling Secondary Students

Cody J. Reutzel

What is your school doing to ensure that all students have the reading skills they need? As secondary school administrators, we're constantly searching for methods to increase student learning and more effectively meet the needs of students. Reading skill is essential to academic and workplace success. Oberholzer (2005), in reviewing literature on the intuitive correlation between



link between failure to read proficiently by the end of third grade, ongoing academic difficulties in school, failure to graduate from high school on time and chances of succeeding economically later in life" (p. 3). Student reading proficiency, even at the secondary level, is an extraordinary priority, as we may be a student's last chance to gain the readings skills they desperately need.

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***Students in secondary schools lacking sufficient reading skills are at extreme risk of not graduating and contributing to society.***

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reading and academic performance states, "Research has shown that students with low reading ability are generally low academic achievers.

Children who read effectively have access to numerous sources of written material which, in turn, enables them to increase their general knowledge, their vocabulary and their language skills" (p. 31). In surveying employers, The Conference Board (2006) found, "Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62.5 percent) say Reading Comprehension is "very important" for high school graduate entrants' success in the workforce" (p. 13). Students in secondary schools lacking sufficient reading skills are at extreme risk of not graduating and contributing to society. In Early Warning Confirmed, a report detailing research on the impact of reading ability, Leila Fiester (2013) of The Annie E. Casey Foundation notes, "A

At Uintah High School, we implemented a program titled Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) to meet the needs of students who, based on SAGE Summative testing results, struggle with "Reading Informational Text." With evidence to support the struggle these students were experiencing, we felt it our responsibility to intervene. It is common to perpetually pass students onto the next grade level or class section with the hope that students somehow gain the reading skills they need. When we know that Tier 1 and 2 Instruction has not advanced students to proficiency, it is incumbent on us as educational professionals to develop Tier 3 programs. Tier 3 means that students have previously experienced instruction and additional in-class support and are still not demonstrating proficiency. The words of one TRI participant's mother solidifies the need for Tier 3 Intervention programs, "I've known my son struggled with reading since elementary school, but I thought he'd just have to kind of deal with it. I am so glad

that the school is helping him to address his reading needs.” In this article, I’ll first outline the goals of TRI and present the results of our first year of implementation. I’ll then describe the research-based concepts that inspired the program. Finally, I’ll provide an in-depth description of the TRI program.

### **Program Goals**

Our intent was to design a system to intensively target specific reading skills using a highly individualized approach. While there

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***The scores of the students participating in TRI were averaged and compared to the average score of their peers at Uintah High School and across the state of Utah... The purpose of this approach was to establish the growth of TRI students relative to their peers.***

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are many aspects of reading, we chose to focus specifically on the development of reading informational text. This program would be implemented for eleventh grade students due to the availability of grant funds for this specific grade level. As this was a

new program, we really didn’t have a clear expectation for anticipated student growth. Our goal in the first year was to, utilizing research based strategies, implement the best system we could and to actively learn and reflect through data analysis, discussion, collaboration, and student feedback with the intent of improved future iterations. After the first implementation we would have baseline growth information to drive future adjustment and improvement. To achieve our first-year goals, we focused on student effort, participation, reading program usage, and overall program fidelity.

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***Time and opportunity must be provided for students to track, document, and reflect on their progress.***

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### **Results of the TRI Tier 3 Intervention Program**

Since we intended to build skills specific to reading

informational text and SAGE already measures this skill, our primary tool to measure the student impact of TRI was the SAGE

Summative “Reading Informational Text” reporting category. Growth data was gathered by tracking and comparing each student’s scores over a four-year period. Student scores were compiled from 2014 (eighth grade), 2015 (ninth grade), 2016 (tenth grade), and 2017 (eleventh grade). The scores compared were all from the summative assessment score in “Reading Informational Text” for the respective year. Tracking student scores for a three-year period prior to intervention establishes a strong trend and likely trajectory. The TRI program was implemented during the 2016-17 school year, placing the intervention between the 2016 and 2017 assessment administrations. The scores of the students participating in TRI were averaged and compared to the average score of their peers at Uintah High School and across the state of Utah. The difference, calculated by simply subtracting the average TRI score from the average school score, between the TRI students and their Uintah High peers on the “Reading Informational Text” reporting category is labeled “School Gap” (Table 1). Using the same procedure, the TRI students were compared to their peers across the state of Utah and labeled “State Gap” (Table 1). The purpose of this approach was to establish the growth of TRI students relative to their peers. One potential concern in measuring growth of only the TRI students was if the SAGE assessment became easier over time, the growth could have simply been a function of all students achieving significant gains. By calculating the average score for all students over this time period, this concern is dispelled. The School Gap and State Gap are shown in Table 1 for each administration from 2014-2017, illustrating a reduction in the gap between the TRI students and their peers of 59.1 points (School Gap) and 57.1 points (State Gap) from 2016 to 2017. Additionally, the difference between the TRI students and their peers across the state (State Gap) was reduced by 52% from 2016 to 2017. Figure 1 illustrates two things. First, it establishes the fairly consistent performance

of students at Uintah High School and across the state from 2014-2017. It also illustrates a consistent widening of the gap between TRI participants and their peers prior to participation in TRI between 2016 and 2017. The trend and trajectory of TRI students was clearly altered in a positive direction.

**“Know Your Impact” and Adjust**

The first of John Hattie’s “8 Mind Frames” (John Hattie’s Eight Mind Frames for Teachers) is, “My fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of my teaching on students’ learning and achievement” (n.d.). Without consistent, grounded methods to

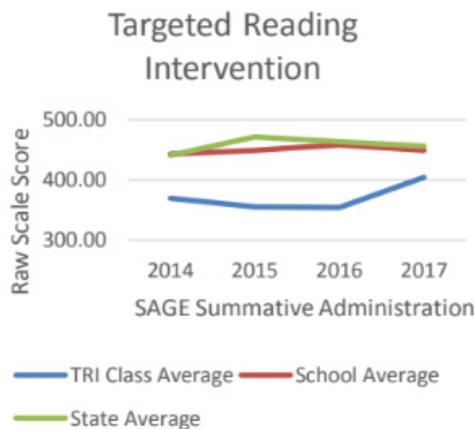
evaluate the effect of a program, we as educational professionals are left to make decisions based on instinct and other anecdotal information. Knowledge of the impact of instruc-

tion through a program is of the highest importance. This is acutely relevant for a Tier 3 instructional program. Knowledge of student impact occurs most effectively when growth is calculated as opposed to simple achievement. Annual summative assessments and pre-and post-test cycles are a necessary component to gaining student impact information. Student surveys about teacher effectiveness, instructional effectiveness, classroom climate, and availability of helpful and timely assistance offer additional insight. Certainly, the act of adjusting and improving in response to information gathered is the fundamental objective.

**Table 1**  
**SAGE Summative “Reading Informational Text” Scores**

	2014	2015	2016	2017
TRI Class Average	368.91	355.19	353.53	403.63
School Average	443.0	449.0	458.0	449.0
<i>School Gap (School - TRI)</i>	<i>74.09</i>	<i>93.81</i>	<i>104.47</i>	<i>45.37</i>
State Average	441.0	472.0	463.0	456.0
<i>State Gap (State - TRI)</i>	<i>72.09</i>	<i>116.81</i>	<i>109.47</i>	<i>52.37</i>

Figure 1 – SAGE Summative “Reading Informational Text” Scores



**Foundational Concepts of the Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) Program**

*One of our primary tasks in implementing TRI was to enlist a teacher with high teacher efficacy as well a willingness to try this innovative program.*

of this program.

The following concepts and research-based practices guided our design of the TRI program. Each practice was integral to our implementation and future successful replication

**Student Self-Monitoring**

The single person in the classroom who makes the largest impact on a student’s learning is the student. Students experience increased achievement and motivation when they are active participants in monitoring their own progress in relation to learning targets. I wanted to ensure that this would happen in a systematic way. Our expectation was for the teacher to clearly communicate the learning target and illustrate what success looks like. Also, time and opportunity must

be provided for students to track, document, and reflect on their progress. Frequent informal and formal formative assessment plays a key role in ensuring that both the student and teacher are aware of current progress. To maintain consistent progress and motivation, when skills are mastered, as informed by these checks for understanding, students must have the opportunity to move on to new units of study. The concept described here rolls two of Professor John Hattie's highest

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***The student self-monitoring time, referred to in the Monday Schedule (Table 2), provides students time to track their progress in usage and reading ability.***

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rated educational practices together in teacher clarity and feedback with effect sizes of .75 and .73 respectively. Teacher clarity is defined by Hattie (2009) as, "communicating the

intentions of the lessons and the notions of what success means for these intentions" (p. 126). Hattie's notion of feedback is widely known by the idea of "feed up, feed back, and feed forward," meaning that teachers need to continually answer the following questions for their students: "Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?" (Waack, n.d.).

### **Blended Instruction**

Horn, Staker, and Christensen (2015) have written extensively on the topic of blended learning and offer the following definition, "any formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace" (p. 34). Readers develop gaps and deficiencies in their abilities at various locations along their learning path. Identifying those gaps, providing content specific to those needs, accelerating through concepts already mastered, and extending time on concepts not yet understood can be a daunting, specifically at scale. Horn et al. suggest, "allowing all students to progress in their learning as they master material may be possible in a school

with a small student-to-teacher ratio and flexible groupings, but it is taxing on an individual teacher who has to provide new learning experiences for students who move beyond the scope of a course" (p. 10). Advances in online/digital instruction offer a promising solution to these needs when properly utilized and as a support to a live instructor. Technological solutions can extend the capability of a single instructor to provide individualized content in ways that catalyze student learning. As Horn et al. explain, "at its most basic level, it lets students fast-forward if they have already mastered a concept, pause if they need to digest something, or rewind and slow something down if they need to review (p. 10)." We do not have the intention of displacing live instruction, but rather aim to enhance and extend personalized instruction by working in conjunction with online learning tools. Quality online instruction can occur in scenarios where, "teachers serve as professional learning coaches and content architects to help individual students progress—and they can be a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage" (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2011, p. 39).

### **Teacher Efficacy**

It has been widely established that teachers' beliefs and expectations have a substantial impact on student growth and achievement. Ross (1994) defines teacher efficacy as, "the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement" (p. 3). Eells (2011), Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) and Bandura (1993) have conducted extensive research that indicates that teacher efficacy is systematically connected to student achievement. One of our primary tasks in implementing TRI was to enlist a teacher with high teacher efficacy as well a willingness to try this innovative program. In fact, finding a teacher willing to implement this new program may indicate that they possess a higher level of teacher efficacy, as research reveals an association between these two teacher traits (Ross, 1994, p. 2). The right teacher with the right attitude and expectations will undoubtedly yield invaluable gains,

specifically in consideration of the student demographic served by this program.

**Growth Mindset**

Teacher efficacy is tied closely to teacher belief about the ability of students to grow. Inherent in the implementation of a Tier 3 intervention program is the unwavering belief that student skills and abilities are not fixed. Psychologist Carol Dweck (Great Schools Partnership, 2013), a leader in the field of growth mindset, describes the presence of growth mindset as when, “people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point.” I was intent on ensuring that the teacher as well as the students were trained to have a growth mindset. The teacher must be guided by this mindset in all student interactions and also work to cultivate this approach among

“good” at something, demonstrate considerably less motivation and lower expectations than students who receive strategy feedback, which provides students with specific information about strategies to use and how the teacher will support the student as they progress (Rattan, Good, and Dweck, 2011).

**Program Description**

The TRI program is a blended model of instruction, utilizing components of both live and online instruction. Classes of no more than 10 students participated in a curriculum made up of primarily reading instruction with an injection of daily writing instruction. The reading portion of the curriculum is delivered through MindPlay, an online program. This program continually assesses student reading ability and advances students through increasingly more advanced activities as appropriate for the current skill level of the

**Table 2  
Monday Schedule**

<b>Monday Schedule</b>	
8:00-8:20	MindPlay online reading program
8:20-8:24	Break, as earned by effort and participation (program usage)
8:24-8:52	Personal choice reading (if on usage pace), MindPlay (if not on usage pace)
8:52-9:00	Document and review MindPlay progress (self-monitoring)

**Table 3  
Tuesday-Friday Schedule**

<b>Tuesday-Friday Daily Schedule</b>	
8:00-8:20	MindPlay online reading program
8:20-8:23	Break, as earned by effort and participation (program usage)
8:23-8:42	MindPlay online reading program
8:42-8:45	Break, as earned by effort and participation
8:45-9:00	Writing program

students. A central concept of growth mindset is the type of praise and feedback given to students by the teacher. Students who receive comfort feedback, essentially helping students to feel comfortable about not being

individual student. The writing portion of the curriculum is delivered by a live instructor and is focused on reinforcing reading skills through the development of foundational writing skills. The daily schedule is shown

in tables 2-3, using a 60 minute class period (8:00-9:00) as an example. The schedule is designed to motivate students to meet the MindPlay program usage goal. The usage goal is created prior to the beginning of the term or trimester (grading period) by adding the number of minutes in the schedule devoted to MindPlay throughout the entire class. This is then broken down into weekly usage goal check points that can be compared to a student's actual use. When, at any point during the term, a student is not on pace with the usage goal, the time periods devoted to

breaks or choice reading are used to help the student catch up. The student self-monitoring time, referred to in the Monday Schedule (Table 2), provides students time to track their progress in usage and reading ability. The form illustrated in Table 4 guides students through this process of reflection. The reading ability categories listed on this form are continually assessed and updated in MindPlay and can be easily accessed by the student or instructor. Notice that the "Expected Time" column is pre-filled by the instructor using the weekly usage goal check points.

**Table 4**  
**Student Self-Monitoring Form**

	Reading Comprehension	Fluency	Phonics	Listening Vocabulary	FLRT	MindPlay Usage (time)	Expected Time
Pre							
Wk 2							Pre-filled
Wk 3							Pre-filled
Wk 4							Pre-filled
Wk 5							Pre-filled
Wk 6							Pre-filled
Wk 7							Pre-filled
Wk 8							Pre-filled
Wk 9							Pre-filled
Wk 10							Pre-filled
Wk 11							Pre-filled
Wk 12							Pre-filled

The writing program consists of 15 minutes of instruction and activities each day with the exception of Monday. This instruction consists of

the following weekly foundational writing topics and is based on a 12 week trimester with a week to spare due to breaks and other interruptions.

**Lesson Sequence**

- Week 1: Deconstruct prompt
- Week 2: Annotate
- Week 3: Outlining
- Week 4: Claim
- Week 5: Intro
- Week 6: CBEAR reinforcement (claim, background, evidence, analysis, return to claim)
- Week 7: Evidence
- Week 8: Analysis
- Week 9: Writing Prompt
- Week 10: Conclusions
- Week 11: Sentence Structure/Revision

Our ELA teachers designed the scope and sequence of topics based on their experience in writing instruction. The weekly format for instruction is to teach and model on Tues-

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***During this brief meeting, the teacher guides the student through reflection about behavior, reading program usage, and reading ability progress.***

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day, do together on Wednesday, gradual transfer/ do individually on Thursday, and provide feedback/ do individually on Friday.

To ensure students fully reflect on their progress, the teacher conducts weekly feedback interviews throughout the week. The tone of this meeting is intended to be positive, encouraging, and informative, with a specific focus on growth potential. Each student meets with the teacher individually at least once each week for less than 10 minutes and takes place as a pull-out during MindPlay reading time. During this brief meeting, the teacher guides the student through reflection about behavior, reading program usage, and reading ability progress. Goals for individual improvement are set to support maximum student growth and achievement. This is valuable for celebrating students' success and also holding students accountable for academic and behavioral expectations. The information from this meeting is communicated to parents at week 3, mid-term, and week 9 (based on a 12 week trimester).

This program can be implemented using a teacher or an aide who is under the supervision of a teacher. In either case, the following responsibilities must be fulfilled.

- Create and maintain a positive, growth oriented classroom atmosphere
- Ensure the daily schedule is followed with fidelity
- Supervise all students and monitor daily behavior and academic progress
- Circulate and assist to ensure students are on task, not "stuck", and engaged
- Maintain a system to track the progress, effort, and performance of individual

students (independent of the students' Self-Monitoring form)

- Conduct weekly interviews with each student to lead them in self-monitoring/ tracking/reporting progress and reflecting on their effort and performance
- Communicate student progress, effort, and performance information to parents at Week 3, mid-term, and Week 9
- Develop and teach writing instruction lessons

Our program ran for 12 weeks as a one trimester class. We utilized a committee made up of all administrators and counselors at UHS to select students for inclusion in the program. Students were selected by sorting all ELA 10 "Reading Informational Text" SAGE Summative scores from 2016 "lowest to highest" and identifying students at the top of the list. The criteria for inclusion were that the student did not have severe behavior or attendance problems and was not currently receiving special education services. Each parent was contacted and provided with an explanation of the program, why their student was a candidate, how the program would help their student, and invited to enroll their student in the class. An emphasis was placed on the fact that the intent is learning recovery, not credit recovery, so elective credit would be earned, not ELA credit. With parental permission, students were then enrolled in the class. It should be noted that almost every parent contacted was excited and grateful to know that our school knew and cared enough about their student to offer this program to them. At the conclusion of the class, students were able to provide feedback on both teachers' instruction, the format of the course, the reading program, and how their confidence and skills had evolved as a result of the class.

### **Conclusion**

The need to help students by targeting reading ability deficiencies is well established. There are innumerable methods to attempt to help students remediate these

deficiencies. The utilization of research based strategies is the most effective and efficient approach. We are extremely motivated by the student growth experienced by participants of the TRI program. With this year of experience, student feedback, and knowledge of significant student impact, we have optimism and increased resolve that we can experience even higher levels of student growth with our next iteration as we work to refine the program and learn from our teachers and students who participated in the TRI program.

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# Prepare Girls in Utah with Girls Who Code

Reshma Saujani

Computing skills are the most sought-after in the US job market, but girls across the US are being left behind.

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**Today, less than a quarter of computing jobs are held by women, and that number is declining. In Utah, only 10% of computer science graduates were female.**

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Today, less than a quarter of computing jobs are

held by women, and that number is declining. In Utah, only 10% of computer science graduates were female. Computing skills are the most sought-after in the US job market, with demand growing three times the national average — in Utah alone there are more than

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**Started in 2012, Girls Who Code has reached over 40,000 girls, running 80 Summer Immersion Programs and 1,500 Clubs across the US in 2017.**

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4,000 open computing jobs and Utah's Technology Council has been very active in working to expand that number. With women making up almost half of our work force, it's imperative

for our economy that we're preparing our girls for the future of work.

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**Clubs are free after-school programs for girls to use computer science to impact their community and join our sisterhood of supportive peers and role models.**

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I am not a coder. My background is as a lawyer and politician. In 2010, I was the first South Asian-American woman to run for Congress. When I was running for office, I spent a lot of time visiting schools, and that's when I noticed something. In every computer lab,



I saw dozens of boys learning to code and training to be tech innovators. But there were barely any girls!

I decided I was going to start a movement and organization to teach girls to code and close the gender gap in tech. What started as an experiment with 20 girls in a New York City classroom has grown to a movement of tens of thousands of middle and high school girls across all 50 states-- and we'll reach 50,000

by the end of the 2018 school year. Started in 2012, Girls Who Code has reached over 40,000 girls, running 80 Summer Immersion Programs and 1,500 Clubs across the US in 2017. Girls Who Code is leading the movement to inspire, educate, and equip young women with the computing skills to pursue 21st century opportunities.

Our afterschool Clubs programs are the perfect way for school districts, schools, libraries and local community centers in Utah to join the movement--we can't reach girls everywhere without the support of people like you. Clubs are free after-school programs for girls to use computer science to impact their community and join our sisterhood of supportive peers and role models. Clubs are led by facilitators, who can be librarians, teachers, computer scientists, parents or volunteers from any background or field. Many facilitators have no technical experience and learn to code alongside their Club members.

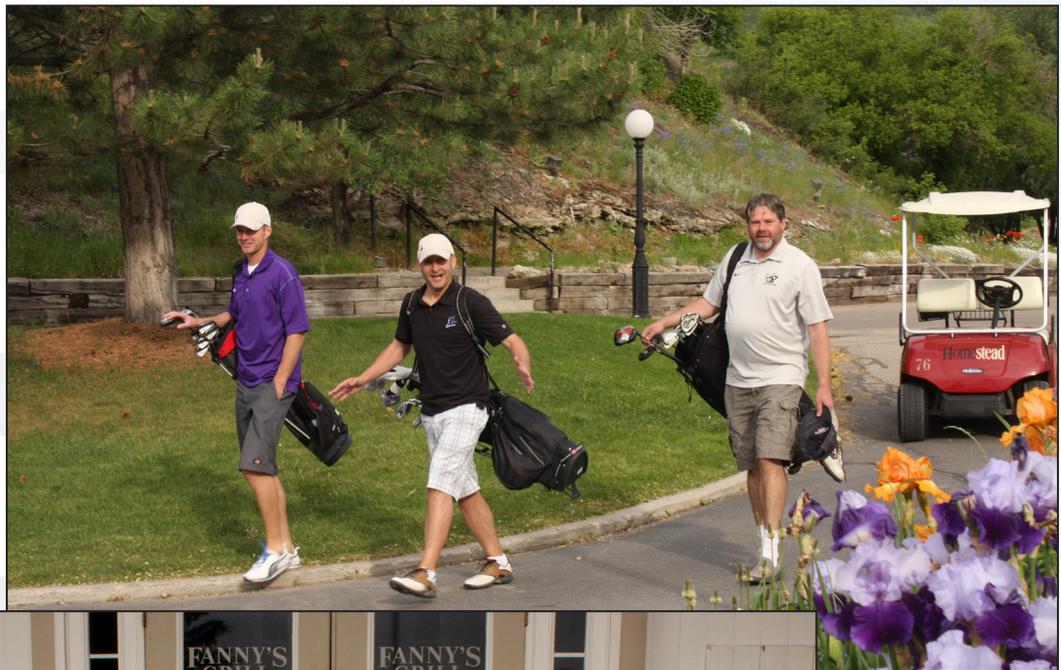
In Utah, we have already partnered with the Utah Department of Education to increase free computer science opportunities for mid-

dle and high school girls. This school year, we have launched 14 Clubs but hope to reach many more girls across the state by launching over 50 Clubs by the end of this school year.

When you teach girls to code, they

become change agents and can build apps, programs, and movements to help tackle our country's toughest problems. We hope you'll join our movement by bringing Clubs to your community!

**Reshma Saujani is the Founder and CEO of Girls Who Code, a national non-profit organization working to close the gender gap in technology. She can be reached at [clubs@girlswhocode.com](mailto:clubs@girlswhocode.com). For more information, please visit [girlswhocode.com/Clubs](http://girlswhocode.com/Clubs).**



# Building the Bridge between American and Chinese Schools

Sherri Branch, MAT

This past November, I had the amazing privilege of participating in the Chinese Bridge for American Principals Delegation offered by the College Board and Hanban University. This opportunity provided 187 educational leaders from all areas of the United States a chance to experience Chinese culture and participate in educational exchanges in various provinces throughout China. I was privileged to be a part of 35 principals and education officials to visit the province of Tianjin, China. I would like to thank Granite School District, College Board,



**The College Board**  
The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education... The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools (Chinese Bridge Delegation: Participant Handbook, 2017, p. 3).

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and Hanban University for making this once in a lifetime educational opportunity possible for me. Following are some things I learned from this Delegation although my education was limited to only five days visiting schools. Therefore, this discussion is only as comprehensive as my five days in the schools I visited, with additional knowledge learned from my fellow colleagues on this adventure.

## **A Little Background on the Delegation**

The organizers of this Delegation are the College Board and Confucius Institute Headquarters(Hanban). Some information about purposes follows.

In 2006, the College Board launched the Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives ([www.collegeboard.org/k12chinese](http://www.collegeboard.org/k12chinese)), in collaboration with Confucius Institute Headquarters/Hanban, to help support the growth of Chinese language education in U.S. schools and build a foundation for student success in the AP Chinese Language and Culture course and exam. The College Board and Hanban, together, offer several programs (Participant Handbook, 2017, pp. 3-4): Chinese Guest Teacher Program ([www.collegeboard.org/guestteacher](http://www.collegeboard.org/guestteacher)) Confucius Institutes and Classrooms Program ([www.collegeboard.org/confucius](http://www.collegeboard.org/confucius)) Chinese Bridge Delegation ([www.collegeboard.org/chinesebridge](http://www.collegeboard.org/chinesebridge)) National Chinese Language Conference ([www.nclcusa.org](http://www.nclcusa.org)) The 2018 conference will be held May 17-19, 2018 in Salt Lake City, UT Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban)

Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) is committed to providing Chinese language and culture teaching resources and services to the world and meeting the needs of overseas Chinese language learners, so as to contribute to the development of multiculturalism and the building of a harmonious world (Chinese Bridge Delegation: Participant Handbook, 2017, p. 5).

Programs offered through Hanban include (Participant Handbook, 2017, pp. 5-6):

Confucius Institutes/Classroom  
“Chinese Bridge” Chinese Proficiency Competitions

“Chinese Bridge” Delegation for Principals and Education Officials

“Chinese Bridge” Summer/Winter Camp for Foreign Students

Volunteer Teacher Program

Confucius Institute Scholarships

Three Tour Program

### Some Background on Chinese Education

My experience on this delegation trip was mostly in the secondary schools in Tianjin. I had a chance to visit:

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***There is a morning break, lasting 20-25 minutes. During this break, the entire student body gathers on the outdoor playground/track/field area for morning exercises.***

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Shuangling Middle School  
Jinying Middle School  
No. 42 High School (which included all secondary grades/

middle and high school)

No. 7 High School (which included all secondary grades/middle and high school)

In the secondary schools, a typical school day goes from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with an average of one and a half hours for lunch. There is a morning break, lasting 20-25 minutes. During this break, the entire student body gathers on the outdoor playground/track/field area for morning exercises. There is usually a second break in the afternoon, as well. These scripted exercises are done in unison, with all students engaging in the

same exercise at the same time. During lunch, students may go home for lunch (depending on proximity to school, of course), eat off campus, or eat in the school cafeteria. They have free time to play ball, participate in activities, nap, do homework, etc. Most of the extra-curricular activities are held after school. All the schools I visited required uniforms. The students had dress uniforms as well as what they wore daily, which resembled track suits, with a polo shirt, track pants, and matching jacket.

China has what are known as “key schools” or “better” schools; Shuangling Middle School that I had the privilege to visit in Tianjin is one such school. These key schools have better resources, better facilities, more qualified teachers, and students usually do better on their examinations. These schools have one goal, which is to prepare their students to enter top tier colleges and universities, with a solely academic focus. Key schools are extremely important to China to ensure the country is producing a sufficient supply of qualified college applicants, and are important to some families to ensure a more prestigious education through high school and college, resulting in a higher paying job or career. These schools are similar to our American college prep high schools.

In addition to key schools, and general high schools, China also has vocational high schools, which prepare students for jobs in the service industry. Common vocational programs include business, culinary arts, and business operations. These high schools play a vital role for Chinese culture in preparing students for the ever-expanding service industry needs and various skill sets. These schools are a great fit for students who are less successful in the academic classroom and score lower on the academic examinations. These schools are like our American technical schools, and focus on hands on experience. Students attending these vocational high schools can still apply for colleges and universities, but they must apply to programs

related to the skill set they learned in high school due to the fact the curriculum is different from that of a key school or a general school.

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***In addition to key schools, and general high schools, China also has vocational high schools, which prepare students for jobs in the service industry***

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Admission to any high school, whether a key school, regular, or vocational school, is

dents take high stakes tests to determine acceptance into higher education programs. However, in America, the score on the ACT or SAT is only one factor for admission. We also factor in things such as high school transcripts, interviews, campus visits, extra-curricular activities, community service, and recommendation letters. In China, the examinations score is the sole factor for admission to a college or university. Those who pass the exams usually enter colleges and universities, whether academic or vocational, leading to better jobs upon graduation. Students who do not pass the examinations have a hard time finding any job because they have not learned a skill to help them make a good living. High stakes tests are given throughout the education process in both of our countries, however in China, compulsory exams are given at the end of each semester and school year beginning in first grade.



based solely on a student's test score on the Admission Examinations to High Schools, which are given at the end of ninth grade. The better the score, the better the school the student may attend. Admission to colleges and universities is very similar, and the better a student's score on the Entrance Examinations to Colleges and Universities, the better the school. These exams test pretty much all the content learned from 7-12 grades, and, just as here in America, parts of these exams include critical and creative thinking.

**Similarities and Differences Observed in the Education Systems**  
**High Stakes Testing**

Both American and Chinese stu-

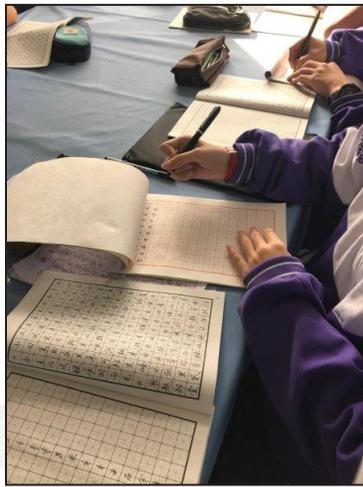
**Compulsory Education**

In China, compulsory education is required by law, just as it is here in America. However, more so in China than here, if a student does not go to school, parents will be punished by the law, and the government or the public has the responsibility to provide free education for all children. Here in the USA, compulsory education is to twelfth grade; in China, compulsory education is to ninth grade. At the end of ninth grade, the student has to take the Admission Examinations to Senior High Schools, and as mentioned earlier, test scores determine placement in high school.

**Educating the Whole Child**

In both cultures, educating the whole child is extremely important. Many of the schools I visited prioritized ensuring the student to become a "good person" before academics. As in all education systems, academics are vital, but we both focus on making sure our students become good citizens and will be leaders in our future societies. All students are taught a sense of common com-

munity for all human beings, with a strong belief in the moral education, as well as



citizenship. China puts a very strong, if not mandatory, emphasis on the arts. In all the schools I visited, each student was required to master one art – whether sports, dance, theater, music,

or such. In addition, mental health is an important focus, but I think China exceeds us in this area. Mental health is included in the daily routines everywhere in the school, from the counseling center, to the daily academic curriculum, to the hall décor. It is very apparent in China that good mental health is a vital part of their education system.

### **Educational Planning**

In Chinese schools, the grandparents, parents, and child make an educational plan with the school when entering first grade, so all stakeholders are constantly working toward the child’s educational goals throughout the educational career. We also involve all stakeholders in the child’s educational process, with a stronger emphasis in junior



and senior high. Both countries are focused on college and career ready.

### **Working Part Time While in School**

In America, it is not uncommon for high school teenagers to have part-time our summer jobs during school. In addition, most of us require our students to do chores at home. In China, high school students do not work, whether inside or outside the home. Students are to concentrate solely on their academics, and Chinese culture does not expect them to be concerned about anything but their studies. Chinese parents and grandparents provide everything from proper studying conditions to spending money.

### **History**

In America, our academics include courses in history, but in China, a strong emphasis is placed on learning and retaining their Chinese culture from calligraphy, to mask creating and painting, to music. Each high school is rich in tradition and each high school I visited actually had a museum in the school, highlighting the history of the school, as well as traditional arts and culture. Emphasis on Confucian symbols and language are ever present, along with educating students on traditional Confucius teachings, such as harmony, respect, obligation to country, and national pride. It is apparent that China puts teaching this responsibility to country on the schools more than on the family. One school referred to this as “The China Dream”, which they are sculpting on the front of their school.

*The China Dream: Shuangling Middle School*

### **Stakeholders**

Here in America, the three major stakeholders are the teachers/staff, the student, and the parents. Our schools are governed by the state school board, the local school board, and the schools are locally controlled. Parents are given a voice in our education through such entities as Community Council and PTSA. In China, all schools are government owned, and parents do not have a voice

in the decisions of the school. The curriculum is decided at the central government level.

### **Practices/Techniques in the Schools**

China uses many of the same techniques and western teaching styles we use: working in groups, math manipulatives, and student engagement learning activities, just to name a few. However, many teachers here would be shocked to learn that class sizes could be upward of 45-50. We all know we have large class sizes here in America, particularly Utah, but most Chinese classrooms in the secondary schools I visited have a higher class size than we do.

### **Special Education Population**

American culture focuses on inclusion and educating the special education student in all schools with the mainstreamed students. In the Tianjin schools, special education schools are separate from the mainstreamed schools and special needs students are not mainstreamed into the education process.

### **Respect**

China outshines us in this category. There is an extremely high level of respect shown to all adults within the school and students are appreciative of their teachers and the opportunities to be educated. Respect starts in the home and has been shown and taught throughout Chinese culture. Here in America, we learn to question authority, including that of our parents and teachers. In China, the Confucian ideals teach proper

order of life and society and are concerned with order, hierarchy, and harmonious interpersonal relationships, known as “filial piety” (Participant Handbook, 2017, p. 21).

### **Final Thoughts**

I strongly encourage all of you to take advantage of this amazing opportunity to visit China. To find out more information, please visit any of the websites mentioned in the beginning of this article. In addition, I encourage all of you to visit the following site to see video presentations and summaries from the groups visiting various provinces listed in the references at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mcccew5mzsf169/AAAQMhKRWpvy03SH8Vz73zqa?dl=0>

It is very apparent that teachers in both America and China love their students and want them to succeed! Although there are obvious differences in our countries, the bridge we are building between our educational systems and cultures allows us to learn from each other and make all of us, in both the East and West, better educators, preparing our students to be college and career ready and to be productive, successful citizens.

### **References**

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**Kalyn Gubler – Principal, Lava Ridge Intermediate School, Santa Clara, UT  
Rebecca Ibarra – Assistant Principal, Kennedy Junior High School, West Valley City, UT  
Ted Levine – History Teacher and Curriculum Advisor, Kingswood Oxford School, West Hartford, CT**

**Renee Milne – Principal Northlake Elementary, Tooele, UT  
Jennifer Wariner – Achievement Coach, Ridgecrest Elementary, Cottonwood Heights, UT  
Terry Warner – Utah State Board of Education**



**Text Message Codes  
Next Generation**

<b>IDK</b>	<i>I Don't know</i>
<b>NBD</b>	<i>No Big Deal</i>
<b>TIW</b>	<i>Teacher Is Watching</i>
<b>LOL</b>	<i>Laugh Out Loud</i>
<b>IMU</b>	<i>I Miss You</i>
<b>LMIRL</b>	<i>Let's Meet In Real Life</i>
<b>KHUF</b>	<i>Know How You Feel</i>
<b>LMK</b>	<i>Let Me Know</i>
<b>MUYM</b>	<i>Make Up Your Mind</i>
<b>POTS</b>	<i>Parent Over the Shoulder</i>

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# Culturally Relevant Education

*T. Leilani Nerveza-Clark, Ed.S*

## Background Experience

I've been in education for nearly 15 years. My journey started in the fiscal office at 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Incorporated. 'Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc. is a non-profit organization that serves as the administrative offices directing 13 Hawaiian immersion preschools via culture-based curriculum. Pūnana Leo translates to 'voice nest', and was the first indigenous language immersion preschool project in the United States (Wilson, 1999). New Zealand (Aotearoa) has



## Statistics on Education in New Zealand

New Zealand's education system ranked as one of the top education systems in the world (Tapaleao, 2012). The Learning Curve global education report by education firm, Pearson (2012) ranked New Zealand 8th amongst forty countries. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Educational Evaluation

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***These growing socio-economic differences including health, economic, and educational outcomes are not being approached by conventional practices.***

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their own Māori immersion and cultural-based curriculum implemented by the Kōhanga Reo. Both organizations were started because

the indigenous people (Hawaiians and Māori) experienced suppression of their languages and cultures when their countries were colonized by immigrant settlers.

While working on my education specialist degree in administrative leadership, I conducted an international comparison education study and extensively compared New Zealand's education system to the United States'. I chose to compare the United States to New Zealand because of New Zealand's exceptionally high Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores. In my comparison, many quantitative and qualitative variables in each country were examined, compared, and analyzed for effects on learning.

tion and Assessment in New Zealand (2012), some of New Zealand's strengths include: a) assessment and evaluation are based on trust in school leaders, teachers, and students, b) assessments are designed for diverse learner needs, c) a strong dedication to evidence-based policy and best practices, d) student assessments are created to improve learning and promote problem solving skills, e) teaching standards are proficiently established, f) teachers are trusted professionals with a great amount of autonomy and are open to improving, g) there is common devotion to continual improvement using evaluation and assessment results and creating policy based on research evidence. New Zealand's effective pedagogy for educators include teaching by inquiry, partnered with hands-on activities, and necessitates teacher reflection to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ministry of Education, 2012).

## Contextual Overview of Education in New Zealand

New Zealand is a country with historical events of colonization of the Māori, New Zealand's indigenous people. The British and Irish settlers implemented intentional policies of excluding other races (Spoonley, 2015). According to the Royal Society of

New Zealand (2013, p. 1), “the past few decades have seen large increases in the ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic diversity of the New Zealand population.” Due to these large increases, the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) and Spoonley (2015) label the current situation ‘superdiversity’.

New Zealand believed in egalitarianism, however in recent years New Zealand experienced a perilous increase in income inequality which affects members of Māori descent (Marriot & Sim, 2014). Health and social well-being indicators worsened over the past decade, increasing gaps between Europeans and Māori and Pacific Islanders including: unemployment, cigarette smoking, obesity, suicide, higher degree completions, income level, and the amount of people receiving benefits from the government (Marriot & Sim, 2014).

These growing socio-economic differences including health, economic, and educational outcomes are not being approached by conventional practices. The recent priority of the New Zealand government was increasing participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) services (Ritchie, 2016).

Participation in high quality ECE has significant benefits for children and their future learning ability. Some studies have found that engagement in ECE helps to develop strong foundations for future learning success... These effects apply to all children but may be particularly important for building academic achievement in children from poorer communities and socio-economic backgrounds.

Another unconventional method being utilized is the collective and collaborative processes that created the Māori model to be put into action alongside the national education standards (Hohepa & Rau, 2012). These practices seek to re-normalize te ao Māori (the enlightenment of the Māori), as well as Samoan pedagogical understandings. These methods provide motivation for the change of education programs to be culturally responsive and inclusive (Ritchie, 2016).

### **Demographics in the United States and Relevance in Utah**

The population of Pacific Islanders increased by 40 percent between 2000 and 2010 (NBC News, 2014). There are approximately 1.4 million Pacific Islanders in the United States, of which, 17.5 percent live in poverty (Department of Labor, 2014).

Culturally, education is not encouraged, and males are pressured to support the family unit instead of furthering their education. In addition, often Pacific Islanders are labeled as simple-minded or unintelligent and left without guidance concerning education goals (NBC News, 2014). Because such labels, students are not advised to take appropriate college exams (e.g. SAT and/or ACT), are not counseled to research scholarships, requirements, and financial aid, and lack the self-confidence to pursue higher education levels (NBC News, 2014).

The College Board reported less than one in five Pacific Islanders met or exceeded the ACT scoring benchmarks in all four subject areas (English, mathematics, reading, and science) (NBC News, 2014). The same report indicated forty percent of Pacific Islanders met zero benchmarks. Amongst the different ethnic groups in the United States, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, age 25 years and over, only 26.5 percent hold a bachelor’s degree (Department of Labor, 2014).

In Utah, the first recorded Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders settled in 1873 (Utah Department of Health, 2014). There are approximately 38,000 Pacific Islanders in Utah, of which, 68 percent of Tongans and 42 percent of Samoans speaking another language other than English in their households (Utah Department of Health, 2014). In Utah, Tongan is the fifth most spoken language, and Samoan is the ninth most spoken (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Only an estimated 7 percent of Tongans, 9 percent of Samoans, and 11 percent of Native Hawaiians hold a bachelor’s degree, the lowest rates of any ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

### **Need and Purpose for Culturally Relevant Education in Utah**

Our youth are growing up in a more ethnically and culturally diverse society. The increasing diversity in schools could help our students broaden their world perspectives by learning and sharing in different belief systems, traditions, and lifestyles (Aboud & Fenwick, 1999; Stern-LaRoas & Bettman, 2000). Unfortunately, there are differing levels of prejudice and racism in schools (Paluck & Green, 2009, Wittmer, 1992) affecting student achievement. In Utah, Pacific Islanders still score well below their Caucasian peers on standardized tests (Wood, 2015). Educators and various advocates insist that to combat the academic achievement gaps between Pacific Islanders and their Caucasian peers, students need programs that accept and encompass Pacific Island cultures and promote proper avenues to higher education (Wood, 2015).

Students who are taught cultural competency will tend to understand and appreciate cultural diversity in their own lives. Students who are educated and actively engaged in creating and maintaining cultural diversity function as powerful sources for inclusion and promote an environment of respect. These students are likely to encourage equality of all students with varying backgrounds. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and some school districts provide professional development for teachers and administrators to better serve their students by becoming sensitive and welcoming of others. The intention and need are to increase teachers' understanding of the different aspects of harassment and bias and how to prevent these occurrences and to develop skills for teaching cultural awareness and tolerance in their classrooms. These qualities are important to guarantee schools are safe environments for all students.

### **Relevance to All Culturally Diverse Populations**

Culturally responsive teaching includes beliefs, values, and the behavioral expres-

sions that recognize the significance of ethnic and cultural diversity in learning (Gay, 2010). It is dependent on recognizing cultural difference as benefits; developing caring and accepting learning communities where individuals of different cultures and backgrounds are acclaimed, being agents of change for academic and social equity, acknowledging racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of injustice, intolerance, and oppression, and accepting cultural responsiveness as conventional to effective educational practices in all areas of learning for students of all ethnic groups (Gay, 2010). Culturally relevant education spearheads the positive learning probabilities of estranged students and their heritage groups instead of dwelling on their pathologies and problems (Gay, 2010).

### **Relevance to Culturally Homogeneous Populations**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the 2011-2012 school year, 83 percent of the U.S. public school teachers were white. The majority of this population were classified in the middle-class, English-speaking, generally in white communities, receiving their teacher education and preparation in typically white universities and colleges (Gay, Dingus, & Jackson, 2003). The expected teacher workforce is comparably homogeneous. Based on the Secretary of Education 2012's Title II report, 68 percent of teacher candidates are Caucasian.

These statistics present a few problems - 1) many white educators will not have an understanding and educational background that would better prepare them for the increasing diversity of their students and 2) when teaching homogeneous student populations, teachers will less likely teach global aspects and differences, hence students are less likely to be globally aware. Having global awareness is a life skill referring to the ability of students to a) use twenty-first century skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking to undertake global issues, b)

collaboratively work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, religions, and lifestyles with mutual respect, c) understand other countries and cultures, including the use of non-English languages (Wagner, 2014, p. 25). The most widely used practice in preparing Caucasian teachers to teach both heterogeneous and homogeneous student populations is teaching culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Vavrus, 2002; Gay, 2010).

### Power of Culturally Relevant Material

Culturally responsive teaching should include both substantial and operational aspects, along with cultural competence and cultural resources to promote better teaching and learning (Gay, 2010). Whether these concepts be included in teacher preparation

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***Because the content is so broad, some autonomy in selecting priorities may be appropriate, and some approaches may be more relevant in different content contexts***

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programs or professional development meetings, a different pedagogical paradigm is necessary insisting educators be

properly trained to address cultural understanding. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive teaching concurrently develops social consciousness, academic achievement, evaluation, cultural declaration, proficiency, self-worth and skills, and ethic enthusiasm. It uses varying methods of understanding,

knowing, and representing different ethnic backgrounds and cultural groups in teaching academic subjects, processes, and abilities. Culturally relevant material elevates collaboration, cooperation, and mutual accountability for learning and achieving among students and teachers (Gay, 2010). It integrates cultural experiences and knowledge about different ethnic groups in all subject areas and abilities taught by improving their cultural character and principles, individual skills, and academic success (Gay, 2010).

According to Gay (2010), despite these identified concerns in U.S. schools, implementation of culturally responsive teaching is difficult. Not all educators will identify with the same engagement with diversity. It is important they understand and assert how they choose to participate with diversity. Because the content is so broad, some autonomy in selecting priorities may be appropriate, and some approaches may be more relevant in different content contexts. Some teachers, for example, may prioritize culture, race, and ethnicity to underachieving students, while others may focus on social class, gender, or linguistic differences. One set of preferences is not right or wrong, or that all components of culturally responsive teaching should address the same elements, but educators explicitly commit to how they demonstrate the general values and principles of teaching to and through cultural diversity.

### Why incorporate culturally responsive methods?

- ★ Increased student engagement
- ★ Higher quality teaching
- ★ Increased percentage of students on task
- ★ Increased respect & positive attitudes → positive learning environment (Willis-Darpoh, 2013)

### Cornerstones for Learning Conditions

- ★ **Challenging & Engaging** - students actively engage in tasks
- ★ **Safety** - students feel safe & respected
- ★ **Support** - students have rapport with educators and have a connection to learning environment
- ★ **Social & Emotional Learning** - students learn to cope with their emotions and handle their relationships (Willis-Darpoh, 2013)

## Activity

Place **green** dots next to two approaches &/or practices you currently apply in your school or district to contribute to culturally responsive and respectful environments.

Place **red** dots next to two approaches &/or practices you have not seen or experienced being applied in your school or district, or think would be tough to apply in promoting culturally responsive and respectful environments.

Place **blue** dots next to two approaches &/or practices you will implement in your school or district to promote culturally responsive and respectful environments.

### Educational Opportunity

#### Professional Development

The goal of the educational opportunity is “To create a learning environment conducive to all students, no matter their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic backgrounds” (Frey, 2011).

This educational opportunity responds to cultural diversity by educating school stakeholders and stimulates student learning.

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***When best teaching methods and culturally responsive content are included in school curriculum, all students benefit, resulting in increased learning.***

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Culturally Responsive Education defined: Using prior experience, cultural background, and perfor-

mance styles of diverse students to make learning more effective and suitable; teaching to and through the strengths of those students (Gay, 2000)

#### Practical Educational Ideas:

- Inquiry-based projects
- Heterogeneous small groups collaboratively working
- Authentic class discussions
- Encouraging students to utilize their prior knowledge and beliefs
- Holding students accountable for their learning
- Building on students’ talents, likes, and linguistic backgrounds
- Designing different learning activities and having students integrate their cultures (e.g. science poster, song, or report including their native language)
- Having students examine situations in a different perspective

- Varied assessments that promote student learning (Willis-Darpoh, 2013)

### Results of Cultural Experiences and Social Networking

As part of the study, I experienced the Māori culture by watching videos/documentaries to learn about the culture and lifestyles in New Zealand. My experience also included learning the native language of New Zealand, Māori. My experience helped me to better understand the distinct culture of New Zealand and the effects various components have had on the culture.

I also attended various cultural events as well as interviewing a friend who is the grandson of a previous Minister of Māori Affairs in New Zealand.

In addition, I was privileged to connect and interview two professors from two different New Zealand universities. The first interview was with Suzanne Pitama. Pitama is the associate dean Māori and the director of Māori/indigenous health institute at the University of Otago in Christchurch, NZ.

According to Pitama (2016), some best teaching practices include: a) encouraging students of diverse cultures to be proud of their cultural backgrounds, to facilitate learning, b) quality teachers focused on increasing students achievement, including social results, c) pedagogical practices proactively address value and address cultural differences, d) cultural practices and language are inclusive of all students, and e) educators provide inclusive, caring, and coherence for productive learning communities. Pitama (2016) stated that the decolonization of the Māori people and the segregation of Māori

and European students attributed to oppressed native people. However, there is increased Māori student achievement when students are empowered by their language and cultural knowledge.

I was honored to interview Teresia Teaiwa. She passed away in March 2017 while battling cancer. Teaiwa has innumerable literary publications including academic journal articles and books Teaiwa (2017) shared some best teaching practices she's experienced and implemented in her courses. These best teaching practices include: a) keeping small class sizes b) provide authentic feedback, c) value students' diverse background, and d) have a caring attitude. According to Teaiwa (2017) people in New Zealand don't feel it is necessary to have a degree to be successful and that having a degree only compliments their life styles. Another reason minority students may not value education, and based on personal experience as a professor in the College of Pacific Studies, Teaiwa (2017) stated a feeling of inferiority to Caucasians.

### **Conclusion**

European educational approaches to learning and assessing lack the foundational importance of including cultural wellbeing. In doing so and alternatively focusing on arbitrary learning standards excludes an increasingly diverse population, those not fitting in the set parameters. Completing the study allowed me to gain a better understanding of the important role of diversity and global competence. When best teaching methods and culturally responsive content are included in school curriculum, all students benefit, resulting in increased learning.

To address this educational challenge, New Zealand implements collective and collaborative methods that created the Māori model to be put into action beside the national education standards (Hohepa & Rau, 2012), attributing to their 8th place international ranking. In Utah, the USBE and some school districts provide culturally relevant professional development sessions to address

the increased diverse population and dismal performance of Pacific Islanders and to encourage the development of cultural awareness and tolerance in classrooms and schools.

We are in a technologically and economically globalized world, where the process of exchanging international views, ideas, and products and other components of culture happen instantly. To reiterate for the purpose of emphasis, having global awareness is a life skill referring to the ability of students to a) use twenty-first century skills – problem solving and critical thinking to undertake global issues, b) collaboratively work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, religions, and lifestyles with mutual respect, c) understand other countries and cultures, including the use of non-English languages (Wagner, 2014, p. 25). By comparing and contrasting New Zealand, the United States, and the State of Utah, I learned the importance of merging culturally responsive curriculum at all grade levels and was reminded of research-based best teaching methods educators need to incorporate to increase student achievement.

The educational opportunity provided as a brief professional development (PD) helps educators to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. The PD responds to cultural diversity and can be utilized at schools by educating stakeholders of the cultural diverse needs of the students and to inform about necessary culturally responsive practices to promote learning and respect. To enhance the PD, the following activity is recommended:

Participation in the activity indicates relevancy to personal educational settings and allows educators to choose how they plan to implement different approaches to promote culturally responsive and respectful environments. Additionally, the PD promotes a safe and positive school culture and fostering culturally diverse curriculum and school policy to indicate support.

As we learn from New Zealand that accepting and valuing all cultures will promote student learning. we educators have new tasks to carry out. Our work is to engage in

thoughtful reflective discussions about what our students need to learn and understand to be successful in the twenty-first century and about the best practices to motivate them to learn. If it be with friends around the ping pong table, in a PTA meeting, in a reading group, or having a discussion with administrators, school boards, members of Congress, or your state legislature, our work is to establish and maintain different conversations. These conversations must be metacognitive and driven by important questions, rather than just easy solutions. Exchanges demand both respect for varying point of views and critical intellect that allows one to ask: How do you know? Where's your evidence? While collaborating with others to design the schools our students need in the twenty-first century, Wagner (2014) suggests practicing the Seven Survival Skills students need to be successful: 1) critical thinking and problem solving 2) collaboration across networks and leading by influence 3) adaptability and agility 4) initiative and entrepreneurialism 5) effective oral and written communication 6) accessing and analyzing information and 7) curiosity and imagination.

My background experiences and cultural identity as a Native Hawaiian is the driving force for emphasizing and analyzing current educational realities and future solutions for estranged students of minority. I know from personal experiences the transformative benefits of culturally responsive teaching and the traumatizing effects of permanent failure from educational irrelevance. My recommendation for teaching through cultural diversity to improve student achievement is a generalized educational requirement and a personal priority. We have a duty to engage in discussions, develop and model these needed skills ensuring student success locally and globally.

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# Promoting Athletic Opportunities in Secondary Schools: Integrating Students with Disabilities into the Whole School Culture

*Chris Streicher and Chad Wiet*

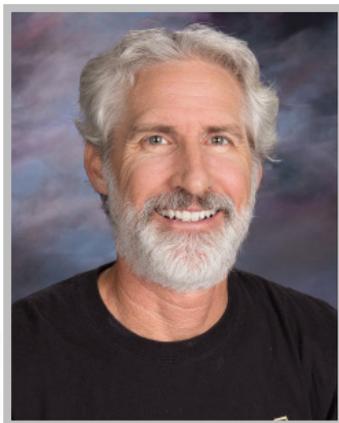
In a letter from the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) dated January 5, 2013, OCR discusses the judgment criteria it will use to determine discriminatory

practice within extracurricular athletics. To begin the letter, the OCR (2010) states:

Extracurricular athletics—which include club, intramural, or interscho-

lastic (e.g., freshman, junior varsity, varsity) athletics at all education levels—are an important component of an overall education program. The United States Government Account-

ability Office (GAO) published a report that underscored that access to, and participation in, extracurricular athletic opportunities provide important health and social benefits to all students, particularly those with disabilities. These benefits can include socialization, improved teamwork and leadership skills, and fitness. Unfortunately, the GAO found that students with disabilities are not being afforded an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular athletics in public elementary and secondary



schools.

To ensure that students with disabilities consistently have opportunities to participate in extracurricular athletics equal to those of other stu-

dents, the GAO recommended that the United States Department of Education (Department) clarify and communicate schools' responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) regarding the provision of extracurricular athletics. The Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for enforcing Section 504, which is a Federal law.

As schools seek to follow and adhere to these inclusive rights, it is valuable to understand the positive impact it can have on school culture. Extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities can positively impact school communities by increasing acceptance, celebrating differences and building respect. Developing a strong program takes time and requires patience. Support from administration and staff is needed for continued growth and development.

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***Developing a strong program takes time and requires patience.***

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There are different ways to provide athletic opportunities for students with disabilities combined with non-disabled peers.

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***The culmination of the season ends with an inter-district competition where all schools compete in Alpine Days. Athletes with disabilities have the opportunity to compete in three events (100-meter dash, shot put, running long jump) alongside their school peers.***

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Athletic opportunities benefit participants in positive ways (e.g. socialization, leadership skills) while

also creating an environment of integration and inclusion. This article will discuss two examples that may help administrators and school districts further enrich their school culture through “separate or different athletic opportunities” for student athletes (non-disabled and disabled).

### **The Alpine School District Experience with “Separate or Different athletic Opportunities”**

The development of school culture is a process and these opportunities are developed over time. The process always starts as an idea and vision. Julie Hines, an adapted physical education teacher, helped to develop and pioneer the Alpine School District middle school track program for students with disabilities. What began as an idea in 1994 has expanded from a two-school track meet to over 10 middle schools and junior highs with multiple track meets held weekly for four

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***Our tournaments help our students better understand the benefits of being active for a lifetime while further developing friendships and having fun while competing.***

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to six weeks. The culmination of the season ends with an inter-district competition where all schools compete in Alpine Days. Athletes with disabilities have the opportunity

to compete in three events (100-meter dash, shot put, running long jump) alongside their school peers. It is a huge success that many

students, school staff and parents look forward to each year and it is part of the middle school track season culture across the district.

In another example, Michelle Holbrook a Special Education Teacher with Lehi High School, began providing opportunities for her students to compete in athletic tournaments. This created a foundation which focuses the resources from contributors in the community, to fund and sponsor a volleyball tournament initially. Presently the Adapted Physical Education Department has expanded this concept and helps to provide athletic tournaments for basketball and soccer as well. The Adapted Physical Education Department, along with the help from many others, volunteer their time to help provide these opportunities during the weekend where parents and family have the ability to be more a part of and to better support our athletes.

Presently, Lehi/Skyridge High, American Fork High, and Orem High Schools host the various athletic tournaments throughout the school year. Team preparation and practice typically occurs in Adapted Physical Education or integrated physical education classes. Some schools choose to hold practices after school, depending on space and parent availability to pick-up students after school. With the support of administrators, these opportunities all began as ideas from special education and adapted physical education teachers. Over the years, we have seen the number of participating teams increase for both high school and community teams. We have seen the benefit of providing opportunities for both groups. We also feel that these tournaments help our students with disabilities make smoother transitions from high school to community based activities. Our tournaments help our students better understand the benefits of being active for a lifetime while further developing friendships and having fun while competing. It is becoming part of the school culture for our high schools

In our experience with Alpine School District, a Saturday tournament format helps students be able to participate in extracur-

ricular athletic events and often results in higher parental support at the events. It also allows many students with already busy

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***As for integration into the school culture, our tournaments are combined, which means we have nondisabled students playing side by side with our students with disabilities.***

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school schedules to have the ability to prioritize their time during the school week to their studies and compete on the weekend. Practices occurring during physical education class times also seems to be a major factor in ability to participate. Needed transportation after school, which must be provided by the parents, causes difficulty for special education students to prepare for tournament play outside of school hours as often many families are unable to meet the transportation demands. After school practices are not always possible for families with students who have a disability, especially with the rigor of a full season sport. There are real life difficulties that parents of students with disabilities have meeting extra demands; preparation during school hours with three to five practices

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***It all started with a small idea and small tournament which grew over the years, and if you have been fortunate enough to be a part of such an experience, you will see the benefits you could be promoting with such an effort at your school.***

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is helpful. Usually our peer players are expected to make two practices which means being excused during other classes for less time. Critical to this tournament process is parent communication. Those staff members and volunteers who help to develop the program and teams will benefit from regular communication with parents to keep them involved and informed. We feel that this has helped with forming what we like to call our “combined” teams in Alpine.

As for integration into the school culture, our tournaments are combined, which means we have nondisabled students playing side by side with our students with disabilities. Tournaments have included school cheerlead-

ers, intermission entertainment (e.g. music from the high school bands, BYU dunk team, Utah Jazz Dunk Team, singing of the national anthem from one of our life skill students). School clubs are invited to help with preparation and also provide our peer players as members are interested to do so. Food vendors are brought in who usually give some of their proceeds back as a donation. High school sports marketing classes develop all aspects of the tournaments as a class project each year. They find financial sponsors, book intermission entertainment, set up professional style flyers with team photos and spotlight athlete bio’s. It all started with a small idea and small tournament which grew over the years, and if you have been fortunate enough to be a part of such an experience, you will see the benefits you could be promoting with such an effort at your school. And yes, it takes hard work. We are very fortunate to have a committed Adapted Physical Education Department and Life Skills classroom teachers who help to coordinate the effort at each school site every year.

### **The Special Olympics Youth and School Partnerships Experience**

As reported in a professional development conference by Ashlee Chatterton (Manager of Youth and School Partnerships for Special Olympics Utah), Hillcrest High School started with one “Unified” soccer team using the High School Integration component of Special Olympics. It grew to two soccer teams at the high school. Club Unified was later formed at the school and the club scheduled scrimmages with other schools to promote increased opportunities. Ashlee commented that getting the right kind of students involved came with forming a club. The program further developed when other students recognized what was happening in the club and had an interest to join. The club was developing and growing a school culture of individuals with likeminded principles and beliefs.

In the High School Integration compo-

ment of Special Olympics, the high school club is set as an Inclusive Leadership type of club. The Inclusive Leadership club works on programs to promote Whole School Engagement, Spread the Word to End the Word, Fans in the Stands, and Cool Schools/Minutes that Matter. All such events aim to promote ability rather than disability and an inclusive school culture for the extracurricular athletics that are comprised of the Unified Sports teams at the school. Federal funding is available to help schools with uniforms, equipment and transportation. Studies from participating schools have revealed that students with disabilities feel more engaged and students in the Unified extracurricular athletic programs have higher rates of graduation and higher GPA.

#### **How Do You Get Started with Such a Partnership?**

- Start with a school liaison to coordinate with Special Olympics, Utah.
- Choose the components you wish to work on at your school to start, but realize all three components work best to get Unified (trademark sign) athletic teams into the school culture.
- Sign-up your team(s) with a form for Special Olympics Unified Events.
- Report on Unified activities occurring at your school.
- Receive funding, equipment, and support materials from Special Olympics Utah.

Special Olympics Unified also provides a curriculum which is a nine-week course with daily lesson plans to help prepare students for

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***Practices occurring during physical education class times also seems to be a major factor in ability to participate.***

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Unified and other events Special Olympics sponsors. This curriculum meets the criteria for SHAPE America. If you are considering this Unified approach to offer “separate or different athletic opportunities”, Unified uses a different concept than peer tutor in the team setting (every student is re-

sponsible for learning and growth in the team experience with Unified). Special Olympics Unified shares a partnership with UHSAA so your athletic directors should be familiar with this program available to high schools.

Becoming a Unified Champion School with the assistance of Special Olympics follows three components. The three components are: Unified Sports, Inclusive Leadership and Whole School Engagement. To learn more about becoming a Unified Champion School please visit <http://sout.org/sports-and-fitness-programs/unifiedchampionschools/>.

Many readers of this article may be aware of other successful programs occurring in Utah schools. Please share these stories with colleagues. Some administrators may not understand the value of such programs and opportunities that districts could be providing for their students. If you are interested in starting these types of opportunities in your school communities, it starts with just one idea. Get that idea into action and watch it grow. Parents appreciate seeing all students have opportunities to participate and compete in combined athletic events which allow and promote varied levels of ability. Remembering OCR guidelines is a secondary incentive for setting up these programs that benefit our students so extensively.

#### **IV. Offering Separate or Different Athletic Opportunities**

As stated above, in providing or arranging for the provision of extracurricular athletics, a school district must ensure that a student with a disability participates with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student with a disability. The provision of unnecessarily separate or different services is discriminatory.<sup>21</sup>

Students with disabilities who cannot participate in the school district’s existing extracurricular athletics program – even with reasonable modifications or aids and services – should still have an equal opportunity to receive the benefits

of extracurricular athletics. When the interests and abilities of some students with disabilities cannot be as fully and effectively met by the school district's existing extracurricular athletic program, the school district should create additional opportunities for those students with disabilities.

In those circumstances, a school district should offer students with disabilities opportunities for athletic activities that are separate or different from those offered to students without disabilities. These athletic opportunities provided by school districts should be supported equally, as with a school district's other athletic activities. School districts must be flexible as they develop programs that consider the unmet interests of students with disabilities.

The OCR document gives guidelines in working with communities. Please refer to those guidelines and to the examples in this article to accomplish the goals.

22 The Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued a guidance document that, among other things, includes suggestions on ways to increase opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in physical education and athletic activities. That guidance, *Creating Equal Opportunities for Children and Youth with Disabilities to Participate in Physical Education and Extracurricular Athletics*, dated August 2011, is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/equal-pe.pdf>.

To paraphrase another clarification from OCR, students with disabilities that could participate without altering the program must be allowed that chance. As educators, our duty is to uphold these all noble stipulations. There is never a better time than now to create and foster positive experiences through physical activity and athletics. Extracurricular activities established through a school, district, or with the help of Special Olympics as a Unified Champion School, will help to build school culture and more importantly help support students with disabilities. May we all follow the words of Martin O'Malley in our efforts of creating, building and or strengthening athletic opportunities for ALL in secondary schools. "The way forward is always found through greater respect for the equal rights of all." (M. O'Malley)

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[https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin\\_omalley\\_701390](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin_omalley_701390)

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## Generation *iY* SCENE

Their World is Full of:

**S**peed

**C**onvenience

**E**ntertainment

**N**urture

**E**ntitlement

Consequently, they  
tend to Assume:

*Slow is bad*

*Hard is bad*

*Boring is bad*

*Risk is bad*

*Labor is bad*



# A Joy to Work With!

David McKay Boren, PhD



Recently in a discussion with my wife about our experiences in various performing groups, she said of a particular choir director, “He’s such a joy to sing for!” This comment caught my attention and reminded me of some experiences early in my teaching career. Like many young teachers, my first few years in the profession were extremely challenging. This was sink-or-swim, make-it-or-break-it-on-your-own, pre-PLC, era for new teachers. I entered my isolated trailer

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behind the school each morning, braced for battle, and left each evening (usually quite late) absolutely exhausted. I loved my students and we had some great times together, but honestly, I was floundering. Other than my lunch break, I had very little interaction with other adults at the school and found that some days I never actually

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***While there are many reasons teachers leave the profession, in a recent national survey, teachers cited “dissatisfaction with administration” as one of the primary factors contributing to their premature exit (Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2013).***

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entered the school building. I’ll never forget sitting in a graduate school class one day, listening to a few of my classmates rave about how much they loved working at their school. What they described sounded amazing. They loved their work environment, and they loved working for their principal. He just made work a great place to be. He trusted in his teachers, wasn’t

afraid to try innovative ideas, loved learning, and made work a joyful experience! They said they felt totally trusted and appreciated, were included in decisions, and felt fully engaged in their work. Was that even possible? I expressed my amazement, at which point they told me of some current teaching openings at their school. Though I hadn’t even considered moving to a new school, I decided to interview, and was soon offered a job for the next school year. I was not disappointed with the change. Similar to my wife’s choir director, this new principal was an absolute joy to work for.

What if all teachers could honestly say, “My principal is a joy to work for!”? While there are many reasons teachers leave the profession, in a recent national survey, teachers cited “dissatisfaction with administration” as one of the primary factors contributing to their premature exit (Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2013). Many of the other cited factors included areas over which principals play a central role: too many classroom intrusions, lack of support for student assessment, lack of autonomy, negative school culture, minimal time for collaboration, and lack of shared leadership and decision-making (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

Teachers and principals are not alone in these challenges. A recent Gallup Panel study found that only 20% of people can give a strong “yes” response to the question, “Do you like what you do each day?” (Rath & Harter, 2010, p. 15). When asked to rank whom they would prefer to spend time with, whether it was friends, relatives, co-workers, children, or others, people rated the time they spent with their manager as the

worst time of the day (Krueger & colleagues, 2008). Ouch! “Even when compared to a list of specific daily activities, time spent with one’s boss was actually rated lower than time spent doing chores and cleaning the house” (Rath & Harter, 2010, p. 25). Double ouch! Perhaps it should be little surprise that those who deemed their boss as incompetent had

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***The fact is, we as school leaders have a tremendous impact on the well-being and effectiveness of our teachers, especially our new teachers.***

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a 24% higher risk of a serious heart problem (Nyberg, et al. 2009), and that more employees have heart attacks on Mondays than on any other day of the week (Witte, Grobbee, Bots, & Hoes, 2005). Achor described it this way: “It seems a bad relationship with your boss can be as bad for you as a steady diet of fried foods—and not nearly as much fun.” (2010, p. 188). The fact is, we as school leaders have a tremendous impact on the well-being and effectiveness of our teachers, especially our new teachers. Here are a few thoughts about how we can all be a “Joy to Work For”.

### **Communicate an Inspiring Purpose**

My second principal was a master at reminding teachers why we became educators and of the nobility of the teaching profession. Wrześniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997) identified three ways individuals view their work in any organization: a job, a career, or a calling. Educators who

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***Just because a few teachers need us to be tight on some issues, we should avoid becoming overly tight with everyone on those issues.***

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see teaching as a job or a career are more me-focused, while those who see teaching as a calling are more others-focused and enjoy much greater satisfaction and effectiveness at work. Unfortunately, with all that is on our plates, it is easy to forget the deep moral purposes for which we became educators. “We became teachers for reasons of the heart,

animated by a passion for some subject and for helping people to learn. But many of us lose heart as the years of teaching go by. How can we take heart in teaching once more, so we can do what good teachers always do—give heart to our students” (Palmer, 1997, p 18)? Shawn Achor urges: “Forget about your current job title. What would your customers call your job title if they described it by the impact you have on their lives?” (2010, pg. 80). Remembering the ennobling and inspiring why and who behind what we do as educators each day will help our teachers wade through and rise above the many uninspiring and maddening policies, procedures, and requirements that bombard them every day.

### **Start with Trust to Find the Loose-Tight Balance**

In his inspiring TED talk entitled Lead Like the Great Conductors, Itay Talgam explains the leadership style of a few world-renowned conductors. One of the conductors he highlights is a very musically competent, extremely intense conductor that provides every possible cue, cut-off, and other direction needed by the musicians in his orchestra. The musicians under his leadership felt stymied by his micro-managing approach and eventually asked for a new conductor. Another highlighted conductor was also very competent and intense but trusted his musicians enough to allow them a fair amount of space and artistic license. Musicians flourished under his leadership. As DuFour and Eaker explain: “Principals do not empower others by disempowering themselves. They cannot send the message that everything is acceptable: They must stand for something. They must lead, and this is a task that requires them to be both ardent advocates of teacher autonomy and passionate promoters and protectors of shared vision and values. Empowered teachers and strong principals are not mutually exclusive. Schools that operate as learning communities will have both” (1998, pp. 187–188). Do we trust our teachers enough to give them the space and support needed to make their

teaching come alive?

Admittedly, some teachers will abuse the space we give them. At such times, it can be tempting to respond by making blanket policies and rules based on those less effective teachers (see Whitaker, 2003, pp. 67-72). Just

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***Everyone in the school worked hard and played hard, and while we experienced the regular ups and downs of any school, our time there was filled with the magic that comes from high-trust relationships, regularly expressed appreciation, and joyful times as a faculty.***

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because a few teachers need us to be tight on some issues, we should avoid becoming overly tight with everyone on those issues. When we fall for this temptation, the tight directive constrains good teachers and is often ignored by the very teachers

for whom the directive was originally created. While there will always be teachers who will take advantage of our trust, perhaps we ought to start with the assumption that they are trustworthy and treat them as such. If at any point they prove otherwise, we can then become appropriately tight with those teachers on that issue.

One of my first experiences with my second principal had a profound impact on my understanding of this principle. As a young teacher attending graduate school, I often had graduate classes at 4 p.m., meaning

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***The best leaders help others to reach their latent potential, even if that means pushing them beyond their comfort zone***

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I had to leave my teaching job a little before contract time ended. My first principal had been very strict about contract times, and we had engaged in some cumbersome negotiations in order for me to make it to my graduate classes on time. During the first few weeks at my second school, I hesitantly approached the principal, prepared to engage in similar negotiations. When I told him about my situation, he simply said, “You don’t need to keep track of your minutes. I know you’ll put in more than your contract requires and I trust you to be professional.” That was the

end of the discussion, and his simple expression of confidence motivated me to do everything possible to earn that trust. I’m sure if I had broken that trust that he would have worked with me individually. Because he started with trust, he found a good loose-tight balance under which I felt safe to take risks, fail, innovate, and thrive.

### **Find and Cultivate Joy**

In addition to offering confidence and trust, this principal was a master at finding “ways for students, teachers, and administrators to take a break from the sometimes emotional, tense, and serious school day and have some fun together” (Wolk, 2008, p. 14). One of his favorite sayings was, “Childhood is a short season.” Everyone in the school worked hard and played hard, and while we experienced the regular ups and downs of any school, our time there was filled with the magic that comes from high-trust relationships, regularly expressed appreciation, and joyful times as a faculty. We played music in the hallways, celebrated birthdays, went on retreats, did faculty dress-up days, read books and articles together, had frequent faculty parties, attended extra-curricular activities, and took care of each other in times of distress. John Goodlad insightfully asked, “Why are our schools not places of joy?” (1984, p. 242). No surprises, but there is ample evidence that we perform at much higher levels when we feel good (see Cameron, 2012). This principal certainly created the “conditions for people to do their best work” (Pink, 2011, p. 86), and as a result, not only did people stay, but they flourished.

### **Hold High Expectations and Provide Ample Support**

The best leaders help others to reach their latent potential, even if that means pushing them beyond their comfort zone. One father tells the story of his son Lee who was a high jumper in high school. One evening after work, he found Lee practicing the high jump and asked him how high he could jump. Lee

said, “Five feet, eight inches.” That was the height required to qualify for the state track meet. Lee was able to clear that height every time. When the dad suggested that they raise the bar to see much higher Lee could jump, he hesitated and replied, “Then I might miss,” to which his dad responded, “If you don’t raise the bar, how will you ever know your potential?” “So we started moving the bar up to five feet, ten inches; then to six feet; and so on, as he sought to improve. Lee became a better high jumper because he was not content with just clearing the minimum standard. He learned that even if it meant missing, he wanted to keep raising the bar to become the best high jumper he was capable of becoming” (Perry, 2007, pp. 46-47). Do any of our teachers need a little encouragement to raise their personal bar?

To be fair, if we raise the bar on teachers, we must match those increased expectations with increased levels of support. Richard Elmore explains such reciprocal accountability: “For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation” (Elmore, 2002, p. 7). Margaret Wheatley shares how we might best provide needed support: “People do not need the intricate directions, time lines, plans, and organization charts that are assumed to be necessary. These are not how people accomplish good work; they are what impede contributions. But people need a great deal from their leaders. They need information, access to one another, resources, trust, and follow-through. Leaders are necessary to foster experimentation, to help create connections across the organization, to feed the system with information from multiple sources--all while helping everyone stay clear on what we agreed we wanted to accomplish and who we wanted to be” (Wheatley, 1997, p. 25). Are we giving our teachers the support they need to perform at the high levels required to meet our shared mission and vision?

#### **Feel and Express Love**

While it is true that “the engaged prin-

icipal is always building and tending to relationships” (Fullan, 2014, p. 135), should our desire to build relationships stem primarily from a desire to increase school performance? During my doctoral dissertation defense, I made the claim that student learning improves when principals establish caring relationships with teachers. A professor on my defense committee asked, “So is that relationship just a means to an end? What if trusting relationships with teachers didn’t have any impact on student learning? Would cultivating those relationships still be worth the effort?” I fumbled through an answer and eventually passed the defense, but the question has remained with me. Are we striving to build close relationships with teachers simply as a way to boost student learning, school effectiveness, and reduce teacher turnover? If so, can teachers sense those ulterior motives? Fortunately, feeling deep regard for others and resultant levels of performance are not usually mutually exclusive, but are mutually reinforcing (Cameron, 2012). While some teachers are definitely more difficult to love, everyone will find more joy at school when genuine care, respect, and regard are nurtured, felt, and expressed. “The people . . . from good-to-great companies clearly loved what they did largely because they loved who they did it with” (Achor, 2010, pg. 184).

#### **A Joy to Work With!**

How do our teachers talk about working with us? Are we a joy to work with? One teacher recently shared: “For the past decade, I’ve worked at a school where 97% of the children qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. I stay because the school climate is good for children and teachers alike. I stay because my principal is wonderful, supports us, does what’s best for children, and because I trust her. I stay because my colleagues are gifted teachers and good company, and because I continually learn from them” (Ragatz, 2014). We have to acknowledge that none of us are wholly responsible for our teachers’ successes and failures. We also have to rec-

ognize that “certain leadership strategies have been found to enable organizational thriving, flourishing, and extraordinarily positive performance” (Cameron, 2012, p. 11). While hopefully none of us is as bad as eating fried foods or causing heart attacks, are we a joy to work for, or even better, a joy to work with? As we strive to be a joy to work with, let us seek to do the following:

- Communicate an inspiring purpose;
- Start with trust to find the loose-tight balance;
- Find and cultivate joy;
- Hold high expectations & provide ample support;
- Feel and express love.

As we do so, more quality teachers will not only stay in the profession, but they will thrive and flourish, making teaching and learning a joy for students, teachers, and school leaders.

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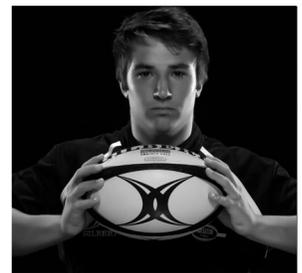
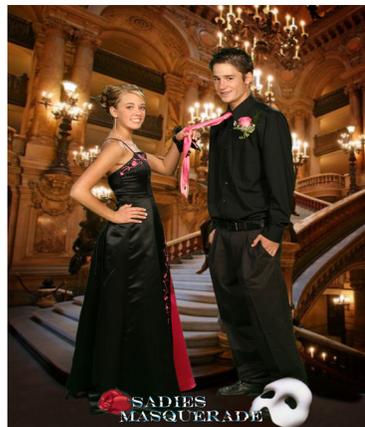
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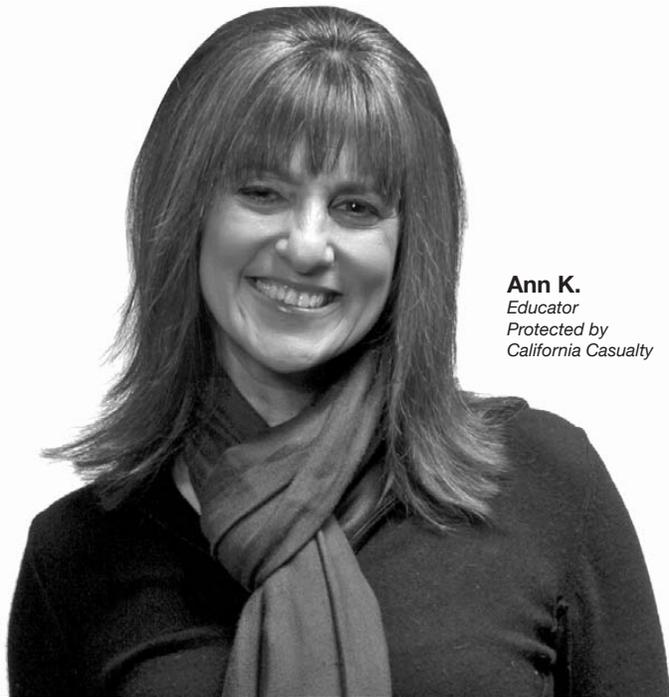
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