

WASHINGTON STATE KAPPAN

a journal for research, leadership, and practice



Great Teachers Reflections and Relationships

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

by Mary Lynne Derrington, EdD



A great teacher is remembered because of the personal interaction he or she cultivates with students ...

Great teachers—they play such an important role in our lives. In the pages that follow we will look at issues that consistently surround these tremendous contributors to our daily lives.

Numerous recent publications and several politicians on the stump this fall gave new twists to familiar proposals. Another version of merit pay, a look at more school choices, and a revised evaluation process were among the ideas under discussion. Intriguing as these proposals may be, the essence of what makes a great teacher was not a part of the conversation. Perhaps the larger, more thought-provoking question is this: What is it about a person that makes him or her a great teacher?

I think most of us would agree that good teachers possess a repertoire of identified and effective technical skills. But methodology aside, great teachers possess something much more. When some of our authors asked students to recollect a memorable teacher and define the qualities that made that teacher so influential, they heard several reasons: the teacher's passion for learning, his or her care and consideration for the student, and the development of a highly satisfactory personal learning relationship between the student and the teacher. Other authors in this issue, including three notable Washingtonians with diverse backgrounds who work in very different fields, describe teachers who influenced their lives. The personal story each tells provides insight as to why some teachers are remembered long after graduation.

A great teacher is remembered because of the personal interaction he or she cultivates with students, as some authors in this issue suggest. When you recollect a teacher who inspired you and influenced your life, who comes to mind? My memory is of my eighth grade teacher, Sister Thea, a Roman Catholic nun and the principal of a large K-8 school

in Illinois. She was definitely a competent teacher, as evidenced by the number of her students who found their way onto the high school honor roll. But what I remember most is that she liked us goofy tweeners and good naturedly guided us through our adolescent antics.

Perhaps our search for meaning, not just method, in our work leads to the intuitive understanding that relationships play a key role in learning. These learning relationships between teacher and student appear to be highly personal and not prescriptive. As a principal, I wondered why parents requested certain teachers when there was no significant pedagogical difference between them that I had observed in the classroom. As a superintendent, I pondered why a complaint from a parent about one teacher would be balanced by a compliment from a different parent regarding the same teacher. Now at the university, I discuss with my colleagues why a course evaluation produces different student responses when they all experience the very same instruction.

Perhaps the answer is on the poster in my colleague's office, which I read daily when passing by his door. "Students won't always remember what you taught them, but they will never forget how you treated them."

This issue is dedicated to teachers everywhere who have touched a life and left a legacy through the meaning a young person found in this powerful student-teacher interaction.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John W. Armenia, PhD



Our second research conference was held October 11 at the University of Washington. It was titled: **High-Performing Educators: What makes a great teacher?** This theme was chosen by Phi Delta Kappa because research has established that the single most important factor in a student's education is his or her teachers.

Great teachers have many diverse qualities, like the autumn efflorescence of color that we are all admiring in the gardens and landscapes of our homes, communities, and countrysides. They have a repertoire of lesson design and teaching strategies to use in a rich array of learning environments. Many great teachers are first-rate scholars in their fields and are committed to their students and disciplines while they engage their students' analytical and imaginative powers in the process of finding their own answers to the task and problem at hand.

Research validates our observations that there are many facets and characteristics of great teachers. They include a professional competence in teaching as measured by the teacher's skillful use of a range of teaching strategies, creation of effective lesson designs and learning environments, and an ability to promote the personal growth and moral development of each student.

In Washington State, the *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools: A research-based resource for schools and districts to assist in improving student learning* (OSPI, 2007) points out that "Teaching is a holistic endeavor; all the different aspects of teaching are entangled in multiple ways." Emphasis is given to the application of the principles of learning in both instruction and assessment. The principles include: constructing knowledge, active engagement, meaningful content, collaboration and social interaction, reflection/metacognition, and inclusivity. Cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching are embedded in each of the nine characteristics. Today, almost every teacher and school is studying the research on effective teaching and successful schools while gathering data and evidence into the effects of their practices and programs on the improvement of student learning and achievement. Today, many highly motivated teachers are working to achieve new skills and receive coaching from colleagues and master teachers as they build competence in complex teaching strategies and curricula.

ABOUT THE PRESIDENT

John W. Armenia, PhD, is President, Chapter/Member Liaison, PDK WA. Faculty Emeritus, City University, Seattle, Washington.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Phi Delta Kappa is to promote high-quality education, in particular publicly supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life. The mission is accomplished through leadership, research, and service in education.

The Washington State Chapter is chartered for the purpose of furthering the mission of the association through forums, networking, professional development, mentoring, volunteering professionally, and leadership skill development.

The *Washington State Kappan, a journal for research, leadership, and practice* provides members an opportunity to participate in the PDK mission through a focus on educational research and best practices concerned with leadership, issues, trends, and policy.

Dancing With Different Partners

by Samuel Green, Washington State's first Poet Laureate

Some of us are lucky with teachers. And some of us are fortunate enough to figure out just how we've been lucky. I fall into that group. For the sake of this little memoir, I want to mention just three who have had a tremendous effect on my life as a poet—and as a person—because each of them was very different in their approach. Each of them had that mystical skill of the best teacher who enters into a dance with a student, making them believe they can move with grace, making them believe that they are, in fact, leading, when all the time, the teacher—who appears relaxed and happily following—is looking ahead, sending subtle signals, and pushing the dance where it needs to go. It takes far more energy than anyone could guess.

The first was Lonny Kaneko. In 1970, when I was a returning veteran, Lonny was teaching the creative writing courses at Highline Community College. I had been writing poems more or less secretly, but thought it was time to find out what someone else thought about what I was doing, so I tried signing up for his course. It was full. I had to talk him into signing an overload slip, something I still tease him about. Lonny was the first person in the world to introduce me to the world of contemporary poetry. One of the first poems I remember him reading aloud to us was Theodore Roethke's great villanelle, "The Waking." I was hooked. Once Lonny recognized the hunger in me, he made it his job to feed it. You could call it "the bread crumb method," I suppose. He knew where I needed to go, but he also recognized my need to discover things for myself, so he scattered clues to learning like crumbs along a trail, neatly disguising what he was up to. I followed along while he kept a close watch on me from the dark shadows of the path, or the overhanging trees, when the going was dense. He gave me everything he had, and more. He had a disarming way of keeping us off guard. One quarter, on the first day of class, he announced that he wanted to teach the course without grades getting in the way, so he told us we were going to begin with the final exam. He sent us off to find some place comfortable, instructed us to invent

a form, and write a poem. We did. I began the course with an A. The rest of the quarter was sheer joy. Only Lonny could have gotten away with that.

The second poetry teacher I had was Robert Huff, at Western Washington University. For me, Huff was the epitome of the inspirational model of teaching. He was an intimidating, complex professor whose actual classroom demeanor varied wildly because of personal difficulties. In private conferences, he could be intimidating. But he so wholly embodied a passionate love for poetry, both as reader and as writer, that he made me want to reach the same level of achievement. He also put forth an aura of expectation: I knew he assumed that I would feel the same way he did. I read more than 40 volumes of poetry for a single class that he taught one summer. That isn't quite right. It's more correct to say I read 40 books *because* he taught that class.

He was the first teacher to let me know, clearly, that what I was doing was embarking on a lifetime's commitment, that it was a serious one, and that what I was doing mattered. There were no shortcuts. Once, when I was depressed because no one in the English Department could help me figure out where Roethke might have gotten the title to one of his poems ("Where Knock is Open Wide"), and even displayed a sort of impatience that it mattered to me, Bob called me into his office just after arriving on campus for a late afternoon class and asked me why I looked so morose. I explained the problem.

"Ah," he said. His eyes squinted. "Christopher Smart, 'Song of David,' ..." and then he quoted the relevant lines. He wasn't showing off. He wholly



He knew where I needed to go, but he also recognized my need to discover things for myself.

continues on page 4

understood that it should be important to me. The intensity of my reading went up even more after that (and the first thing I read was the entirety of that glorious long poem by Smart). Bob has been gone for many years now, burned to death in a fire, but I still go to his too-neglected poems now and then, and his is one of the heads that peers over my shoulder, nodding or scowling, from time to time. He is one of the reasons our poetry library alone numbers several thousand volumes.

Each of these three teachers... gave me the understanding that learning was not something that stopped when an arbitrary class ended. I am still learning from them.

My third poetry teacher was Nelson Bentley, at the University of Washington. I was there almost by a fluke, merely to pick up five credits toward my MA at Western. Nelson's ongoing poetry workshop was already famous in Seattle. His great gift as a teacher was to be a consistent model of generosity. Nelson taught with unabashed commitment. Everyone knew he had taken only a few days off during a long career. He created an environment in which his students learned more from one another than they did from him. We were encouraged to care passionately about one another's work—so much so that we were ruthlessly thorough in the workshop sessions, determined that a poem by a classmate would not get published (and we all *expected* to publish) without it being the piece we all thought it should be. As trite as it is to say it, he taught us to love one another in the act of loving what we did.

I learned the collaborative, unselfish nature of art in Nelson's class. He taught me to appreciate whatever help a classmate might offer, because he made it clear that the poem was more important than the poet. This meant that the success of a classmate didn't for a moment diminish my own success. It's true that we competed with one another, but we took joy in that competition. Many of the young poets I met there became lifelong friends to whom I've been able to send work for the past 30 years, and get honest feedback. In many cases I don't even need to send it, because I keep their critical voices in my head, and in my heart. Nelson was the puppet master for that class, doggedly representing what could be. I never teach a class of my own without trying to imitate some of what he did, knowing—always—that I couldn't possibly live up to his own genius.

I've always believed in the apprentice method. Even when I was a child, and wanted to know how to do something, I learned how to find a man or woman who seemed to me an expert, and ask them to teach me. It took me years to understand that teachers are looking for students, as often as the other way around. It's a happy occasion when the two meet. Each of the three teachers above also gave me a lasting gift: the understanding that learning was not something that stopped when an arbitrary class ended. I am still learning from them.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samuel Green graduated from Anacortes High School. After four years in the military he earned degrees from Highline Community College and Western Washington University. A 30-year veteran of the Poetry-in-the-Schools program, he has taught in literally hundreds of classrooms. In December he was named by Governor Chris Gregoire as the first Poet Laureate for the State of Washington. He received a Washington State Book Award in 2008 for *The Grace of Necessity*.
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Heroes

written for Mark O'Connor by Cathie West

I learned at a young age to follow my own path. My musical training ran the gamut—from classical, to folk, to jazz—and my blending of these styles and influences has been evident throughout my career. What I learned, even in my early years, was that my musical ideas—and the colorful canvas I created from various styles—were something unique. But I was told it wouldn't work. My first classical violin teacher told me my bow grip was all wrong—he wouldn't teach me unless I changed it! Today Yo-Yo Ma, the renowned cellist, tells people that learning my bow grip changed the way he plays music. Follow your own path; there is never just one.

My earliest memories of learning the violin include teachers who became my heroes. One of the greatest was Stéphane Grappelli, the masterful French jazz violin player and musician. He created an important jazz movement in Europe and influenced generations of jazz musicians all over the world. I was fortunate to begin playing with Stéphane, who was then in his seventies, when I was just out of high school—as a guitarist actually. After Stéphane heard me play the violin at our first rehearsal, he immedi-

ately proclaimed that I would join him for a double violin piece every performance on tour. After our performance each night, Stéphane would motion me back onto the stage for an encore. It was an invitation to join him in a joyous celebration—a celebration of music and the violin! Stéphane taught me to play with happiness and joy and an exuberance I feel to this day. If you listen to the duets Stéphane and I play on my *Heroes* album, you will hear us communicate—using our music to talk to each other. You can hear it in our playing: master teacher to beloved student. Stéphane taught me so much, but most of all, to take musically what was already mine and take it as far as I wanted to go.

Follow your
own path;
there is never
just one.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark O'Connor is an internationally recognized violinist and composer. This memoir was prepared by Cathie West from material taken, with permission, from Mark O'Connor's website: www.markoconnor.com

Teachers Make a Difference

by Rufus Woods

When I look back on the people who had a significant impact on my life, Dr. Robert G. Albertson, a professor of religion at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, resides at the top of the list.

My association with Bob Albertson began as a freshman when I took a religion course to satisfy university requirements. That led to my participation in the 1977-78 Pacific Rim/Asia Study-Travel Program and a relationship that has spanned a quarter of a century.

Pac Rim, as it was known, was designed and led by Bob Albertson and his wife Aileen as a way to introduce students to the world in a unique way.

His was a legacy of inclusion, tolerance, and affirmation.

The Albertsons believed that a special kind of learning goes on when you mix academic rigor with the sights, sounds, smells, and experiences of foreign countries. It was not a popular notion with the administration at the institution or with some other faculty members who suggested that a person could learn more from books than traipsing all over the world. To their credit, the Albertsons were not daunted by the challenge and the program was initiated in 1973-74 with a program that encompassed an entire academic year. It was the first of three round-the-world programs they led, in addition to several other trips abroad with students in tow. The program has survived and continues to this day, a testament to the strong foundation laid by the Albertsons.

In 1977-78, the years I spent abroad with the Albertsons, our travels took us to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal before returning through Turkey, Austria, and London. We studied at universities along the way in what we referred to as “gathering” but there was always time built in for the group to go explor-

ing on our own, or “scattering.” We were given a certain amount of per diem for food each month, and this allowed us to get intimately acquainted with the cuisine and the restaurants in each locale. The result was an extraordinary experience, but at the heart of the experience was the academic program built and nurtured by Bob Albertson.

As a teacher, he was unparalleled in his ability to inspire students. What made Bob Albertson extraordinary can perhaps best be understood by examining the way he approached teaching and life. These qualities made him a teacher who was loved, respected, and admired by those who were fortunate enough to be in his class, and his impact has been felt by former students for decades.

He had a brilliant mind—an extraordinary ability to assimilate information, draw connections, and explain events or situations in a way that was fresh, interesting, and compelling. He was not just an academic, though, but had rich life experience. As a soldier in India during World War II, he spent a day listening to Mahatma Gandhi speak near Calcutta. His sense of adventure and openness to new ideas made him a lifelong learner and a wonderful guide for students exploring a broader world.

He was a man of deep religious faith. Although he was a Methodist minister, he also saw the value in and beauty of other great faiths of the world. He didn’t wear his faith on his sleeve or stand in judgment of those who held differing beliefs. He honored other faiths by learning and trying to understand. His was a legacy of inclusion, tolerance, and affirmation.

Bob had an uncanny knack for bringing out the best in students. He had a unique ability to determine the strengths or talents of individuals and come up with ways to incorporate that into a learning experience. If a student was musically inclined, for example, he would find ways to let them show that ability and benefit the entire group. Even with the most troublesome students, Bob found ways for them to contribute in a meaningful way to the experience.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rufus Woods is publisher of the *Wenatchee World*. Reprinted from *Teachers Make a Difference*, North Central Education Service District.

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Student Voices

by Tim Bruce, PhD, and Kathleen A. Shoop, EdD

WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM YOUR TEACHER TO BE SUCCESSFUL THIS YEAR?

This was the question posed to all students on the first day of school in grades 3-12 at the La Conner School District. The following letter presents a composite response reflecting the unique voices of La Conner's Native American students who, like all other students, begin each year filled with hope:

Dear Teacher,

First, I need you to smile at me, support me, and read to me. I like it when you have an open mind and are happy. I need you to talk to me and help me go to college and get an education.

Please don't pressure me, teacher. I hope you'll be fair with me. I need you to help me with my homework. I know I'm going to need extra help, so can you explain more to help me understand what I don't know and then teach me? I like to learn outside of the classroom in new ways. And, I really like to have choices.

I really want to be on the honor role for the second time. Mostly, though, I will only be successful if you believe in me and encourage me. I hope this is my best year ever.

Your student, Susan

Strong, dedicated teachers and administrators understand that knowing and caring about each child is fundamental to the success of students like Susan. Thoughtful practitioners deeply comprehend student context and intentionally work to build positive and respectful relationships. Research by Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) explained that teachers who develop a trusting relationship, coupled with high expectations and a belief that all students can succeed, instill corresponding expectations and beliefs in their students. Masten (1994) observed that, "schools ... not only provide knowledge and teach problem-solving skills, they provide a setting

where children can become connected with caring, competent adults" (p. 15). Native Americans simply learn better in a supportive social context than in an impersonal setting (Murdoch, 1988).

In a study by Jackson et al. (2003), Native students expressed the importance of being greeted and contacted warmly by their teachers. Students in this study related more commitment, motivation, and success when they perceived that the teacher actually cared about them. Wigfield and Eccles (2002) found that when teachers and students care for one another and share a sense of purpose, and when teachers are open to learning about their students' unique perspectives, the opportunity to motivate and guide students toward success is enhanced. Observations by Taylor and Garofalo (1989) show that students naturally gravitate to teachers who are perceived as truly caring about them, who take the time to give them positive attributional feedback, and are perceived as moving them "towards the ultimate goals of becoming more autonomous" (p. 61).

Susan's letter reminds us of what characteristics teachers must consistently practice to help their Native American students succeed. The following checklist was derived from a frequency analysis of the responses Native students gave to the prompt, *What do you need from your teacher to be successful this year:*

- Help and support me.
- Read to me.
- Talk with me so I know you and you know me.
- Help me know the others in my class.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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What Makes a Good Teacher Good?

by Laurie Winder, PhD

There is a dearth of research that examines learning from the standpoint of those who did not thrive in public schools. Consequently, I asked adults engaged in remedial education, individuals who are often discussed but rarely offered an opportunity for self-representation, to evaluate retrospectively their K-12 education. Their narratives suggest that the quality of teacher-student relationships is central to students' educational and socio-emotional development. They recalled how teachers influenced their perceptions of the world and their place in it. They described what they believe makes a good teacher good.

The assumption that frames this study is that all children have the ability and desire to learn, yet social and structural inequity stifles the actualization of some children's potential. Understanding the interconnections of people and systems within which they are situated requires that we consider subjective realities (Leonardo, 2004), therefore the first-hand perspectives of learners may better equip us to provide more equitable and effective education. Critical inquiry has the ability to make the couched marginalization of less privileged learners explicit by "broadening awareness within the field of educational research about whose stories are being heard (and whose are not)" (Nasir & Hand, 2006, p. 455). By viewing learners as *knowers* we have access to more comprehensive explanations of academic achievement (Wiggan, 2007). Individuals who were not well served by public schools are the "knowers" who inform this work.

METHODS

I accessed 38 adults who had attended K-12 schools in the U.S. through developmental education programs at two community colleges and one human services agency in Washington State. I interviewed

participants about their experiences with schooling and their perceptions about what fosters and hinders learning. I transcribed audio-recorded interviews verbatim and coded the resultant 1,386 pages of data using the framework of Miles and Huberman (1994). Limitations include the phenomenological approach of the study, the findings of which will neither generalize nor claim causality. In addition, there is an absence of voices representing individuals who have not pursued adult education.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

All participants remembered at least one extraordinary teacher who taught, nurtured, and respected them. Liz said that her academic success "... depended on the relationship I had with the teacher and the potential that the teacher saw that I had." She worked hard for teachers who were "... good enough to realize the potential of the student." Marina pointed out that children "... need to feel cared about and need to feel liked." John formed his strongest "connections" with teachers who conveyed positive regard toward all students because they created an environment in which everyone thrived. Jana's favorite "awesome" teacher was interested in all students—even those with "attitudes." Julie recalled that teachers who were like "family" had called her at home when she was sick, asking, "How are you doing sweetie? When are you coming back to school?" Successful teachers are relational; they engage students conversationally and facilitate rather than dominate their learning (Juliana & Andrews, 2005).

If a child does not experience warmth, security, and caring at school, there is a significant absence of warmth, security, and caring in his or her life. Most participants (97%) said that "care" is what fosters learning. Positive relationships with teachers provide a buffer for insecure children (O'Conner & McCartney, 2007). Joe explained that when teachers were kind to him, he felt better about himself and put more effort into learning. Teachers who nurture students' well-being cultivate both knowledge acquisition and self-confidence (Bruner, 1996). Moreover, when students experience teachers' warmth they are

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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happy, and in a reciprocal relationship, their happiness inspires teachers (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

INDIVIDUALIZED ATTENTION

Ninety-five percent of participants cited “one-on-one” as the most effective method of instruction. Becky said that good teachers “actually sat down with me and helped me learn.” Marina was motivated when teachers asked how she was doing and offered help. To teachers she said: “You see a kid is failing. You can see it in your book. Ask them why. Ask them if they need help ... have love inside.” Irene appreciated teachers who asked, “Do you get it? Do you have any questions?” The magic of *one-on-one* is the interest and regard teachers convey when they are responsive to students. Attentive teachers bolster students’ confidence and competence and give them what Noddings (2003) calls a “memory of having been cared for.”

EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION

The most laudable aspect of No Child Left Behind is the belief that all children have the potential for academic success regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances (Cummins, 2007). Yet, participants remembered some teachers who provided differential instructional and social attention based on students’ status positions. Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) state that socially just teachers are cognizant of the transformative effect emotions have on learning and therefore attend to all students’ emotional needs while providing high quality instruction. Emotional well-being is not contrary to intellect development but is essential to transactional teaching and learning. Equitable instructional and social attention equalizes classroom power relationships. Socially just teaching insures that all citizens receive an equitable education (p. 282).

Participants said that the “best” teachers taught and respected all students. Mutual respect is elemental to social bonding and as such, the quality of teacher-student relationships predicts student security and academic success; therefore when teachers fail to connect with students, students are likely to disconnect from school (Goodman, 1999). Rose asks teachers to extend themselves to all students, “not just the popular kids, because everyone wants to feel that they matter.” Jen said that students invest

in learning when teachers invest in them.

DISCUSSION

The learners represented herein tell us that good teachers are caring and relational egalitarians that provide effective instruction and one-on-one. Felt levels of acceptance and respect at school shaped how participants responded to schooling. When they felt liked—they liked school. When they felt rejected—they rejected school. Participants tell us that positive student-teacher relationships, individualized attention, and equitable instruction foster learning. As educators, we must convey the message that participants longed to hear when they were children in our public schools, “we care to teach you.”

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Moving Good Teaching to Great Teaching: Student-Focused Approaches to the Middle Grades

by Tariq T. Akmal, PhD, and Donald E. Larsen, PhD

In this age of educational accountability, the joy, wonder, and excitement of learning can potentially be subverted by the myopic national focus on test scores. The expectation that *all* students attain the *same* standard at the *same* time—contradicting what we know regarding student differences and learning needs (Vars, 2001)—wrongly influences policy makers and educators to focus only on the test score and not on the learner. Great teachers, however, understand that the relational aspect of working with middle graders and using developmentally appropriate measures is still paramount in helping them learn in meaningful ways (Erb, 2005; Wiles & Bondi, 2001; Vatterot, 2007).

This article focuses on the middle grades and has two purposes: (a) to help remind both novice and expert middle grade teachers that in our focus on boosting test scores, we mustn't forget the underlying traits/needs of the middle-level child; and (b) to focus on using students as a resource for teaching.

All teachers, but especially middle level teachers, must know students informally and formally and show them that they care *and* enjoy teaching this age group (Doda & Knowles, 2008). Formal knowledge comes from the battery of tests and assignments students do, but *informal* knowledge poses more of a challenge. How does one develop and utilize informal understandings of students and their interests to create learner-centered approaches to optimize pupil learning and better inform our teaching practice?

BEGIN WITH THE STUDENTS

Ideally, middle schools are staffed with teachers who are experts at teaching young adolescents (Erb, 2005;

Jackson & Davis, 2000). Middle grade teachers are called upon to understand their young wards' development (cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and physical) and then use that information to develop relationships with and lessons for their students based on that knowledge. However, these group traits do not necessarily provide the individual classroom teacher with a clear picture of *her* class or ways to connect with *his* students.

These concerns—of who is in my classroom and how to engage them—should be of importance to any teacher, setting the stage for good teaching. Teachers see their students during the structured time of the school day but often feel challenged to really know their students. For that understanding, teachers must hear directly from their students (Doda & Knowles, 2008; Mee, 1997). Doda and Knowles' survey of middle graders revealed that middle graders comprehend what it takes to teach them well, underscoring how important it is for teachers to know their middle graders. Their survey responses included:

- Know us as people and learners;
- Respect us as people/learners with important ideas and contributions;
- Understand our developmental nature and associated challenges;
- Know that development does not diminish us; and
- Find ways to make learning engaging.

If we know what is important to students and where their interests lie, we can connect these interests and our knowledge of students to teaching them. With an increased level of awareness of students' interests and needs, teachers can design student-focused curricular and instructional strategies (Vatterot, 2007). This approach is not intended to be a prescriptive, "one size fits all" approach; its applications should vary according to needs that individual teachers encounter.

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ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Young adolescents experience more rapid growth and development than any time save infancy to age three (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Stevenson, 2002; Wiles & Bondi, 2001). While one may wish to infer that the remarkable range of differences in middle school students' developmental rates offers no consistent reference point, in fact, that elusive constant may be found in those same predictably irregular changes manifested in any group of middle graders.

Still, members of this age group share certain needs in common. Middle graders need to be: safe; loved and believed in as well as believing in themselves; recognized and respected for their uniqueness, yet not singled out as different; independent, yet supported when they have need; and part of a group with identification and acceptance (Stevenson, 2002; Wiles & Bondi, 2001). For a teacher to have any clear sense of how to address the many different needs and developmental stages a class of middle graders might manifest becomes a real challenge if one is focused solely on test scores.

Establishing a classroom congruent with these needs means considering how we might better respond to the diverse learning needs of children. Rather than trying to make students identical in terms of test achievement (Vars, 2001), teachers who

are culturally responsive to students from all backgrounds "spend considerable classroom and non-classroom time developing a personal relationship with the students" (Irvine & Armento, 2001, p. 4) and building on their individual interests and strengths.

STUDENTS AS TEACHING RESOURCES

Any school year should begin with efforts to connect with students on a personal as well as professional level. Teachers should utilize open-ended, written surveys of their students and then consider the resulting responses to help develop impressions regarding kids' academic skills, interests, hobbies, and other traits. Questions might include:

- What is one thing you think you do well?
- What do you think would really help you learn at school?
- How do you think you learn best?
- What do you like in a teacher?
- What (school) subjects do you really like?
- What interests you?
- What do you like to do after school?
- If you could be anyone (or any career), who or what would you choose and why?
- What kind of a job would you like to do someday?

These surveys could include questions designed to provide insights to student “intelligences” (Gardner, 1995), learning styles (Dunn & Dunn, 1978), and learning “profiles” (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). Nor should parents be excluded from this process. Deborah Bova (2002), a former middle school teacher, recommends asking parents, “In a million words or less, tell us about your child.” The result is a rich profile of the middle level child from the parents’ perspective and a tool for the teacher.

As anyone who teaches middle graders knows, they want adults to care for them even when they, themselves, seem not to (Mee, 1997; Stevenson, 2002). Asking students about their interests or how they learn illustrates this care and has several applications. First, the teacher can develop lesson plans centered on students’ own interests and traits profiled in these survey results, further acknowledging the primacy of the student. Second, teachers can highlight the students’ own learning styles or intelligences (Gardner, 1996) and help them understand why they might prefer learning in some ways, while feeling less confident about other teaching and learning strategies. Finally, teachers can invite students to help select topics and approaches for making the curriculum more relevant and meaningful to the students. Middle graders are more likely to be engaged by content when given opportunities to develop personal relationships with it—opining, solving a problem that is important to them, competing in teams, imagining possibilities, or being creative (Intrator, 2004; Vatterot, 2007).

There is no single answer to how to teach well, just as there is no single answer as to how our schools can meet all the challenges that society places upon them. But great middle school teachers utilize what they know of their charges to teach them well. With a nod to David Letterman, here is our “Top Ten” list that characterizes how high-performing teachers use this knowledge:

10. Use the academic and non-academic knowledge to connect with students.
9. Connect content with student interests and feelings.
8. Look for and find success in students, no matter how small, because of the informal “data” they gain.

7. Work to develop one’s own knowledge in order to meet student needs.
6. Maintain high expectations for *all* students—not allowing students to choose failure as an exit strategy.
5. Explain things in ways that are grounded in student experience and interest.
4. Offer students a variety of ways to learn and demonstrate learning.
3. Make classrooms safe for students by knowing how *not* to embarrass them.
2. Engage students in meaningful work.
1. Develop close relationships with children: the cornerstone of achievement.

APPLICATIONS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Several middle school organizational structures can also benefit from this student-focused approach.

Teacher-Student Relationships. Now that the teacher knows about the student informally (from surveys and descriptive data provided by students in writing, conversation, etc.) and formally (classroom performance, standardized assessments, learning inventories, etc.), conversations and conferences with students can now become deeper and richer. Topics for reading and writing can be developed through this knowledge and everyday conversation can be improved through identified issues of value to students.

Advisory Time. The advisory period in middle schools is often used for meeting logistical needs of the school day (announcements, attendance, lunch counts, permission slips, etc.). After “housekeeping,” there is time for informal conversation with the goal of the teacher and students becoming better acquainted. Advisory aims to “foster growing bonds of interdependence and trust, ensuring that no student is left out of having an adult mentor and belonging to a family-like band of peers” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 132) and create a more positive school climate (George & Shewey, 1994; MacIver, 1990). Using the student “data” to build upon what the students bring to the classroom, the teacher can now plan meaningful whole-group discussions and activities.

Student-Student Relationships. The advisory teacher and others can also use this knowledge to develop interpersonal relationships of students and

shape them into a learning community. Grouping students whose interests, intelligences, and/or experiences match or complement one another can be one benefit. Students can also be introduced to one another, or a new student can be partnered with someone with similar interests, reducing some of the stress of fostering new friendships.

Lesson Planning/Contexts for Learning. Knowing student interests can help teachers determine what topics they wish to address as well as how to teach them. Teachers can be more culturally responsive: offering a menu of ways for students to learn, multiple ways to represent what they know, and multiple ways of engaging the students in a learning task.

Contexts for Assessment. For a teacher, knowing students' academic strengths and growth-need areas will serve to improve assessment. For example, if a teacher understands that her/his students are largely "kinesthetic" learners, pencil and paper tests are probably inauthentic assessments of students' learning. Great teaching means aligning multiple forms of assessment with knowledge of students to best discern what they know.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We began this paper with the assertion that the focus on test scores and not on the learner was, at best, shortsighted. Indeed, what we know about the developmental traits of middle graders defies a singular examination using standardized testing instruments. Student-focused teaching and learning offer a different vantage point on high-performing teachers. If we understand what young adolescents' interests are, as well as their academic strengths, we can help them shape (or have them help the teacher shape) the curriculum and instruction to foster engagement in the learning *and* to help the middle level student learn better. "As schools change in ways that may better match early adolescents' developing characteristics, perhaps the declines in adolescents' achievement beliefs and values observed . . . will diminish" (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994, p. 133). Any teaching approach that addresses learning from the students' perspective *and* includes her/him in the process is a step toward making meaningful changes, diminishing those declines, and increasing student achievement.

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More Swimming, Less Sinking: High Quality Support for New Teachers

by Sue Anderson and Jeanne Harmon

If we hold higher expectations for new teachers as learners and hope to meet ambitious reform goals, the mentoring must move beyond emotional support and brief technical advice to become truly educative, focused on learning opportunities that move novices' practice forward and challenge their thinking and practice. ~ Achinstein and Athanases, *Mentors in the Making* (2006).

Washington loses about 25% of its new teachers within their first five years in the classroom (Plecki, 2005). While not as dire as the 50% attrition rate found in some parts of the country, this attrition still represents a significant loss to the K-12 system. The constant churn that schools experience makes it exceedingly difficult for staff to embark upon a coherent, multi-year improvement plan, as much of the expertise developed over the year walks out the door each spring. It also makes it difficult for parents and community members to form solid relationships with faculty, as the cast of characters changes frequently.

In addition to retaining teachers in the school and profession (Ingersoll, 2004), a high-quality induction program moves new teachers beyond survival to increasingly positive impacts on student learning (Villar, 2004), and integrates them into the professional communities in their schools and districts.

Washington's schools and districts must offer their new teachers a robust and comprehensive support/induction program so that these novices:

- develop into highly capable practitioners who positively impact student learning

- remain invested in the profession and in our public schools, and
- partner with veteran teachers in an integrated model of adult learning.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE INDUCTION PROGRAMS

A group of Washington educators met in 2005 to develop a set of standards for new teacher induction and guidelines for districts to consider when implementing them. The five standards are hiring, orientation, mentoring, professional development, and assessment for learning (see www.cstp-wa.org). Addressed in the five induction standards are nine conditions that must be in place to assure success:

A MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM

A second year of robust support has positive impacts on student learning for teachers who receive it (Fletcher, 2004). During this year, teachers consolidate classroom management practices and focus more on curriculum and instruction. They can then transition smoothly to the Professional Certification process in their third year.

MANDATORY PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

Not all districts choose to apply for the state funding. In some district programs, new teachers choose whether or not to participate. If we know that comprehensive and systematic early learning for teachers is critical, we must require districts to provide it and new teachers to participate in it.

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APPROPRIATE ASSIGNMENTS

Instead of receiving the most difficult students, the toughest course loads, the least desirable classrooms, inadequate materials, and extra-duty assignments, new teachers must be placed in situations appropriate to individuals just beginning their careers as teachers. This commitment begins during the hiring process and requires supportive actions on the part of district and building administrators, school faculty, and the local education association as the new teacher is welcomed into the classroom.

ORIENTATION

New teachers need a warm welcome, nuts-and-bolts information about the district and the school, and opportunities to work closely with their mentors to set up their classrooms and plan for the first weeks of school. Orientation should be thoughtfully planned to provide “just in time” learning that models excellent instruction.

MENTORS WHO UNDERSTAND SPECIFIC NEEDS OF NEW TEACHERS

We know the kinds of skills and attributes needed to work with new teachers, and must ensure that

these—not seniority nor convenience—determine who takes on the mentor role. Once selected, trained and matched, mentors must have time to observe and discuss lessons and examine student work with new teachers, help them plan, and model effective instructional practices. These activities can’t happen in a meaningful way by simply relying on time after school. Studies show that a ratio of one full-time mentor for 15-17 new teachers produces student learning gains, gains that are lost as the ratio rises (Fletcher, 2004).

The OSPI Mentor Academy provides high-quality professional development for mentors and many ESDs have monthly events that help meet immediate needs on the regional level. These mentor roundtables support their continuing growth in this challenging role, providing opportunities to discuss common issues, examine the latest research, and move their practice forward. Mentors also need opportunities to observe each other as they work with new teachers, so that they can provide helpful feedback on the complex skills involved.

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Using Video Annotation Software to Enhance the Mentoring and Professional Development of Teacher Candidates

by Matthew Miller, PhD, and Joanne Carney, PhD

... real classrooms cannot be stopped ... teaching and learning cannot be put on hold while intending teachers digest the prior ten minutes.

In Washington State there is widespread recognition that every child deserves an effective teacher.

In fact, the quality of the teaching a child receives has more of an impact on his or her achievement than any other factor (Johnson, Kahle, & Fargo, 2007; NCTAF, 2003). It is widely recognized that learning to teach is a challenging endeavor; it is necessary that new teachers receive quality feedback from more experienced mentors as they analyze

and “unpack” their own practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Such analysis enables new teachers to implement the ideas and “best practices” learned in their preparation programs in K-12 classrooms. How do we provide such opportunities for new teachers to engage in this continuing, situated work of learning from their own practice?

Traditionally, practicum experiences in classrooms have been the preferred mechanism to help new teachers connect theory to practice. Yet previous research has demonstrated that such early experiences in schools frequently overwhelm novices, who have difficulty processing the complexity of classroom events and fail to notice or correctly interpret significant occurrences (Cochran-Smith, 1991; McDiarmid, 1990; McDiarmid & Wasley, 2003; Miller, 2008). As Ball and Lampert (1998) note, “Raw experience can be the enemy of learn-

ing. Unlike books and films, real classrooms cannot be stopped ... teaching and learning cannot be put on hold while intending teachers digest the prior ten minutes.” (p. 174). Beginning teachers especially would benefit if they could revisit episodes of their classroom teaching, slow down the whirl of interactions, and hear the “in-the-moment” perspectives of more experienced mentors. This article will explain how a particular technology—video annotation software—may enable us to do just that.

RESEARCH WITH VIDEO ANNOTATION SOFTWARE

Funded by grants from Washington’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, we have done research at Western Washington University that involves preservice teachers, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, school-based literacy specialists, and university faculty in annotating teaching video of preservice teachers in elementary classrooms.

Video annotation software gives us a number of powerful new capabilities beyond video itself. The software allows the viewer to record a “commentary track” that follows the classroom action and captures his/her in-the-moment responses to what is being observed. A user can pause, rewind, and comment upon the action, using the mouse to point to particular people or actions that seem significant. Later, another viewer can view that annotation and lay down an additional layer of commentary.

We used two software applications to conduct our video annotation research: Video Traces (www.depts.washington.edu/pettt/projects/videotraces.html), which was developed by Dr. Reed Stevens from the University of Washington, and Snapz, a commercially-available desktop recording software developed by Ambrosia (www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapz-prox). While each has somewhat different functionality, both enable users to “mine” classroom episodes for enhanced teacher learning.

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THE AFFORDANCES OF VIDEO ANNOTATION SOFTWARE

Our investigation reveals that video annotation offers preservice teachers several affordances. It gives candidates access to a real artifact of practice vs. their recollections, which can often be fragmentary. The process also enables preservice teachers to distance themselves from the original teaching event as they view their teaching on the screen and think aloud about it. As they do so, they see through a lens, slow down the event, and filter the complexity of student-teacher interactions. In analyzing annotation transcripts, we see evidence that, in using the tool, teacher candidates attend more to the learning of individual students, make connections to what they have learned in teacher education, and reconsider both their own actions and the actions of students.

When a more experienced mentor adds a commentary track, the novice is likely to learn even more from a given episode of teaching. Our research shows that video annotation enables a mentor to do the following: (a) Provide interpretations of teaching/learning events when the candidate fails to do so, (b) Correct a candidate's misinterpretations, (c) Extend the candidate's interpretations to provide more specific feedback and to recommend particular content-specific "best practice" strategies or even script appropriate teacher moves.



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Table 1 features an excerpt illustrating these affordances. In it, a preservice candidate, "Scott," works with a struggling fifth-grade student, "Tyler," on a social studies project. We had invited Scott's National Board Certified cooperating teacher, "Mrs. Drummond," to view Scott's teaching videos twice—first *without* access to his annotation, and then *with* his annotative comments. When the cooperating teacher was given access to the candidate's thinking, her feedback was less general in nature, better targeted to the novice's learning needs, and more specific

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TABLE 1: VIDEO ANNOTATION EXCERPT

Scott (candidate)	Mrs. Drummond (cooperating teacher)
<p><i>So what I am doing here, is I am demonstrating something that Mrs. Drummond had done recently. She maybe even did it that day. I'm trying to model how a reader reads and takes notes at the same time through a think aloud. If I were to do this again with Tyler, I would bring the page closer to both of us and have it flat on the table is so we can both see what I'm reading.</i></p>	<p>I want to applaud you for showing yourself as a learner. When model reading through think aloud, make sure that you give the student a job to do and explicitly state the learning goal. So, "today while I am reading I want you to notice how I ..." or, "Today as I am reading I want you to be listening for ..." Give the student a job to do and make sure that they know that they are going to be responsible for telling you about their learning afterwards. That will keep them focused more on your learning goal.</p> <p>Make sure in your own mind that you have that very clear, "What is your goal for the lesson?" When we are setting goals for lessons, as you and I talked about, we need to talk with students about setting a goal and making it really explicit. The learning goal about how to navigate a complex text is not being made clear to Tyler and as I see right now, Tyler is looking down and there's a lack of engagement.</p>

Increasing National Board Certified Teachers in Challenging Schools: Evidence about Key School and District Supports

by Hilary Loeb, PhD

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) National Board (NB) Certification¹ has gained attention as a strategy for instructional improvement both nationally and in Washington. Established in 1987, the NBPTS characterizes participation in the voluntary performance-based assessment program as a means

“... to recognize and reward great teachers—and make them better” (NBPTS 2007a, p. 8). More than an estimated \$637 million has been allocated to the NBPTS reform effort, noting it “... is arguably the most significant national development in teacher policy in the last fifteen years” (Goldhaber, 2006, p. 373). Almost every state and more than 25% of the nation’s school districts have made sizable investments in NB Certification (NBPTS, 2007b). Ranking fifth in the number of new National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in 2007, Washington represents one such supportive context. The number of NBCTs in the state expanded to 1,792 in 2007 (NBPTS, 2007a), or three percent of the state’s teaching force. A key recent reform is that, beginning in 2007-2008, NBCTs’ stipends above their salary increased from \$3,500 to \$5,000. Teachers with the NB Certificate in “challenging” (OSPI, 2008, p. 1) schools receive \$10,000. These incentives are getting the attention of teachers in high-needs contexts. Close to one third (31%) of the candidate pool is comprised of teachers in challenging schools (M. Miller, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This article draws from research exploring the conditions of teaching for NBCTs in Washington’s high-needs schools. Beginning in 2005, the author analyzed six surveys developed by a team of researchers at the University of Washington Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, comparing responses of NBCTs with the general population of teachers in Washington. This led to in-depth interviews of 12 NBCTs working in rural and urban school districts across the state. While the criterion for participation in the study was employment of a school serving at least 30% students of color, all but one worked in buildings with at least 40% students of color. The majority worked in schools in which more than half of the students received FRPL, and five would meet the OSPI criteria for serving in a challenging school. Interview topics included a range of facets of teachers’ work related to meeting the needs of low-income and racially, ethnically, and linguistically marginalized students. These included the perceived effects of the NBCT process, teachers’ professional histories as educators, teacher-leadership activities, culturally responsive instructional practices, and state policy supports for student learning.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO GROW NBCTS IN CHALLENGING SCHOOLS

Implicit in the design of Washington’s current NB Certification incentive system is the hope that an increase of NBCTs in challenging schools will improve student learning for children living in poverty. This addresses evidence that indicates that NBCTs were less likely to be serving in schools with larger numbers of children in poverty and students of color (Loeb, Elfers, Plecki, Ford & Knapp, 2006). Such a system responds to evidence that underserved student populations generally attend schools with less experienced and less qualified teachers (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). As the NBCT bonuses have caught the attention of Washington’s teachers,

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it will be necessary to implement school and district supports that facilitate teachers' professional growth during and after their pursuit of an NB Certificate.

Evidence from my recent study indicated that supports should be differentiated to meet the needs of teachers in more challenging settings. I interviewed 12 NBCTs working in high-needs schools throughout Washington about the ways NB Certification contributed to their work with students historically underserved in public schools. These teachers provided insights about the types of supports that had been meaningful during their NB candidacy and subsequent to their NBCT status. They also described steps that school and district leaders may take that could help teachers navigate through the NB Certification process. This issue of the *Washington State Kappan* addresses the question: What makes a great teacher? I learned through this research that key relationships may enhance the NB endeavor. Principals and district leaders may foster collaborative structures among NB candidates and NBCTs. These, in turn, can cultivate communities of practice with strong norms about reflection on student progress. While the study focused on NBCTs in high-needs schools, I suspect this would also be the case in more affluent contexts.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME AND RESOURCES

A striking aspect of my conversations was the wide range of school district approaches to supporting NB candidates. Study participants named varied types of assistance, including stipends, computer and video technology, and leadership networks. I learned that access to the videotaping equipment and related assistance required for developing the portfolio was not universally available. While some districts made dedicated investments, others lacked a program to encourage or support NB candidates.

As the NB Certification process is labor intensive, a related theme was that NBCTs greatly valued release time for assembling their portfolios or other preparations related to NB Certification. One teacher in a supportive district told me that she had six paid days to prepare her portfolio. She also noted that this district was considering a dedicated role for supporting NBCTs, elaborating:

GREAT EDUCATORS ARE CULTIVATED THROUGH THE NB CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The NBPTS stewards its mission "... to advance the quality of teaching and learning ..." by:

- Maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,
- Providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and
- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers' (NBPTS, 2006, p. 2).

Scholarship about NB Certification addresses these objectives, showing that successful participation in the teacher assessment can influence the practice of NBCTs inside the classroom (Lustick & Sykes, 2006; Place & Coskie, 2006) and is associated with student gains on state standardized tests above and beyond those without the certificate (Hakel, Koenig, & Elliott, 2008). Emerging evidence suggests this may be especially the case for students in high-needs contexts (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). Reports on NB Certification highlighted the rigor of the professional learning experience and the value of the NBPTS support group in this endeavor.

... if our Director of Teaching and Learning or someone from our Student Learning Office came and filmed a teacher doing National Board work and then watched the film with them and had a reflective conversation, it would help that district person get a much better read on what's really going on in the classroom and in the minds of teachers (interview, June 13, 2006).

A key lesson of this study was the value of school and district acknowledgement of the investment of time NB candidates dedicate to this effort, and how this time could aid in cultivating supportive relationships among teachers.

MOVING TO CHALLENGING SCHOOLS VS. HOMEGROWN APPROACHES

Another finding supporting specialized supports in challenging schools was that NBCTs doubted their colleagues in more affluent contexts would be likely to move to higher-needs schools following NB Certification. One teacher articulated:

I think NBCTs have an awful lot to bring to children of diverse backgrounds and poverty. I think their cohesiveness in their teaching, the flow that I think they have that would help in the classroom that is already fragmented by a lot of different barriers. And so I'm wondering if the financial incentive would be attractive enough. In my community I don't know that very many people would switch for \$5,000 or \$10,000. People who are in those schools like their schools, they have a strong collegiality, they have strong leadership (interview, June 24, 2006).

The study participants' skepticism may be associated with the pride that they took in the roles that they deliberately cultivated as instructional leaders; they suspected that these roles would be difficult to duplicate in a new setting. These were as varied as providing professional development, chairing school programs, and leading community groups. In certain cases, NBCTs expressed frustration when their districts did not reach out to them to take on these responsibilities. This and other research (Frank et al., 2008; Loeb et al., 2006) suggests that NBCTs may be better tapped to make contributions in schools and districts.

POSSIBLE SUPPORTS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

Five of the NBCTs in the study told me that they retook part of the NB assessment. They generally characterized this experience in a positive light, noting that the retake process prompted further reflection about portfolio entries. Nonetheless, they noted that the second year of the process lacked the level of support they received during their first attempt. While retaking the NB assessment is generally not within the scope of school or district systems, it should remain on the radar screen of school leaders who may

not be aware that NB Certification can be a multi-year process.

NBCTs with the Exceptional Needs and English as a New Language Certificate articulated the value of specialized supports during and after the project. This makes sense as the demands associated with serving students with special learning needs may be best understood by colleagues with shared roles. The study participants serving English Language learners noted that the network of NBCTs serving these students was especially valuable, as they often felt isolated in their work.

CONCLUSION

Washington is in the midst of a "natural experiment" in which teachers are pursuing NB Certification in greater numbers. What is yet to be understood is the role that incentives and supports will play in the growth of the NBCT workforce in challenging contexts, and the impact of increasing accomplished teaching in these buildings. These interviews illustrate that certain supports may be key to teachers' success during and after NB Certification. By further exploring the experiences of NBCTs and those pursuing the certificate in challenging schools, we may understand more about the most important mechanisms for teachers in these schools to successfully navigate the advanced teacher assessment. This knowledge will inform efforts to refine policies and programs to target accomplished teaching in high-needs schools.

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ENDNOTES

1. For more information about the NBPTS, or Washington's NB support systems that include collaborations among OSPI, the Washington Education Association, universities, and school districts, please visit www.nbpts.org or www.k12.wa.us/certification/NBPTS/. The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, www.cstp-wa.org/ provides NBCTs and other teachers the opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to policy decisions.

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Hiring Effective Teachers: What the Research Doesn't Tell Us

by Linda Martin, EdD

Research is increasingly clear that teachers have a greater effect on student achievement than any other single factor within the school environment (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 1998; Sanders & Horn, 1998). In fact, the authors of one statewide longitudinal mathematics study concluded that students in classrooms taught by teachers who were rated in the top quintile for a period of three consecutive years scored up to 54 percentile points higher than their counterparts who were taught for three consecutive years by teachers in the lowest quintile, even though the students had the same achievement rates prior to the study (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Another study found that “a good teacher will get a gain of one and a half grade-level equivalents, whereas a bad teacher will get a gain of only half a year for a single academic year” (Hanushek, 2002, p. 3). In fact, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) concluded that of all of the school-related factors that may impact student learning, teacher quality is the most important.

It is essential that a school district hire the right teachers. By some estimates, one teacher may impact 6,000 students over the course of his or her career. In addition, hiring a teacher represents a significant long-term educational investment. By one estimate, the decision to hire one teacher represents an investment of 1.7 million dollars over the course of a 30-year career, and this estimate does not include costs such as health care, retirement, administration, or professional development (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2003). Therefore, it is absolutely critical that a district's hiring practices be subject to the most careful scrutiny in order that only the very best teacher candidates are offered positions in the district.

What is an effective teacher? It is not difficult to recognize an effective teacher by watching that person teach. However, few administrators have the opportunity to observe a teacher in a classroom setting prior to making a hiring decision. Therefore, thoughtful administrators often look to the body of

research to help them make informed hiring decisions. This article will briefly summarize the research on the attributes of effective teachers.

TEACHER EXPERIENCE

Teacher experience is one topic relative to teacher effectiveness that is fairly easy to measure and it is included in many studies. In most school districts, teachers are paid a differential salary based on their years of experience. The underlying assumption behind this pay structure has always been that a more experienced teacher is a more effective teacher. According to the research, that assumption is only partially correct. One meta-analysis of 109 studies found that in only 40 of the studies was teacher experience significantly related to student achievement (Hanushek, 1986).

Another very large study which examined three cohorts of student test scores with more than one-half million students concluded that there is a large variation in teacher quality regardless of teacher experience, although the authors state, “the results for teacher experience generally support the notion that beginning teachers and to a lesser extent second and third year teachers in mathematics perform significantly worse than more experienced teachers” (Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005, p. 447). In short, one could not be confident that hiring a teacher based on experience alone would necessarily be predictive of that teacher's effectiveness.

DEGREES AND COURSEWORK

If a teacher's level of experience is a relatively weak indicator of his or her effectiveness, it may not be surprising to note that the data about the related topic of degrees and coursework is equally murky (Podursky, 2005; Wilson & Floden, 2003).

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One study concluded that “teachers with master’s degrees are no more effective than those with bachelor’s degrees” (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1996, p. 512). Other researchers, such as Linda Darling-Hammond (2000), have reached the opposite conclusion in the highly political setting of education and public policy. While there may be context-specific instances when subject matter preparation may help to predict teacher quality, there does not appear to be sufficient evidence for us to rely on these factors as we search for the best teachers.

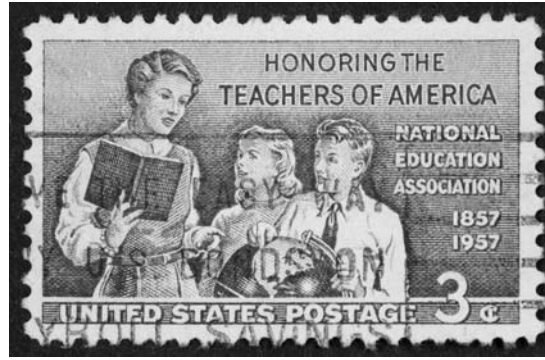
KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER

This leads us to the third measure that researchers have explored in the quest to identify quality teachers: content knowledge. Like degrees and coursework, subject matter knowledge is sometimes viewed as a proxy for a teacher’s intelligence (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Wilson & Floden, 2003). Several studies have linked content knowledge in secondary mathematics or science with increased student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1996; Monk, 1994; Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002).

An unexpected teacher characteristic related to content knowledge has arisen from a number of studies. There does appear to be some evidence that there is a correlation between a teacher’s verbal ability and his or her impact on student achievement (Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Hanushek, 1971). It makes sense that the ability to communicate clearly would be a great advantage to any teacher. One might also theorize that verbal ability may signal a high cognitive ability. However, some researchers caution that this is an area that needs more study (Wayne & Youngs, 2003; Wilson & Floden, 2003).

CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

The fourth category of research related to teacher quality is certification and licensure. This is a politically charged topic because a number of states have begun hiring teachers who hold no educational certification. In addition, certification requirements vary



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from state to state, making it difficult to link teacher certification with student achievement. Nevertheless, newer studies do seem to bear out the positive effect that National Board Certified teachers have on their students’ achievement, when compared to teachers without that certification

(Bond, Smith, Baker & Hattie, 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004). Minus the evidence in favor of hiring a National Board Certified teacher, the remainder of the evidence indicates the need for more study.

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

Pedagogical training is the fifth factor thought to be an indicator of an effective teacher. When interviewing a teacher candidate, the interviewer may have the assurance that the candidate is experienced, has the necessary subject matter degree, and that the teacher possesses a valid certification. The question in an interviewer’s mind, however, is whether or not the person sitting before him/her can actually teach.

One study authored by Darling-Hammond, Berry, and Thoreson (2001) used a regression analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS, 1988) to examine various teacher effectiveness variables, including pedagogical training. The authors concluded that teachers with pedagogical training produced somewhat greater student achievement than those who do not have training. Another study of recently graduated secondary teachers concluded that the grades that a teacher obtained for his/her coursework in pedagogy were the strongest predictor of teacher performance in the areas examined in the study (Ferguson & Womak, 1993). However, other studies have concluded that there is not enough evidence to determine that a teacher’s pedagogical training will predict his or her effectiveness in increasing student achievement (Wilson & Floden, 2003; Chaney, 1995). Interestingly, there is some evidence that pedagogical training increases teachers’ sense of efficacy, which in turn impacts their certainty about remaining in the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002).

SUMMARY

Despite the fact that thousands of studies have investigated the qualities of effective teachers and that there is a growing body of research about the classroom behaviors of effective teachers (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001), an administrator looking to make a hiring decision may not find too much enlightenment from the literature. Perhaps the one thing that can be gleaned from these studies is that a teacher candidate with strong verbal skills may merit further consideration in the hiring process.

A NEW DIRECTION

Although decades of research have failed to shed much light on this important subject, hope and a fresh perspective are emerging primarily from practitioners tasked with the job of hiring effective teachers. Many school districts have purchased commercially developed hiring instruments or they have created their own questionnaires which are designed to identify a teacher's personal traits and skills. These instruments ask questions related to a teacher's purpose and his or her ability to build relationships. Questions about teaching skill are focused on such things as instructional flexibility and the ability to motivate students. Although these instruments lack empirical data to support their use, promising studies with similar themes are also beginning to emerge in the literature (Becker, Kennedy, & Hundesmarck, 2003; Metzger, 2005). This new focus represents a significant shift away from the attributes that researchers have typically studied, and may be the first critical step in giving educators the tools that are necessary to make informed hiring decisions. Given the tremendous effect that a teacher can have on student achievement, it is no exaggeration to state that our students' futures may rest in our ability to go deeper than the current research literature in order to learn which specific characteristics, qualities, and skills to assess in a teacher job interview.

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C x C x C = C³:

An Equation for Classroom Teacher Effectiveness

by Judith Stell-Lemmel and Jason W. Smith

The real success of our schools is created in the classroom and teachers are the ones that make it happen. The best professional learning models, including embedded collaboration and tiered structures, don't have the significant impact on student learning that the classroom teacher provides daily. The teacher is at the center of what "makes or breaks" a child's desire to learn, which is at the heart of their success in school.

As instructional leaders that spend time in elementary classrooms on a regular basis, it is evident that teachers with the highest performing students are a "triple threat." A triple threat teacher faithfully implements the three Cs—clarity, consistency, and caring. He or she creates a classroom with clear expectations, consistent routines, and a culture of caring. Students thrive when they know exactly what they're supposed to do, how to accomplish the task, and that their teacher cares about their success.

CLARITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Clarity is essential to the learning and teaching process of the effective teacher. When observing ineffective teaching, we see daily examples of students who aren't engaged due to a lack of clarity in lesson design or implementation. These students have no idea what to do. They don't experience success because expectations change and there is a lack of consistency. They are not motivated because they feel that no one cares; someone has to care deeply before students invest themselves. Clarity of instruction, consistent behavior expectations, embedded routines and practices, and caring through personal investment in each child provide the foundation for high

achievement and active participation at school.

High-performing teachers *grow* high-achieving students. They make learning expectations transparent for students, so students don't suffer with constantly moving learning targets. Students know what they need to do and can share their learning at the end of the lesson. A teacher who provides standards-based instruction goes above and beyond using the grade level expectations as a catalyst for lesson development. Instead, they clearly articulate in student-friendly language what a student must do to meet grade level standards. Stronge (2007) states, "A teacher's ability to give clear and focused explanations to students and to clarify expectations for academic achievement is an important aspect of effective instructional delivery" (p. 71).

In Washington State, the tools that drive achievement are: (a) a clear focus on the performance expectation (PE) or grade level expectation (GLE), (b) identifying the critical learning, and (c) the activities that help students process and apply the skill. The teacher defines the skill and teaches it concisely, allowing students to make meaning from their processing. Schmoker (2006) refers to clearly defined learning objectives as one of the most basic elements of an effective lesson. For lessons to be clearly defined, students must understand what they are working toward and the steps they must take to get there. The teacher facilitates student learning and engages them in the process of identifying *why the learning is important* and *how they will use it in the future*.

In the Federal Way School District, the newly formed Teaching for Learning Department is relentlessly pursuing K-12 clarity and alignment. Clear learning targets are displayed using a tool known as the "snapshot." Every classroom or learning space has a visual representation of what the student is expected to know, how to demonstrate the learning, and why it is important. Schools use a variety of ways to display those expectations visually. Some elementary schools use a GLE focus grid that is posted in every

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Elementary Snapshot
The elementary “snapshot” is a visual representation of the current GLE on which students are working in different core content areas. It changes when a new GLE is introduced.
Elementary Example
<p>LIST</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do I need to know (GLE)? 2. Why is it important? 3. How do I show what I know?

Secondary Snapshot
The intermediate “snapshot” is on the board or overhead when the students enter class. The snapshot changes daily or at the end of the lesson.
Secondary Example
<p>LIST</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GLE 2. Strategies/Activities 3. Know & Show 4. Homework

FOCUS GRID			
	What I need to know (GLE or PE)	How I will show It	Why it is important
Reading			
Math			
<i>The grid can be either horizontal or vertical, but each school should strive for K-5 alignment.</i>			

FOCUS GRID			
GLE	Strategies/Activities	Show/Know	Homework
Reading			
Math			
Science			
Social Studies			

	GLE Focus	In order to meet standard, I must...	This learning is important because...
Reading			
Math			

K-5 classroom to ensure clarity of instructional targets for students. Others post the target on charts or posters in different learning areas. Middle and high schools use a similar posted “snapshot” that includes the daily homework that is linked to the GLE.

This is an example of providing clear expectations for student learning. It is equally important to provide clarity regarding expectations for behavior in the classroom. Without established routines that are intentionally taught, retaught, and practiced, students do not learn to self-monitor or hold their peers accountable. It’s the teacher’s role to develop clear parameters for a productive learning environment that allows opportunity for intervention support with individuals or small groups. Without the intentional teaching and practice of behavioral expectations, the teacher is busy monitoring student behavior rather than providing quality, individualized instruction.

CONSISTENCY OF PRACTICES AND CLASSROOM ROUTINES

While clarity of expectations lays the foundation, it is the consistent reinforcement of the expectations that leads students to higher levels of achievement. Faithful replication of quality teaching and learning each hour of every day moves students along the continuum to meet or exceed standards. The teacher who is consistent in the use of best practices bell-to-bell is the practitioner with all or most of his/her students meeting standards.

Consistency is as important as transparency. When the teacher’s expectations for high performance and rigor stay the same each day, students become quality producers. When they internalize the expectations, a high level of performance becomes the norm.

Just as quality instruction must be replicated faithfully, intervention is built into the structure of

every day. Providing immediate correctives, relevant feedback, and motivation to improve work keeps the quality teacher busy but effective. The goal is to build a blended classroom model in which ELL, special education, and general education students improve. This happens through consistent provision of (a) tiered intervention, (b) formative assessment that informs and drives instruction, and (c) an intentional focus on reteaching. The effective teacher takes responsibility for the learning of all students and guides support staff in providing additional aligned intervention. Consistent procedures, routines, and expectations allow the teacher to focus on providing quality instruction and to maximize instructional time.



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CARING THROUGH PERSONAL INVESTMENT IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS

“Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” is a well-known phrase that puts everything a teacher does (or doesn’t do) in perspective. A caring teacher whose passion includes successful learning for all students is most effective. Personal connections must be as clear and consistent as quality instruction. Relationships, trust, and rapport are built through daily words and actions. A quality teacher understands each student and consistently communicates caring in ways that the child hears, feels, and experiences. The teacher takes a personal interest in each child and shares his or her hopes for their immediate and future success.

“Effective teachers care about their students and demonstrate that they care in such a way that their students are aware of it ...” (Stronge, 2007, p. 23). Relentless caring is expressed through daily accountability, a willingness to do whatever it takes to help

every child learn, and positive, encouraging communication. Showing caring goes above and beyond sympathizing and developing a relationship. “Being a caring and supportive teacher does not mean coddling; rather, it means holding students accountable while providing the support they need to succeed” (Stipek, 2006, p. 47).

The teacher shows respect for the child, the family, and their environment by focusing on success in the classroom. When children walk through the door, they are expected to respect the norms for vigorous learning, exemplary behavior, and academic excellence. Even when a student demonstrates a behavior outside the clearly articulated expectations, an effective teacher is a “warm demander.” “Warm demanders approach students, particularly those whose behavior causes trouble in the classroom, with unconditional positive regard, a genuine caring in spite of what that student might do or say” (Bondy & Ross, 2008, p. 55). On the rare occasion when redirection is necessary, the teacher honors the integrity of the child and makes the corrections privately. It is not enough to say the words; the teacher *believes* that every child can meet or exceed standards. “At the heart of *unconditional positive regard* is a belief in the individual’s capacity to succeed” (Bondy & Ross, 2008, p. 55).

CONCLUSION

The three Cs teacher consistently shows unconditional love but does not lower expectations for academics or behavior. Accountability comes with responsibility: the child’s responsibility to learn and the teacher’s accountability to be clear, consistent, and caring. When kids talk about their favorite educators, they recall an incident where the teacher stepped out of the traditional role to help, listen, guide, or give. Clarity, consistency, caring—the three Cs define the exceptional teacher.

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BOOK REVIEWS

What Great Teachers Do Differently: 14 Things That Matter Most

Reviewed by John W. Armenia, PhD

What are the specific qualities and practices of great teachers that elevate them above the rest? In this book, Whitaker draws on his background as a parent, secondary teacher, high school principal, and Professor of Education at Indiana State University to share his views on what the most effective teachers do differently than their colleagues. After reading this book, every reader will have reflected in depth about what great educators do differently, why they are effective, and how to select and develop great teachers for today's classrooms.

Whitaker answers these essential questions: Do high expectations for students matter? How do great teachers respond when students misbehave? Do great teachers filter differently than their peers? How do great teachers approach high stakes testing? Why is it people, not programs, that create great schools?

What Great Teachers Do Differently is a practical resource for new and experienced teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators who are examining what great teachers do that sets them apart from others. It focuses on the beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and commitments that positively impact teaching and learning in our classrooms and our schools. It is not a book comprised of hard scientific data, detailed assessment rubrics, or esoteric theories. Rather, it is a book that clearly and concisely informs the reader about what it is that our most effective teachers do on a daily basis. Put simply, it is a book that teachers can use—and use immediately.

Accompanying this 144-page book is a study guide organized into five parts, with the acronym **USE IT** in mind, as follows:

- Understanding Key Concepts;
- Selecting Questions for Discussion;
- Eliciting Journal Responses;
- Interacting With Others; and
- Taking It Back.

Key Concepts: Great teachers do not use sarcasm, yell at students, or argue with students in front of other students. Teachers must self-reflect on who they are and what they must do in order to improve their practice.

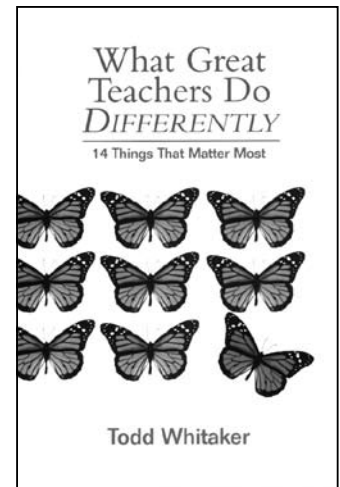
There are really only two ways to improve any school: get better teachers and improve the teachers already there. No program inherently leads to school improvement. It is the people who implement sound programs and determine the success of the school. Programs are never the solution, and they are never the problem.

What matters most is not what teachers do. We may have been taught to “teach to the middle,” where the majority of the students cluster. However, as long as we teach to the middle, that is where the majority of our students will remain.

Great teachers take a different approach. Great teachers aim high. Great teachers make decisions following three simple guidelines:

1. What is the purpose?
2. Will this actually accomplish the purpose?
3. What will the best people think?

Writing Style and Voice: This book is easy to read and can be used in professional development activities that engage teachers and administrators in studying teacher attitudes, goals, decisions, and practices. Teacher motivation, teacher leadership, principal effectiveness, and powerful teaching and learning are



What Great Teachers Do Differently: 14 Things That Matter Most. Todd Whitaker, (2004). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education. ISBN 1-930556-69-1

continues on page 32

Reviving the Soul of Teaching

Reviewed by Debra Rose Howell, NBCT

It is a welcome sight to find this very timely and important book that focuses on redirecting and reconfirming the essence of what truly is important in the educational field: Why did I become a teacher? In light of the negative ramifications of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the authors truly bring forth the topic in this stimulating and compact book. The

frustrations of the narrow focus of NCLB and how this directly molds the uniform standards and testing that we are constantly struggling with is illustrated in a way I have not seen in other educational books. The wisdom of the two authors permeates with their depth of experience and knowledge of the calling of teaching. The chapters are laid out for the open discussion of a staff of teachers, or group of administrators, to facilitate the much-needed discussions about why teachers are becoming more and more frustrated, and why we are losing so many of our finest

in the early years of their teaching career.

As the authors so clearly state, “The delicate balance between tangible outcomes and subtle influences has tipped and we need to reinvigorate the heart and soul of teaching.” This is the heart of the book which is dissected and dealt with in a very upfront and important manner.

This book is written for all educators, new and experienced; for administrators and classroom teachers who are struggling day to day with how to fix the current problems that turn many of the finest educators away from public education. The authors try to redirect our attention to what truly makes a high quality, effective teacher. In addition, the reminders of just how vital the role of the classroom teacher can

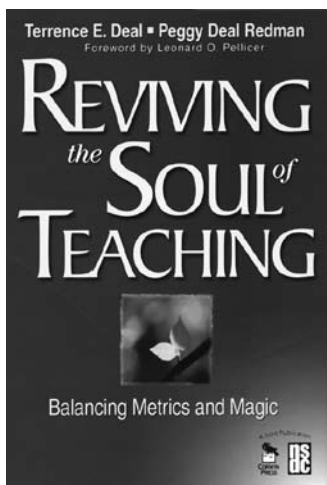
be in the life of an individual and how our schools (much like many companies) have drifted away from what is truly important, are powerfully discussed. The book is threaded with short classroom teacher experiences as well as important findings by prolific educational writers such as Roland Barth and Frank McCourt.

The book consists of eight chapters that each begin with an introduction that gives a solid background to teaching of the past and how we have gotten to the state of education today. It begins with a discussion of such companies as Starbucks and Saturn and how they compare to public education in the United States. It then moves to how teachers make a difference, the changes in school reform, how to be an authentic teacher, and how the magical side of teaching has eroded. It concludes with a discussion on how we as educators can chart a new course and turn things around. The cost of not acting has very negative implications for the United States if we do not revive that magic.

This conversation is needed in all our schools, administrative meetings, and at the state and local level. I envision this book starting some much-needed discussions beyond the frustrated and often times misguided complaints in staff rooms and teacher work rooms. Bringing this discussion to the forefront can bring about a change—a change we cannot afford not to make.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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Reviving the Soul of Teaching.
Terrence E. Deal and Peggy Deal Redman. Corwin Press.
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TEACHING to Capture and Inspire All Learners: Bringing Your Best Stuff Every Day!

Reviewed by J. Yates

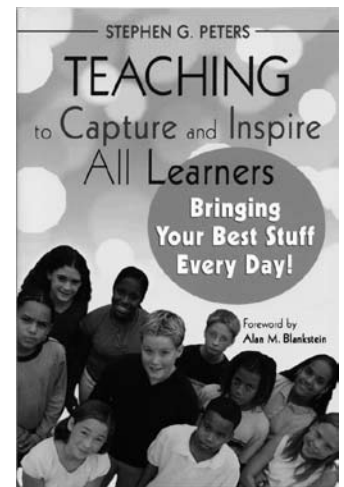
Inspiring all learners and understanding that all students deserve the best from every teacher every day is the entire premise of this book. In Peters' own words, this book evolved from his personal experience working within "schools that were first in categories one would want to be last in, and last in categories they would want to be first in" (Peters, xii). Peters draws on his experiences as a current and past teacher, principal, director, and CEO to share insight and ideas in how to change desperate situations into highly functioning, desired and respected schools. He acknowledges that all plans can be done in time, but in our current state of urgency, meaningful transformations within short periods of time can and will happen when the right leadership, relationships, and collaboration are crafted. This book is meant to motivate and inspire school leaders and administrators, while offering some practical ideas, strategies, and suggestions to begin this specific process of change.

In this book, Peters is quick to note that although school clientele and issues have dramatically changed in the last decades, understanding the difference and moving forward is the only direction we have. Finding, creating, and coaching both teachers and students to move collaboratively toward a truly shared and common vision is the key. Offering excellent education includes: empowering and training good teachers to become great advocates for all students; requiring "best teaching" daily without excuse; and shaping commitments of mutual respect and restored hope. Peters' passion and dedication certainly drive this book; even the phrase "ALL learners" has ALL always capitalized.

All in all, it is a short book at 102 pages, written in a style very easy to read. All eight chapters are designed and formatted in similar fashion: each begins with a statistic or quote; followed by a list of chapter objectives; sections addressing each objective; figures and reflective questions probing personal philosophies; and an ending summary which both

summarizes and leads the need for the next chapter. Peters' writing easily flows with each point building upon the one prior, while each chapter stands fairly independent in addressing the objectives within it. The intentional formatting of the text makes it easy to navigate, re-reference, and move through without much concern for reading deeper or stopping to apply and practice theories before moving on. Chapters 1-5 are especially written with school leaders, principals, and administrators in mind, focusing directly on the change process, expansion of roles, interpreting data results, teaching and learning styles, and core collaborative values. Chapters 6-8 target teachers and school leaders in their specific relationships, knowledge, and operational strategies used with students.

Peters carefully references many sources, most being current within the last ten years. Overall, he offers a great motivational read, with some practical suggestions and tips in helping to shape and begin the change process, offering examples from personal experiences. This book does not offer specifics with guideposts to monitor, nor are there alternatives and suggestions stated for those who try to embark on this process, but find the challenges overwhelming. This book is simply to inspire and motivate leaders to have and share hope for ALL learners everywhere.



Teaching to Capture and Inspire All Learners. Stephen G. Peters. Corwin Press. ISBN 978-1-4129-5874-5

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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TEACHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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rience. As a result, he formed a deep connection with his students.

He had an unfailing sense of humor and an ability to laugh at himself. All too often, great intelligence isn't matched in equal parts with conviction and humility but in Bob's case, these three attributes found a wonderful marriage and the twinkle in his eye revealed a genuine human being who was living life to the fullest.

When challenged, Bob stuck to his principles but did so with grace, affirming the conviction of the person who was challenging him. He wasn't a man to hold grudges, or play favorites. He treated others as he would want to be treated. The development of the Pacific Rim program was a study in perseverance in the face of long odds. He was convinced he could light a fire under students by exposing them to a broader world, and this proved to be true. For the hundred or so students who traveled with him to far reaches of the globe, climbing in the Himalayas, planting rice in Thailand, conversing with Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, and studying the art and architecture of Japan, whole new vistas were opened. The world was a smaller, more personal place and to those who traveled with Bob, hearing subsequent news reports of events throughout Southeast Asia brought back not only memories of those exotic places but a sense of connection with the people and their traditions.

I recall vividly the impact that Bob Albertson and the Pacific Rim experience had on my academic career. After my academic year abroad, I returned to the college campus a more focused, more mature student with higher aspirations. It was a turning point in my life when I made the leap from just showing up for class to attacking my studies with vigor and dedication.

Bob's retired now, but he remains a trusted friend and mentor to hundreds of students. His positive approach to life and learning sets a wonderful example of how a person can get the most out of this short time we have on earth. It's a lesson worth remembering.

STUDENT VOICES

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- Help me discover what I need and show me how to learn.
- Let me learn outside of the classroom more often.
- Offer me new and different ways of learning.
- Be fair.
- Keep an open mind about me and my community.
- Be happy when you are in the classroom.
- Let me make more choices.

If teachers put this simple student-invented checklist into action each day, students will know their voices have been heard, providing them with a new and continued hope which is:

“... the singular gift
we cannot destroy ...
the genius that invents the future ...”
(Mueller, 1996, p. 103).

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MORE SWIMMING, LESS SINKING

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ONGOING, TIMELY
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the key factors in teacher retention is the school's professional culture (Johnson, 2004). Novice teachers are most likely to stay in schools that recognize the unique needs and potential contributions of new teachers. Welcoming workplaces move beyond one-on-one mentoring to integrate new teachers into professional learning communities that connect them to the school and provide them opportunities to learn from colleagues of all levels of experience.

As the school year unfolds, new teachers need just-in-time assistance with classroom management, parent conferences and communications, report cards, and state tests. This support can happen at the school or district level. In either case, novices need to connect with colleagues who are experiencing similar challenges.

STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT
OF NEW TEACHER PRACTICE

New teachers benefit when districts develop formative assessment systems designed to improve teaching practice. When clearly articulated teaching standards are in place, the new teacher and mentor can use them to continually assess instructional practice. Evidence of student learning provides the foundation for discussion and reflection. With guidance, new teachers determine the strengths and challenges in their teaching and make adjustments accordingly. Using the Professional Certification standards as a benchmark, mentors can help to put together the mosaic of resources necessary to help a new teacher fill in the gaps in their practice.

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY AT THE
SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVEL

At the district office and at each school, someone must own responsibility for new teacher induction, ensuring that each new teacher is receiving appropriate assistance, becoming integrated into the professional work of the school and district, and that all the elements of the program are in place and coordinated with each other.

Districts in rural and remote areas need additional, regional assistance. Administrators often wear too many hats and may have limited capacity to plan an induction program. A district may not have someone with content expertise in certain subject areas, e.g. science, to serve as the mentor. Assistance might range from support for a consortium of districts for orientation/professional development purposes to appropriations for regional mentors who serve new teachers in several districts.

CONCLUSION

It has been ten years since the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future issued its groundbreaking report on the current conditions and critical needs of our system of recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers. While significant, positive changes have taken place in Washington, we must do more to ensure that new teachers in every school across the state can swim upstream in the churning waters of the teaching profession.

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USING VIDEO ANNOTATION SOFTWARE

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ic in recommending pedagogical strategies. Notice how the novice’s annotation enables the expert to target her comments appropriately—correcting and extending Scott’s interpretations of the event.

Here, Mrs. Drummond first validates Scott’s intention to use a think-aloud strategy to model the gathering of textual information, but extends his somewhat superficial (yet still important) annotation that he should bring the page closer to the student. Mrs. Drummond suggests that Scott has not made the learning goals explicit to his student—perhaps not realizing their importance for student engagement. She extends this novice’s understanding with specific strategies for engaging student interest and enhancing learning—actually scripting and thinking aloud the manner in which a teacher might communicate learning goals to a student.

Throughout our data, it is clear that giving mentors access to novices’ thinking is important. As we continue to study the implications of the technology, it appears that video annotation software has the potential to enhance the professional development of preservice teachers—making them more effective educators. As we prepare the next generation of great teachers, it is crucial that those who mentor them—college faculty, clinical supervisors, and classroom

teachers—continue to expand their repertoires with such new technologies and methods that help novices develop the practices that will ensure the learning of all our students.

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WHAT GREAT TEACHERS DO DIFFERENTLY

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the foci of each chapter and verse. Throughout the book, Whitaker insists on the importance of treating every person with respect and dignity, every day, and at all times.

To observe Whitaker’s style and voice, I have selected this excerpt from the book:

“As a principal, I often felt very much like a business manager, responsible for making decisions, setting policies, getting things done. Inevitably, some employees gripe and complain, others drag their feet, and the top performers embrace change. The challenge for the manager is to focus on the ones who do their jobs well.”

In this book, Whitaker convinces us that a great teacher seeks learning opportunities frequently, is a reflective practitioner, and must intentionally be developed, coached, nurtured, rewarded, and used as a teacher of other teachers.

What Great Teachers Do Differently is a must read for anyone who wants to become an effective teacher and develop great teachers. It is insightful, authentic, and truly resonates as a professional development resource.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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INCREASING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN CHALLENGING SCHOOLS

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Call for Article Submissions

THE WASHINGTON STATE KAPPAN,

a journal for research, leadership, and practice

SPRING 2009 ISSUE THEME — **SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION: WHAT WE CAN LEARN**

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION — **MARCH 1, 2009**

The spring issue will examine Washington State's Schools of Distinction. We will examine what we can learn from these schools who have been recognized for demonstrating consistent achievement over time. Send proposals to and obtain additional author guidelines from the editor, MaryLynne.Derrington@wwu.edu. All papers will be subject to peer review and evaluated for connections to the theme, uniqueness of the contribution to the field, applicability to Washington State educators, and adherence to manuscript guidelines.

Awards Dinner and Nominations for Great Teachers

Registration and Nomination Forms at www.pdkwa.org

JANUARY 8, 2009 AWARDS DINNER

Our Awards Dinner will be held concurrently with the OSPI Conference in Seattle. You will find the evening an inspiring and valued professional experience. Our awards and program will focus on answering the following questions: *What makes a great teacher? What is in the portfolio of a great teacher? How does the great teacher create a community of highly motivated and engaged learners? Who are these teachers? Where are these schools?*

Therefore, we need your help in answering these questions by nominating candidates for "Great Teacher Awards" in the following categories: individual teacher; school, district or regional/state organization; and university. Your nominations are requested to assure that we recognize the work, commitment, and contributions of our fellow educators who are making a difference for learning and teaching in our schools, districts, regional and state organizations, and communities in both public and private schools.

NOMINATION

(The nomination deadline is December 15, 2008.)

1. **Individual:** The nominee is making a significant and positive impact on student learning while influencing the professional performance and growth of other educators as a professional in a school, district, regional/state organization, and/or university.

2. **School, District or Regional/State Organization:** The faculty and leadership of a school, district and/or regional/state organization are making a significant and positive impact on student learning and achievement. (Data evidence reports and tables may be attached to support nomination.)
3. **University:** The faculty and leadership of a university are making a significant and positive impact on student learning and achievement as a result of their distinguished and effective preparation of teachers, principals, superintendents, program administrators, and other professional educators.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nominations must be cosigned by a Phi Delta Kappa member. The nomination proposal includes the following:

1. Completed nomination form.
2. Two (2) letters of support. One letter should be from the nominee's supervisor.
3. A summary statement (250-400 words) describing how the nominee has significantly contributed to his/her school, program, district, and State of Washington.

Submit nominations by e-mail or by mail to:

Dr. John Armenia, President, PDK-Washington State
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