

EMPOWERED

A MAGAZINE FOR TEACHERS

SPRING 2021 / ISSUE 01

TikTok, Tea, *and* Teaching

A platform for positivity online



*Get motivated
with our habit
tracker!*

Inspired by James Clear



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Travis Bouldin impacts DC

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with your DIY school lunch

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how to talk to your students



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SPRING 2021

Letter *from the* Editors

There's something about a fresh start that gets us excited. And honestly, the timing of this start is just perfect. Many of us, recently vaccinated, are emerging from our year-long cocoon of distancing and insulation. Many are beginning that trek back to normal — whatever the heck that is. After what felt like a year-long winter, spring is in full swing, flowers are blooming, birds are chirping in the trees, and the world around is budding with possibility. It's an ample metaphor for new beginnings, for new creation, for new energy.

Empowered Teacher is the beginning of a new way for teachers. Ever since the pandemic struck, we've seen teachers cast aside, without support, left on an island. It begged a simple question: why isn't there a group built to offer community, support, and help to teachers?

This magazine is just a part of our answer, but it's an important part. Written by teachers for teachers, this magazine is truly bringing something new into the world. Even more important than telling the honest truth about our profession ... more important than swapping war stories with friends ... Empowered Teacher is a rallying cry for changemaking teachers around the nation.

It's only right that our first issue be themed with new beginnings. In this issue, you'll read stories of innovation and new ideas. Travis Bouldin, a teacher in Washington, D.C., who uses an unconventional approach to bring kids to life in the classroom. Tiana, a teacher in rural Montana, dedicated to raising up entrepreneurial young minds. You'll get inspiration on how to reimagine yourself from important names in mental health, self-help, and professional development. And, you'll get fun tidbits that help you bring new tools and ideas to your classroom.

We're excited to bring you something that is truly built by and for teachers. We're more excited to bring you something valuable, something honest, something new.

Happy reading,
The Editors



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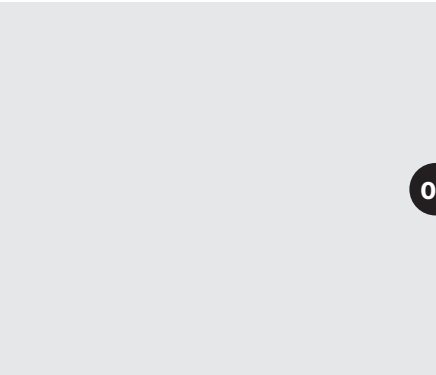
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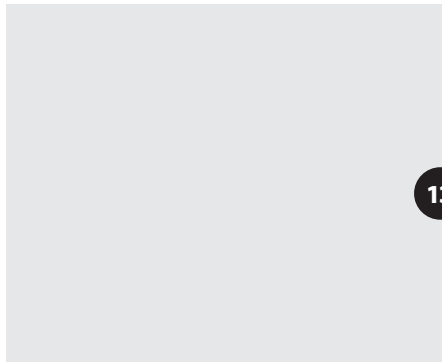
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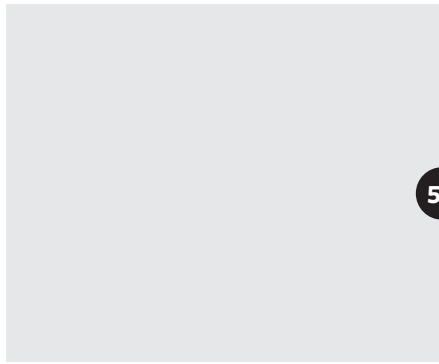
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doesn't have to be boring.

Empowered Academy is an ever-growing library of courses, modules, and events for teachers in any subject or grade level. Learn everything from classroom management techniques to combating burnout.

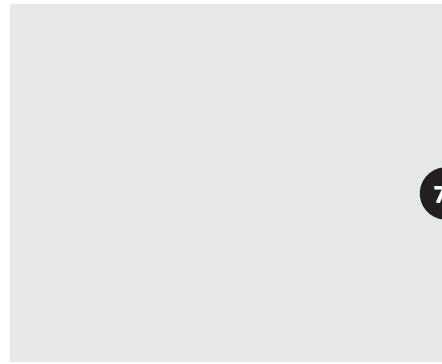
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Dig In

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SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to all teachers who work endlessly to support a stronger future in education!

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A NOTE TO READERS

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SUBMISSIONS

We encourage submissions to future edition of the Empowered Teacher Magazine and empoweredteacher.com at: ideas@empoweredteacher.com.

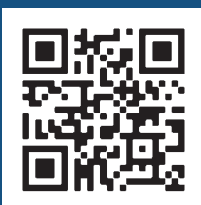
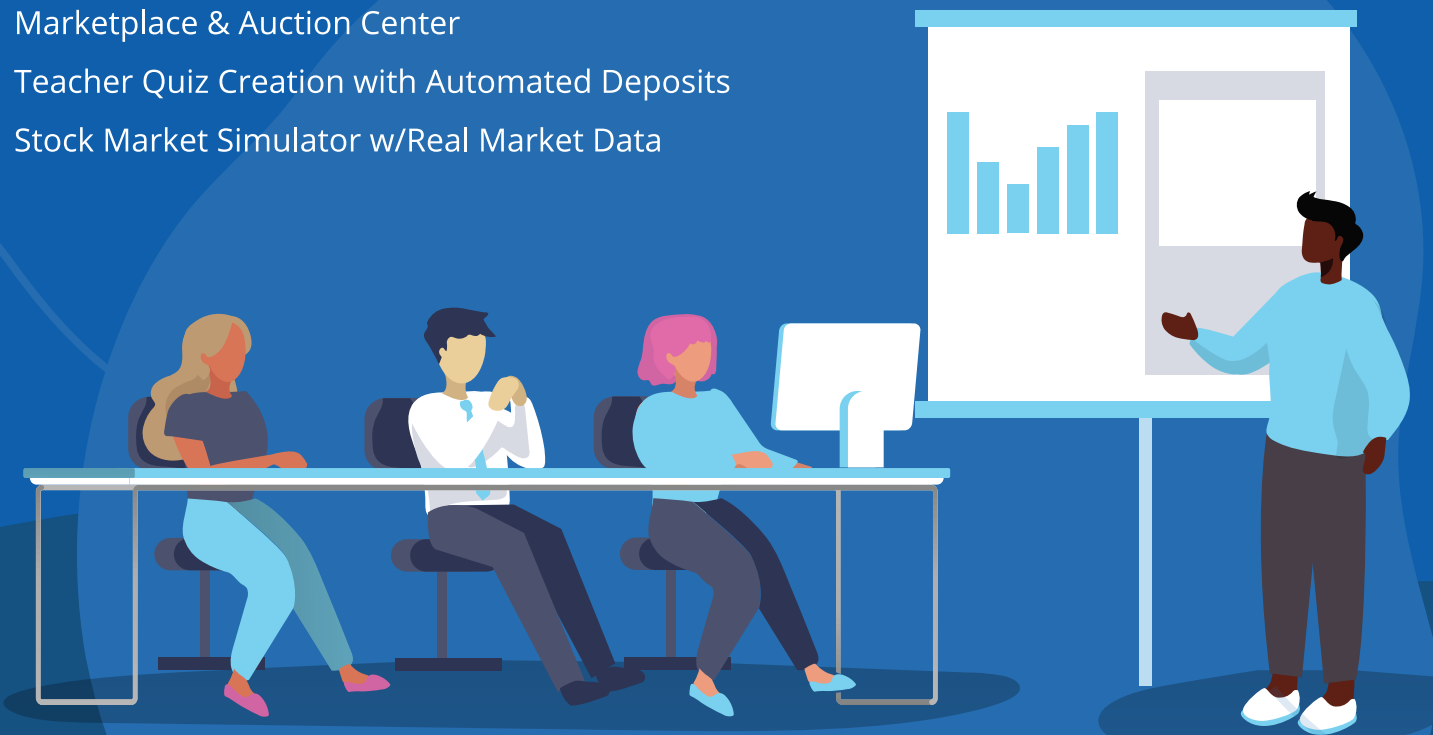


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- Teacher Quiz Creation with Automated Deposits
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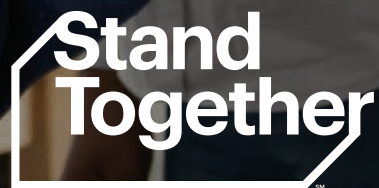
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TEACHING LIFE

Get to know a high school French teacher



BRYAN SMITH

7th year teaching / Teaches French for grades 9-12
El Cerrito High School, El Cerrito, California.



01 I literally moved across the globe to teach. I went to Japan for a teacher exchange program for two years.

03 If I could have any food in the world, I would always choose sushi.

THE FACTS



02 I've lived in America, France and Japan.



BEST ADVICE FOR TEACHERS

01 AMID A PANDEMIC

Really focus on the most important things. There may be 500 things that you want to do or you might have a really fun lesson that you do, but it's not that relevant. You just need to pick the minimum and work with that because there are just so many layers to teaching online.

02 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Be very selective about things that you choose to grade. You don't need to grade everything, or you'll burn out. Focus on grading only the true measure of the students' performance.

03 NEW TEACHERS

Get to know your students. The most important thing is to build a positive relationship with them. Also, don't be afraid to ask for help from other teachers at your school. Even if they don't teach the same subject, they probably have something they can share with you.

MY REASON FOR TEACHING

I wanted to find a way to use languages in my everyday life, and I thought being a teacher and giving back to the community would be a good way to do it. Plus, I felt like a teacher from an early age, after teaching my sister how to read when we were little.

TEACHING LIFE

Get to know a kindergarten teacher



JENNIFER WILLIAMS

5th year teaching / Teaches kindergarten
Jackson Elementary School, Valparaiso, Indiana



THE FACTS

01

I have two fur babies, a lab and a pitbull mix.



02

I am a marathon runner.



03

I love to travel. I'm currently on a quest to see all of the national parks in the country; Yellowstone and Channel Islands are among my favorites so far. Japan has been my favorite place I've traveled so far; I really liked Okinawa.

BEST THINGS ABOUT TEACHING

- 01 When students have that "aha!" moment. I love the excitement that my young learners show when they finally do something for the first time. Teaching kindergarten, these moments happen so often for my students.
- 02 Teaching is never dull. My kids keep me laughing and on my toes — you never know what 5-year-olds are going to say or do.

INSPIRATION

Mr. John Hayduk / Chesterton High School

When I think of the kind of teacher that I want to be, I think of my high school journalism teacher. We still keep in touch! He was someone who genuinely cared about me and my family. He invested time in getting to know me. He cared about my academics and always challenged me to work harder and do my best. Having the same teacher for four years helped us build a strong connection. As a writer and editor, I spent so much time with staff members before, during, and after school working on writing and editing pages. I ate lunch with him and my friends every day in his classroom. As a teacher, I love eating with my students as well. It's a time that you can get to know them and build genuine relationships. Children need to know that you care and that you're in their corner. I want to be the adult that they can come to if they need something.

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"My principal asked, 'What are you doing that has these kids running to your class?' She immediately saw what YE stood for and how it changed the school's culture. At this school where everyone is on free lunch, YE has really changed students' lives."

JOAN HERRON, TULSA, OKLA.

YOUTHENTREPRENEURS.ORG

"YE is the magic behind good education. It's my dream for every kid to develop confidence and to believe in themselves. You do it through promoting self-awareness and teaching integrity and by helping kids to take risks and be innovative ... that's what we need in schools going forward."

JODY SANDRU, TWIN BRIDGES, MONT.

7 Celebrities You Didn't Know Were Teachers

By A. Winter

Imagine, the bell rings, you take your seat, and Wolverine walks through the classroom door in his full Sexiest Man Alive glory. What if you had to turn in your transparently autobiographical, teen vampire drama to Stephen King himself? From New York City's famous Broadway stages to California's Hollywood studios to the concert halls in between, many celebrities who have graced these landmark locations have an alter-ego — teacher.

We don't want to encourage anyone to quit their teaching positions; but it's not a

secret that teaching prepares you to make a splash in whatever career path you choose. You're already accustomed to dealing with difficult people (albeit the people you're used to working with may be a little smaller than those in other fields); you work days and nights; and you need a super-powerful focus to get through the day.

This list of teachers-turned-celebs might just throw a few surprises your way.

01

Gene Simmons

Yes, you read that right. Gene Simmons — the prolific bassist and famous tongue from the band Kiss — got his start as a 6th-grade teacher at a public school in New York City's Upper West Side.

He says he wanted to be a teacher to be able to "get up on stage and have people notice me." However, he says his reason for leaving the profession was because "the stage was too small. Forty people wasn't enough, I wanted 40,000." Don't we all?

02

Hugh Jackman

Prior to joining forces with the X-Men as Wolverine and serenading his way into our hearts as the Greatest Showman, Hugh Jackman taught English, drama, and physical education at the Uppingham School in London, England.

03

Lin Manuel Miranda

How many of you listen to Hamilton while grading? Well, did you know that the creator and original star of the show started his career off by teaching English at his former high school in New York City? That's one alum to know.

04

Mr. T

Before he was "pityin' fools in Rocky III, Mr. T was teaching physical education at Dubar Vocational Career Academy in Chicago. Imagine facing off in Steal the Bacon with that A-Team member. Maybe the "Mr." in his stage name is a nod to his former career?

05

Sheryl Crow

When she wasn't soakin' up the sun, country/rock/pop idol Sheryl Crow spent her 20s teaching elementary school music in Fenton, Missouri. She spent her weekends performing with her band in St. Louis until she made it big.

06

Stephen King

Perhaps some of our favorite scary stories from the mind of Stephen King were inspired by the horror stories he witnessed in his time teaching high school English in Maine. We can *sorta* relate. While teaching, King was busy writing and submitting his works to various short story collections. He ultimately didn't leave teaching until he published his breakout novel, "Carrie." That's one teacher you don't want to disappoint.

07

Jesse Williams

This Grey's Anatomy star began his career by teaching not science, but English. He taught for six full years in the Philadelphia Public School system before leaving for New York to pursue his acting career.

A graduate of Valparaiso University, Alex Winter has spent his career working in marketing for several education-centered nonprofit organizations. His passion for education and helping teachers stems from being raised in a family of educators and school administrators.





GOOD READS

From Tiny Habits *to* Big Results

By *Lizz Milcoff*

Quitter's Day arrives annually on January 19th.

That's when people are most likely to give up on the New Year's resolutions they made less than three weeks prior, according to research by Strava.

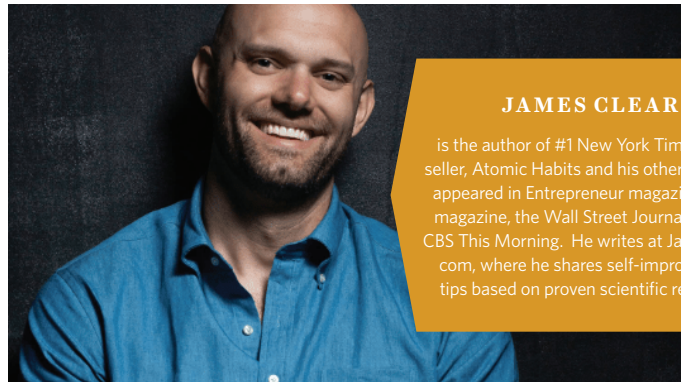
Now that it's spring, we can assume that many well-meaning New Year's resolutions have already been abandoned. If you're dedicated, you might still be riding your Peloton or turning emails off over the weekend, but you still may not be meeting your goals.

Whether it's a birthday, a new year, or even just a Monday, we set out with the intention of achieving new goals but keep sliding back into old routines. James Clear, the author of *Atomic Habits*, says that we are focusing in the wrong places when we set out to make changes in our lives. We focus too much on the goal (ride that Peloton 60 minutes per day) instead of our systems to get there (figure out how to give yourself an hour of available time daily to get on the Peloton). His premise starts with the notion that it takes tiny habits — the one percent changes we make here or there in the right direction — that add up over time to reach our goals.

Starting a new habit is easier in the beginning because motivation makes us excited to show up, but sticking to it can go out the window after a stressful day. Making a lasting habit that goes beyond our motivation can be broken down into four steps that, if repeated over time, help us build the habit for the long run. To help illustrate these steps, first grade teacher Carrie Swain, of Discovery Charter School in Porter, Indiana, shares her experience implementing the steps to teach the reading foundations that help her students implement reading as a habit.

01 MAKE IT OBVIOUS

This is the cue that reminds us of the habit. You can use a current habit that is already established in your routine, such as drinking your morning coffee. The two most common cues are time and location. For Swain, this means starting every day with small group reading. The first cue is that it's the beginning of the day, but she also uses a visible daily schedule and small group chart to remind students.



JAMES CLEAR

is the author of #1 New York Times best-seller, *Atomic Habits* and his other work has appeared in *Entrepreneur* magazine, *Time* magazine, the *Wall Street Journal*, and on *CBS This Morning*. He writes at [JamesClear.com](https://www.jamesclear.com), where he shares self-improvement tips based on proven scientific research.

02 MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE

Once the cue has been seen, the next step is to create a craving. We don't typically crave the habit itself, but we do crave how it makes use feel. For example, most people don't crave their actual workout, but they do crave the endorphin rush that they experience afterward. In Swain's classroom, students get to use toys like finger lights, witches' fingernails, as well as special pencils and paper that only get used during their small groups.

03 MAKE IT EASY

When presented with a problem, we will typically default to the option that is easiest. Building a new habit is so difficult in part because we are conditioned to remove friction from our lives, not add to it. If we can make a new habit easy, we are much more likely to stick with it. Swain's students read texts during this activity at or just above their current level. This also helps them to feel successful, which leads us to the last step.

04 MAKE IT SATISFYING

We are much more likely to take an action that has an immediate reward, instead of one that we know will benefit us in the future. That's why it's important to find ways to make our habits satisfying now. Swain's students get the immediate reward of having fun with their teacher, and they earn a break as well after they are done. In the long run, learning to read is the reward, but these short-term rewards make them more likely to stick with the habit.



BREAK A HABIT, MAKE A HABIT

Use this simple habit tracker to write down your goals and hold yourself accountable. Keep this in a place where you will see it often like your fridge or your desk so you'll constantly be reminded.

EVERYDAY ACTION

After breakfast I will...

When I'm on a break I will...

As soon as I get home I will...

NEW HABIT

14-DAY HABIT TRACKER

Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

PLATFORM for Positivity

TikTok isn't just for kids.

Maria, aka *TwentiesTikTokTeacher*, took the platform by storm, sharing advice ranging from how to avoid teacher burnout to what to wear on your first day of school. We virtually sat down with her to learn how she copes with burnout, how she became a TikTok star, and how the pandemic has affected her mental state.



Maria's TikTok (@twentiestiktokteacher) is a source of near-constant positivity for her fellow teachers. Get style tips, purchase ideas, and plenty of inspiration for both the classroom and the gym!



Question: So, a big thing that we hear about is teacher burnout. Have you seen that in your peers? Why do you think the burnout rate is so high in teachers?

Maria: So I have definitely seen that. I've known that I wanted to teach middle school since I was in middle school. My mom works and has worked for a while in a middle school. So, she used to work in the special education guidance department, and so she would see, especially within that department, a high turnover rate of teachers because of the burnout being so strong.

Year one was really hard for me with being in charge of two grade levels and being in a self-contained classroom in a new state. It was just a lot of newness thrown at me with not as much support as I had been hoping to receive. By November, I felt like I was burnt out. Not to

the point of like 'I'm going to leave this career,' but to the point of, 'I don't want to go to school,' or 'I don't want to do this today, I'm tired, and it's only Tuesday.' In my three years of teaching, I've seen that so often with young teachers, being kind of whack-a-moled down into, 'No, we don't want to hear your new ideas,' 'No, we don't want your energy and spunk.' When speaking with veteran teachers who are facing that burnout, they are pushing those feelings onto people who are excited to be in the workspace when they are maybe at a point that they should be exiting the workspace.

I'm feeling that strongly this year because of the craziness that we're experiencing. I love teaching, and at this point in my life, I don't see myself doing anything else. But, it really is a constant battle to try to face that burnout.

IT'S SUCH A SIMPLE ANSWER...

I'm a naturally optimistic and positive person. It is so exhausting to be in that culture sometimes, where it's constant complaining about students, or admin, or schools, or district, or teaching as a whole. You can get into those complaining traps so easily, and it's so hard to pull out of them.

Question: *What are some of the strategies that you use to stay positive and avoid burnout?*

Maria: I am such an advocate for breaking up your identity. Like yeah, you're a teacher, but you are so much more than just a teacher. I had someone tell me last year, 'you need to find buckets to fill outside of your teaching bucket, because if you choose to pour everything into that teaching bucket, you're going to have nothing left.' I really internalized that and have come to realize that there are a lot of teachers out there who find their sole identity in being a teacher. They pour so much of themselves, their time, energy, money, and thoughts; they pour everything they have into that identity of being a teacher.

There are some days that I just want to remove everything that happened during the school day out of me. I'm like, 'I need to step away from this right now.' But, if you don't have an identity outside of that, how do you step away from it? It can become a very toxic environment inside of you. I strive to create identities and be someone who has more in life than just being a teacher.

I am really driven by health and fitness. I am really into exercise and movement. I'm into healthy eating and different practices that make me feel healthy, like yoga and meditation. I pour a lot of time and energy into that to make me feel like the best version of myself.

I'm also not afraid to use personal or sick days as a mental health day. This past weekend I took Friday off and created a four-day weekend for myself to take a trip. I was hitting a place of burnout right before that trip, and I knew I needed to go somewhere to be the best version of myself stepping into this next week. I'm huge on using mental health days when you can.

It's about recognizing you are so much more than a teacher, and there are so many other areas of life you can enjoy and be a part of. Like, I'm 25, and I do normal 25-year-old things on the weekend. I feel like sometimes there's a stigma around teachers being themselves on the weekend! I've gotten DM's from people like, "I see you wearing crop tops all the time. I'm afraid to wear crop tops in my town 'cause I'm afraid someone is going to see me." I say, "You do you! You're not on the clock." Obviously, don't post things you don't want your admin or students' parents to see on social that are inappropriate, but if you are a young person, do what you want, and you can do what you want in your free time.

Question: *What sort of challenges have you had to face this year with the pandemic?*

Maria: The lack of connection. I got into teaching because of the connection that my teachers provided for me when I was a student. Whether that be the relationship that I had with my teachers or the relationships that I was able to create with my peers in the classroom; everything's been taken away from me that I loved about teaching. I complain to my boyfriend all the time, "this is not what I signed up for" "I'm not meant to be at a desk or a computer all day."

Lightning ROUND

01 WATCHING ON NETFLIX Bridgerton



01 PREP PERIOD SNACK Coffee - not a big snacker



01 FAVORITE PLACE TO SHOP Target and small boutiques



The students don't like it either — they don't want to talk behind their screens. You hear the same voices in class every day. You don't hear all of their voices; you aren't getting that rapport that you normally get in class. It's a huge lack of connection. I don't even know what my students look like at this point. If I saw them on the street, I could not even recognize them.

With 20-30 kids in my virtual class, I can't walk by a desk and crouch down and say, "Hey, how are you doing today? I know you had a fun weekend. How was that?" or "Hey, you look tired today. Is everything going okay?" There's no sense of connection, and that's really been the toughest part because virtual learning — it is what it is — kids know how to use technology. They can use Google slides, Google docs. They're equipped with the skills they need to be a smart virtual learner. It's a lot of intrinsic motivation on their end, and that's definitely lacking this year as well.

I am huge on relationships over content. I think they are just as important. We're not seeing the same connections as we have in the past. We're going on almost a year of it, and I am losing it on this tiny little computer screen because this is not what I signed up for.

JUST BE YOU.

sic videos to like Hillary Duff and Lizzie McGuire, and that was like my favorite hobby as a kid up until like 8th grade.

When TikTok came out, I was just scrolling and consuming content for about a year, and then I started to see more and more teachers on the platform. I said to myself, "I could do this." I started making funny little videos like, "Hey, I'm a 24-year-old teacher doing Renegade."

I'm also very into fashion. I did an outfit compilation video of all my outfits during the week. On that Friday, I posted it and, looking back, that was the last Friday that I was in my classroom. That video just blew up. Over 100,000 views by the next morning and I was like, "oh my gosh!". I started saying, "I could have a platform."

I have always said that I would love a platform to positively influence people. Whether that's in a teaching space, or fitness space, or mental health space, at this point, I like to think of myself in all three. So, I started really building up teacher content, and I started doing advice videos and more outfit videos. Then I had 30k followers, then 50k, and I was like, "wow, people actually want to see and hear what I have to say." It has been one of the most fun experiences I've manifested for myself that I've ever had.

I say, if you want to make a TikTok for your teaching life or an Instagram for your teaching life, then just do it! Many people are messaging me asking how I know what to post, but it's such a simple answer, and I always feel bad saying it: "just be you."

Don't try to be anything else. That person already exists, and people follow them for that reason, but people are going to be following you and gravitating for you because what makes you, you, is so special! If you're willing to put yourself out there and if you're open to people being in your business, then I say, "Go for it!"



Question: *How did you get started on TikTok? Do you have advice for teachers who might want to get started there?*

Maria: So, I'm an only child, and I had to make my own fun as a kid all the time. My parents used to give me this old VCR camera in my basement. I was a dancer when I was a child, so I had boxes upon boxes of costumes. I used to go to my basement and pretend I had my own TV show and would film myself doing whatever I wanted to do that day. I'd make mu-



KEEPING INCENTIVES RELEVANT WITH

SWAGGER

BY L. HUDAK

LOGAN HUDAK / HELLOMSHUDA

I still remember my first year of teaching like it was yesterday. I thought I knew what I was up against. Heck, so many teachers who came before me warned me not to smile before Christmas. But I couldn't imagine entering a classroom every day where the teacher was purposefully miserable, shut off, flat. Not my thing. And wouldn't the kids react similarly?

And I definitely did not want to be the teacher that students feared. I had plenty of those teachers — more than my share — and I wanted to be the antidote, not a furtherance of the problem. But I also knew I couldn't get too friendly or casual with the kids. The stories that warned of that approach all end the same. All the respect they would come to gain for me — well, it'd fly out the window in a heartbeat the second they felt I was just "one of them."

The reality is that so much of this job is walking a tightrope. You teter between too open and too closed-off; between too strict and too chill; between doing what's right and doing it the way it's always been done. That last bit is especially hard for folks like me. So, I struggled for much of my first year in teaching, and classroom

USING SWAG BUCKS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Swag Bucks are simple. They are a monetary system that students receive in exchange for doing what they are supposed to do. At the beginning of every year, I explain to my students the breakdown of the system:

Every Swag Buck is worth \$1.00	Swag Bucks can be earned at any time.
<i>We then spend about five minutes discussing all the things students can do to earn them:</i>	
01 Participating in class	02 Helping a classmate
03 Being courteous	04 Being a good citizen
05 A's on a major assignment	06 Being Respectful

I create my Swag Bucks on Canva and print them out on neon paper. They're easy to see and easy for everyone to remember exactly who was rewarded with the esteemed prize.

BRING IT TO LIFE WITH EMPOWERED

HOW TO DO IT



EXPERT TIP:

Numerous studies illustrate the positive impact of currencies in the classroom. Helping students connect with their value and rewarding positive behaviors are just the beginning. As students advance through the year, you'll see extrinsic rewards turn into intrinsic habits.

management took front stage in those challenges for me, like it has for so many others I've talked to since. But that's the message that needs to get out there. It ain't easy. Heck, it's incredibly hard. And it doesn't come overnight.

It has taken me almost four years to get even remotely good at managing a group of 94 preteens, and I'm darn proud of how far I've come so fast. Teaching, for me and most of my peers, is a long process of unlearning what we've been taught, and relearning what works best for us: each

individual teacher. The sooner a young teacher can grapple with that, accept it, and open their minds to learning from failure ... well, the sooner they'll see real success. And, while there isn't a silver bullet solution (that's the whole point), there is one classroom strategy that sets the teacher up to get the most of that try-fail-learn-repeat cycle you'll come to love: an incentive structure.

It's the one thing that has held constant throughout all four years of my teaching career and one of the strategies to which I

SIMPLY PUT,
THEY LEARN
QUICKLY THAT
IT'S PRETTY
DARN FUN TO
BRING VALUE
TO CLASS...

owe most of my success. It's a simple tool called positive reinforcement. It works because — well, science and stuff — but believe me ... it works.

I wasn't a great teacher when I was 21, but I knew that in order to have a successful year, I was going to have to create a way for my students to love coming to my class while also understanding expectations and boundaries. That's when I first dreamt up the idea of "Swag Bucks." I created a simple currency to translate perceived value (when kids are bringing their unique value to any activity or project) to real-world value (the things kids really want right now).

Once we go over all the ways to earn Swag Bucks, we then cover the rewards. This is what really gets kids interested in generating value. Each reward is priced just like it would be in any market, with different amounts for each piece of swag. For example, a note of praise can be sent to a parent for one Swag Buck. A free ticket to any sporting event can be bought with four Swag Bucks. An extra five points on any assignment is worth two Swag Bucks. And the list goes on. The better the reward, the more Swag Bucks it costs the students.

At the beginning of the year, I strategically give out the currency like air, and I



make a huge deal out of it when a student gets one. I do this to set the stage for kids. They figure out very early on what flies with me and what doesn't, because I focus all of my time and energy on positive reinforcement rather than negative punishment. The negative behaviors dwindle down quickly to almost nothing. But

maybe more importantly, as the semester progresses, I can get more stingy with my currency because students quickly shift from an extrinsic reward to an intrinsic one. Simply put, they learn that it's pretty darn fun to bring value to class and, while a bag of Doritos is important, it's not the most important thing they do.

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The single *most* surprising benefit *to the* pandemic

By Dr. Jenny Pieratt

Dr. Jenny Pieratt is an award-winning author and expert in project-based learning (PBL). She is Founder and President of CraftED Curriculum, a company with international reach, servicing teachers and school districts looking to implement PBL. She was a former teacher of grades 5-10 and is a proud mother of two. To learn more about creating field work through PBL, visit www.craftedcurriculum.com to access Dr. Pieratt's award-winning books, e-courses, free resources, and blogs.

As we approach the anniversary of pandemic life, silver linings can be tough to come by, especially in education.

However, as an educator and parent, I've felt the weight of responsibility to make the most out of this challenging time. The first step is to realize some of the freedoms and opportunities that hide behind the mask of the pandemic. First, and most notably, for the first time ever we have flexibility from the walls of a classroom. The world can truly be our classroom. From the rooms of an apartment, to the front steps or backyard of a child's home, to the neighborhood streets or a walk in the community; this is our classroom, and the opportunities for deeper learning here ... are endless.

THE BINDS THE PANDEMIC BROKE
As a project-based learning specialist, I encourage teachers to integrate field work into their plans as much as possible. But, as you all know too well, the logistics of that aren't exactly easy. Permission slips for each experience must be returned for every student; bell schedules make it difficult to find the time for field trips; and transportation and planning logistics are overwhelming. These barriers can make it feel unsurmountable to leave our desks.

Today, however, many of our students haven't sat in those desks for a year, and the new learning spaces they've created are one step closer to the field. Even as we all return to school,

the definition of school itself has shifted to include more experiences, more student-led learning, and a generally wider array of hands-on activities than in the past. We can leverage that as we push toward a more experiential learning future.

Covid-19 has created intense connections between teachers and parents like never before.

SILVER LININGS OF COVID LIFE

It's difficult to think of how Covid has improved teaching and learning, but field work is one of the golden opportunities this pandemic presented.

- 01 We can access experts with ease.** Every industry is now comfortable with Zoom. It's much easier to ask an engineer, a dietician, or an architect to join a 15 minute Zoom call than it is to ask them to come into your classroom to be a guest speaker or provide expert feedback to your classes.
- 02 Home involvement expectations have shifted.** Parents see themselves as partners in student learning. A parent would much rather collect data together at the beach, snap photos of neighborhood or nature observations, or go on an interpretive walk than help with a worksheet or test prep.
- 03 There is a newfound comfort with and access to technology.** This can take us to incredible places we couldn't visit before the pandemic. Most zoos, aquariums, and state and national parks now offer virtual field trips, but also opportunities to interview and interact with experts in these spaces. Just last week I virtually took my students underwater to a kelp forest and then interviewed a park ranger.

02



MAKING FIELD WORK HAPPEN

Here are a couple of my favorite ways to get started:

Make it asynchronous if you are in a hybrid or virtual setting. Send students off with clear instructions and graphic organizers to take field notes, then come back and debrief synchronously, and close out your day with a written reflection or assessment based on their experience.

If you are lucky enough to be back to school with students full time, check out my framework for PBL-lite, which is a two week cycle to get you started planning a field work project. Looking for more? Take a deep dive into my book, "Keep it Real with PBL" to plan a 4-6 week project with several opportunities for field work, including a launch, expert speakers, observations in the community/nature, expert feedback, and a final exhibition for an authentic audience.



Check out Jenny's website (craftedcurriculum.com) for experiential curricula planning.

Restorative Justice at Work

*A look inside the successes of
Travis Bouldin's classroom and
how to get started*

BY SUZANNE WILLIAMS

In history
teacher
Travis
Bouldin's
classroom,
students are
seated in
a circle,
engaged in
debates.

Bouldin can be found seated in the circle among the students, listening and tracking where the discussion goes. Travis is young, so he blends into the class easily. But, his class doesn't have a "leader" in the typical sense. Nobody at the chalkboard; nobody instructing the students to turn to page 143 in their textbooks. That's not how this classroom works... it's not how Travis works.

"I'm not leading it. We're all within our circle and the students are keeping it going," Bouldin says.

This type of collaborative, student-led dialogue is something that thrives in the learning environment Bouldin fostered. To prepare students, Bouldin starts each semester in a highly structured way, laying out routines for how to respond to directives as well as how to treat one another.

"After the first few weeks, the classroom is very much a space where all students feel comfortable," Bouldin says. "It's

really one of those classes where it's safe for everyone to be themselves and dig into the learning in a way that really stands out to them as opposed to the more traditional structure of the teacher up front, doing the lesson, and the student responding."

Bouldin has worked in education for 17 years, as a teacher, instructional coach, dean, and principal. Several years ago, in an effort to spend more time with his teenage sons, he stepped out of leadership and back into the classroom, with all of the experience he has amassed along the way. In his current role as a classroom teacher, he focuses on building a learning environment where his students can thrive.

If you had to boil down the nuance of Bouldin's magic into just a single concept, it would be "agency."

By incorporating student choice in everything, even in seating arrangements, Bouldin masterfully creates a learning environment that meets the individual needs of his learners.

"Students have to be part of this classroom environment. They have to feel like something is their own to make them want to be in that space and be themselves in that space," Bouldin said. A Unique Atmosphere

Outside of a structured debate from time to time, his students are able to pick their seats within the circle. But seats themselves aren't even predictable. The room is littered with unconventional options like bean bag chairs, mats, and even a trampoline.

These options do not distract from student learning, but rather facilitate it, allowing for student choice and increased buy-in.

"If we're not having a structured debate, students can just sit or lay on those things. [When they are on them,] they

will engage as a student as normal," Bouldin said. "I really do try to bring choice [into the classroom] as far as furniture goes. I think with the freedom of knowing that they can sit anywhere, the circle structure just works for everyone. They know that if [a particular seat] doesn't work for them, they have other places that they can go."

The circle arrangement in Bouldin's room isn't just an unconventional classroom seating arrangement, though. It's the optimal arrangement to work through restorative justice, a strategy that permeates everything at the Ron Brown school.

Ron Brown, a college-preparatory high school in its fifth year, is focused on serving young African-American boys in a different way. Data consistently shows that black and Latino boys are suspended at higher rates, struggle with more behavior problems, and it all has a dire impact on achievement. Ron Brown set out to better serve their student population by creating a school culture and climate in which students feel safe and comfortable and, from there, focusing on developing students' social-emotional skills, in addition to their academics.

"It's really focusing on: Are we going to perpetuate this data or are we going to do something about it?" Bouldin said. "That's why we give kids multiple chances and multiple opportunities to really make sure that we are serving this population of students differently."

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

In an effort to serve their students differently, the school focuses on restorative justice, a practice which aims to empower students to resolve their own conflicts through peer-mediated small group conversations.

"At the same time, every single day, everyone comes - every teacher, every student, every school leader, every sup-



port staff. Everyone goes to these circles for 20 minutes a day, to celebrate, to give shoutouts, to restore some harm. If there was a large, whole-school issue, it was acknowledged in the circle," Bouldin said.

"Things that you might get sent out, suspended, or expelled for in a traditional school, we try to focus on restorative work. It's all about restoring and keeping the students in school. It's different," Bouldin said.

In Bouldin's classroom, each lesson begins with a seven-minute opening circle, aimed at community and relationship building. In the circle, students engage in a greeting, share, and news before moving into the activity, which is the content lesson for the day.

"For the greeting, we may just greet in a different language every day. The share might be 'What's your favorite thing to do on the weekend?' The news might be something that happened in the news



that day. The activity is simply the content lesson for the day,” Bouldin said.

This opening circle goes in place of a warm up activity and provides students with consistency, as well as an opportunity to express themselves.

“The students know that every single day, we have the same exact drill. They accept it and they get a chance to express themselves on things that are not in the curriculum. It’s the consistency of this circle that they look forward to,” Bouldin said. The circles have positive themes, such as opportunity or respect, which help elaborate on or reinforce these ideas. But they can be used when issues arise as well, in the form of a restorative circle, aimed at restoring harm.

“We try to make it positive with the themes and lessons and, when necessary, acknowledge what’s going on,” Bouldin said.

If an issue arises between a student and

a teacher, a restorative circle is called then, as well.

“With us, the students’ voice is just as equal as the teacher’s voice. Even if the student says ‘I didn’t like what the teacher said,’ we have to sit in these smaller circles with the student and support staff. The student gets to say their piece, then the teacher says their piece, with a focus on restoring the harm,” Bouldin said.

Bouldin said that having a structured conversation about the infraction] hard for students at first because they thought, no matter what, the adults would believe what the teacher said. Teachers also struggled to adjust, because students were, at least occasionally, less than honest.

“I’d get pissed having to sit there and listen to some of the bogus stuff that kids who didn’t want to get in trouble would say. Sometimes they can stretch some things or say things that aren’t true,” Bouldin said. “But it was about getting into practice with that. This was

not about me having to feel inferior or having to listen to them lie but really letting them know what we are here to hear you.”

But, as time went on, both students and teachers adjusted to this restorative practice, and the need for circles for minor offenses diminished.

“And soon after, students didn’t feel the need to lie anymore, or stretch the truth, or come with all the attitude or anger,” Bouldin said. “There were even some who, before we even made it to the circle, were like ‘Bouldin, you know what, I was wrong. We don’t need to do the circle if you don’t want to. That was definitely me, my fault, I’m going to do better with that. If you recognize that I look off one day, tell me to go take a walk or something.’ That’s when you really start seeing the restorative circle working. As they grew older and they knew we would not expel or suspend them, they really started to focus on changing their behavior without us really having to ask or sit in the circle.”

Relationship Quick Tips

1.

PRACTICE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

“Get to know your students! It’s kind of impossible to be culturally responsive if you don’t know who your students are. For example, I made the mistake [in my first year] of thinking ‘oh, these are African American students and they’re male. I’m an African American man. What I didn’t realize is that a lot of students didn’t see me as an African American male...Really figure out what their culture is, which you can only do by getting to know them.”

2.

CREATE A MORE POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

“If we want our students to be vulnerable and open up to us, we have to be the same way. If the culture isn’t where you want it, name that. Like ‘hey, we have a poor culture, how can we make this better?’”

3.

MAKE KIDS FEEL SAFE

“When something is said, call it out. Especially in urban education, the whole homosexuality thing. [If a kid] calls someone gay and you don’t do something about it, but you have kids in your classroom struggling with issues of their sexuality, they’ll be forever silent. Actually acknowledge it. Take the time to have those conversations.

RESPONSIBILITY & AGENCY

Getting students to accept responsibility for their actions and work to change their behavior is something that many teachers might be interested in. Although not all schools are ready to adopt the practice of restorative circles, Bouldin offers some advice on what ordinary classroom teachers who are interested in starting a similar practice can do.

“Start with your classroom first. It’s not going to be easy, but start giving up some of your power,” Bouldin said. “When there is a disagreement with a student, ask to come back to it later on. Even if they walked out or got put out, before

of circle,” Bouldin said. “A lot of teachers will be interested if they see you making progress with the students who no one can make progress with. As you get that data, people will logically want that type of interaction.”

Bouldin warns that this practice is an adjustment, however, and won’t be an immediate fix.

“We have our bad days. Don’t get discouraged because your culture didn’t shift within the first week or first month,” Bouldin said. “It took us two years of hell. We had small wins throughout that, but it was like two years of fight-

“I thought I’d be nothing more than a Saratogababy, but now, since I met Mr. Bouldin, I’ve been to six different countries and I’m going to Guatemala this summer for a basketball camp,” Bouldin’s student said.

they get back into the classroom again, have that conversation with them. Like ‘hey, I just want to debrief what happened. I want to hear your side of it. Let me know how I can do better in the future.’ When students hear that kind of language, they’re more open to giving suggestions or owning their behavior.”

From there, as your relationships with your students become stronger and the community of learners in your classroom becomes more invested, Bouldin suggests inviting others in.

“Then, partner with other teachers and see if others are interested in some sort

ing an uphill battle before we really felt like we were changing lives. You’re going to have bad days, weeks and sometimes months when things don’t go as planned. Just stay with it.”

To maximize success, Bouldin says circle norms must be established early and enforced. In a restorative circle, one of those norms is the existence of a talking piece, which anyone wanting to speak must have in their hand. Having that, Bouldin said, facilitates everything else. He suggests letting the student start, then the teacher elaborate. The process should continue until everyone feels that they are fully heard.

We have our bad days. Don't get discouraged because your culture didn't shift within the first week or first month.

At Roy Brown, restorative practices are even used among the staff, when issues arise. Bouldin said that this experience has been helpful in resolving issues, as well as readjusting expectations for kids.

"If we're grown adults with degrees and we had to send this thing around eight times, you may have situations with students where that thing keeps going around," Bouldin said. "You have to acknowledge and honor that, if we couldn't figure it out within the first three rounds, let's not expect students to have it perfect on day one or within round one."

Bouldin was careful not to sugarcoat anything. Things weren't perfect on day one, and they still aren't. But, reflecting on Ron Brown's first class, which graduated last year, Bouldin believes that the hard work was worth it.

"They came with a lot of baggage. I think, around their junior year, that's when the lightbulb started going off," Bouldin said. "Like, 'you guys are not going to let up on us. You're going to keep supporting us, no matter what. No matter what we do, you're going to keep giving us chances.'"

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Bouldin, an avid traveler who has been to more than 40 countries to date, even extends these chances to students in the form of offering opportunities for them to go on international trips.

"I help urban students travel the world, especially in depressed neighborhoods and in school communities that may not have the resources. So far, for four consecutive years, I've been able to organize international trips for my high school students," Bouldin said.

Bouldin recalls the closing circle during a trip he took to Honduras with students. It was time for one of his toughest students to speak, a student who Bouldin said almost did not get the chance to go on the trip because of the amount of support he needed. Although Bouldin thought that this student might be a challenge to manage overseas, he gave the student a chance. A chance that changed this student's outlook on everything.

"I thought I'd be nothing more than a Saratoga baby, but now, since I met you, Mr. Bouldin, I've been to six different countries and I'm going to Guatemala

this summer for a basketball camp," Bouldin's student said.

Bouldin asked what a Saratoga baby was and he was informed that it was "one of the hoods in D.C." His student, before knowing Bouldin and being afforded the many opportunities that he was, did not see a way out of his neighborhood. But, thanks to Bouldin, and the others at Ron Brown, and the chances that came with that, the world opened up to him.

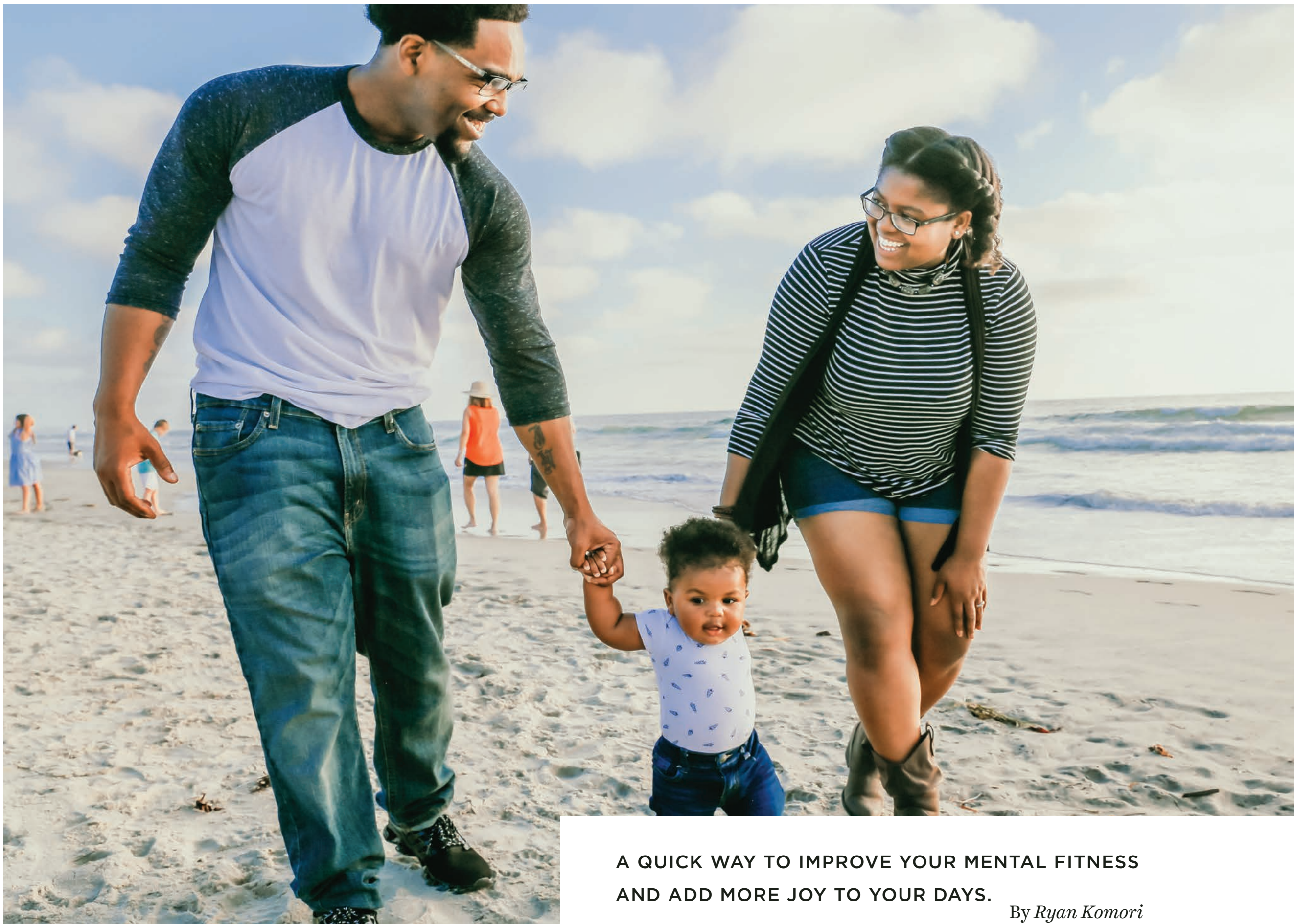
"That's a powerful testimony for others who really didn't see a future beyond hanging around D.C.," Bouldin said.

As for the students and others in Ron Brown's first graduating class, they have taken the skills that Bouldin and their other teachers have taught them to college.

"Now all of these students are freshmen in college and we keep in touch. They text every day and call often," Bouldin said. "They have gone from being students to being like [family] now. Like my nephews or little brothers, who I call and check in on at different colleges across the nation. [Even though they were] coming from homes where their parents don't even have high school diplomas."



Finding happiness from rock bottom



A QUICK WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL FITNESS
AND ADD MORE JOY TO YOUR DAYS.

By Ryan Komori

Remember that last bacon-wrapped filet or that rosewater macaron? If you're like most, you can almost teleport back there and taste it again. You can remember the smell in the air, the feel of the cafe. If so, you're likely already an expert at the act of savoring things. For many of us, we associate the word "savor" with tastes and smells, but it's actually much more than that. It's the idea of holding on to something, committing it to memory, and stretching the positive effects over a longer time. It's about being mindful, present, and focused on positivity. That's why I've focused much of my time teaching people to savor, not just food, but... joy.

We spend so much of our day as teachers focusing on the joy of students, that we forget that we are entitled to joy, too.

The year before the pandemic, I was at an all-time low with my mental health. I had just finished building a mobile gaming company - and I received Inc's 30 Under 30 award. I was blessed with 2 healthy children, and an incredibly supportive wife.

It was all picture perfect, but I simply wasn't able to recognize and, you guessed it, savor, joy. My thoughts became more intrusive by the day, and I sunk into a deep depression that almost took my life. A whirlwind 8-week partial hospitalization followed, and it literally saved my life. I learned how to find happiness - and along the way, I created a brand new company, Savor Lining, offering virtual mental fitness classes taught by licensed therapists that will help you avoid my initial fate. Here are a few things I learned.

DESPAIR

Under the surface, there had been a decade of unrecognized psychological trauma

and depression that ended up almost taking my life. I ended up in an 8-week partial hospitalization program, where I learned a tremendous amount about mental health. In the program, I learned the skills they only teach you in intensive therapy programs, and that much of the general population does not have access to. After making a full recovery and going through transformational personal growth in the process, I founded Savor Lining to help others to never reach the depths of where I had once found myself.

TEACHER WELLNESS COMES FIRST

Much like a flight attendant who reminds adults to put their oxygen masks on before helping others, prioritizing the mental health and fitness of teachers is essential for them to be at their best for themselves, and ultimately for their students.

My organization, Savor Lining, has recently partnered with multiple proactive and forward-thinking teacher-focused organizations and businesses looking to invest in their workforce's mental

fitness as a foundation for success. The challenges teachers face in today's environment are immense, ranging from the anxiety and stress that can be felt with both in-person and virtual learning, along with the grief of having the school year not go as originally envisioned or planned.

But it's not happening. Teachers have consistently been on the front-lines of stress. A whopping 61 percent of teachers report being stressed often or always, according to a 2017 survey by the American Federation of Teachers. Those who aren't teachers report being stressed at work only 30 percent of the time. This was an astonishing figure prior to COVID, and things have only gotten worse as a result of the pandemic.

WHY JOY?

Joy, Fear, Anger, Sadness, and Disgust.

Beyond serving as the main characters in Disney Pixar's animated film, *Inside Out*, these five emotions along with Surprise, were cited in the 1970's by psychologist Paul Eckman as the six basic emotions experienced in all human cultures.

Mental fitness, then, can be defined as a measure of the mind's ability to function effectively in work and leisure - the ability to be optimistic, resilient, and to recognize... joy.

Joy is a cornerstone of mental fitness because, without it, we're left with fear, anger, sadness, and disgust. Joy helps us to balance out all of these typically negative emotions, so let's do the hard but fun work of learning how to cultivate it.

WHAT IS JOY?

Dive in a bit further and find that joy is pretty simple to talk about, but really

Joy is the cornerstone of mental fitness because, without it, all we're left with is fear, anger, sadness, and disgust.

complicated to understand and experience. It's a powerful emotion that contains elements of contentment, confidence, and hope. Powerful stuff. But what makes it different than, say, happiness?

"An easy way to differentiate the two is to remember that joy is an emotion, and happiness is subjective," says Ashlei Lien, the clinical founding instructor at Savor Lining. "What matters in determining happiness is that person's perception of the world and the things that can trigger happiness, which could be different for everyone." As opposed to happiness, joy is cultivated internally. Once you are at peace internally, you will feel joy. Happiness, on the other hand, is triggered by people, things, places and thoughts.

Another way of thinking about the differences between joy and happiness shared by *Psychologies* magazine, is that "Joy is more consistent and is cultivated inter-

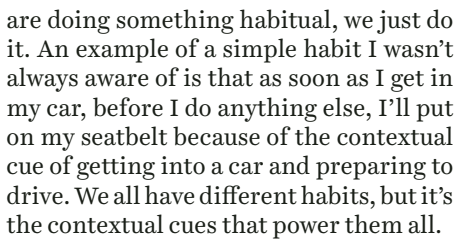
nally. It comes when you make peace with who you are, why you are and how you are, whereas happiness tends to be externally triggered and is based on other people, things, places, thoughts and events."

Joy and happiness go hand-in-hand and increasing joy can lead to more happiness in your life. The most mentally fit individuals are putting their happiness first and identifying ways to balance responsibilities in life with joy.

FIND YOUR JOY

Let's incorporate a new joy-savoring habit to your day. It'll take no more than 2 minutes each day and can be done anywhere. It's all about developing new habits.

By definition, habits are repeated, nearly automatic decisions that are triggered by contextual cues. Contextual cues such as a time or place can be so powerful that we don't even realize sometimes when we




Giving your full attention helps to rewire the mind by focusing on the words and emotions your thoughts bring up.

- 01 Focus on a memory from the past 24 hours that brought you some joy, delight, pleasure or happiness.
- 02 Focus on that memory. Perhaps you recall the details of what you saw or heard and how it made you feel in that moment. Close your eyes and picture this moment in your mind's eye for a few more seconds before continuing on.
- 03 Ask yourself, "How did this moment of joy focus your attention on the memory? How did it feel when paying attention to the details you noticed about the situation you recalled?"
- 04 Write down the memory in a few sentences in the space provided for today, and repeat this exercise for the next 7 days.



Unlike most of us are taught, joy isn't something you fall into when you're lucky. Joy is a practice. It's a habit. Begin the practice of joy in your own life by take time to savor the moments that help you love and care for yourself.

DAY 01	DAY 02	DAY 03	DAY 04
<p>If you can, walk instead of drive to work. Notice what you see and feel. Think about what you could have missed out on by rushing to get to work instead of taking your time to experience this different journey.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Take 15-20 to sit still at your desk or your home. Listen to your favorite album, book, or podcast. Notice how good it feels to slow down in the middle of a busy day and do something just for yourself.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
DAY 05	DAY 06	DAY 07	<div><p>EXPERT TIP:</p><p>Noticing joy doesn't always come easily, and we're not taught many skill surrounding how to take joy in small things. Be gentle with yourself as you learn this practice. Nothing happens over night.</p></div>
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Schedule some time to be alone in your home and do something special for yourself. You could take a bath, read a book, or work on a project you haven't had time for. Notice how your perspective changes when you prioritize alone time.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

At the end of seven days, assess how noticing small moments and protecting your time have effected you. How do you feel? How can you share your journey with others?

PROJECT COLSTRIP

Changing a Community,
One Entrepreneur at a Time

IN the small southeastern Montana town of Colstrip, the coal plant has been as dependable as the air we breathe. The vast majority of Colstrip's fewer than 3,000 residents are employed by the power plant or the coal mine that feeds it. So, when pressures forced the plant's owners to announce a phased, permanent closure of the facility, Colstrip residents were shook.

Colstrip produces nearly half the power that flows into major Washington-state business campuses (e.g., Boeing and Microsoft), but this doesn't matter: Colstrip will be forced to reimagine itself, pivoting its entire local economy in just a matter of years or face the fate of too many other towns before it: a permanent diaspora of its people.

By putting real-world problems in the hands of students, these teachers are building entrepreneurs.

But in Colstrip, two brave teachers believe there's a better way forward. Mindy Kohn and her colleague Tiana Yates, of Colstrip High School, see their entrepreneurship classes as the key to giving Colstrip hope. Kohn brought the innovative program, called Youth Entrepreneurs, into her culinary, fashion, tourism, and personal finance classes, a move that initially bewildered students and parents. But when students started to transform, open up, and start their own businesses it drew the attention of community leaders and other teachers, including Tiana Yates who soon joined Kohn in leading the program.

RAISING COMMUNITY LEADERS

By putting real-world problems in the hands of students, these teachers are building entrepreneurs.

If you walk by Tiana Yates' classroom at Colstrip High School in Montana, you'll hear lots of moving and chatting. You'll see students clustered in groups. You might even see Oreos, gummy worms and pudding scattered about the tables.

What is this? Social hour? Or a business class?

Stop in. Observe closer. Listen.

"So each pudding pack costs a quarter, three Oreos costs a quarter, and each set of gummy worms cost 30 cents," a student may say. "The cup and spoon are another 12 cents."

It's an economics lesson about the cost of goods sold (COGS), and this is one of

many lessons in an entrepreneurial class Yates is implementing. Eating the product once they've determined their game plan isn't part of the lesson: it's just plain fun.

"You exercised some nice sound judgment," she says, rounding one crumb-filled table to visit another.

"I hear some good examples of a win-win focus," Yates told another group, currently busy scraping up the last of the pudding.

Now it was time to implement part two of her plan.

The students bought supplies for the real coffee shop they planned to open at the high school.

"I said 'Let's start looking into some pricing and how much should we sell a latte for.' One girl already had half our list figured out," Yates says. "I was just a guide. That is my goal in the classroom. To guide the students through these experiences." Sneaky huh?

FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM ON ITS HEAD

The neat thing about watching Yates flip teaching on its head, is that in her view, it's not particularly unique. To her, it just makes sense. She wants her students questioning concepts and solving problems. She wants them building their ideas in ways that will impact their lives and communities. She is always thinking about how she can spin an ordinary lesson into a real-life, relatable scenario that will serve her students for life.

Yates didn't learn this innovation from her education on how to be a teacher; because she is just now learning how to be one. She first earned a business degree, worked a while in the hospitality industry, and ran her own wedding and event planning business.

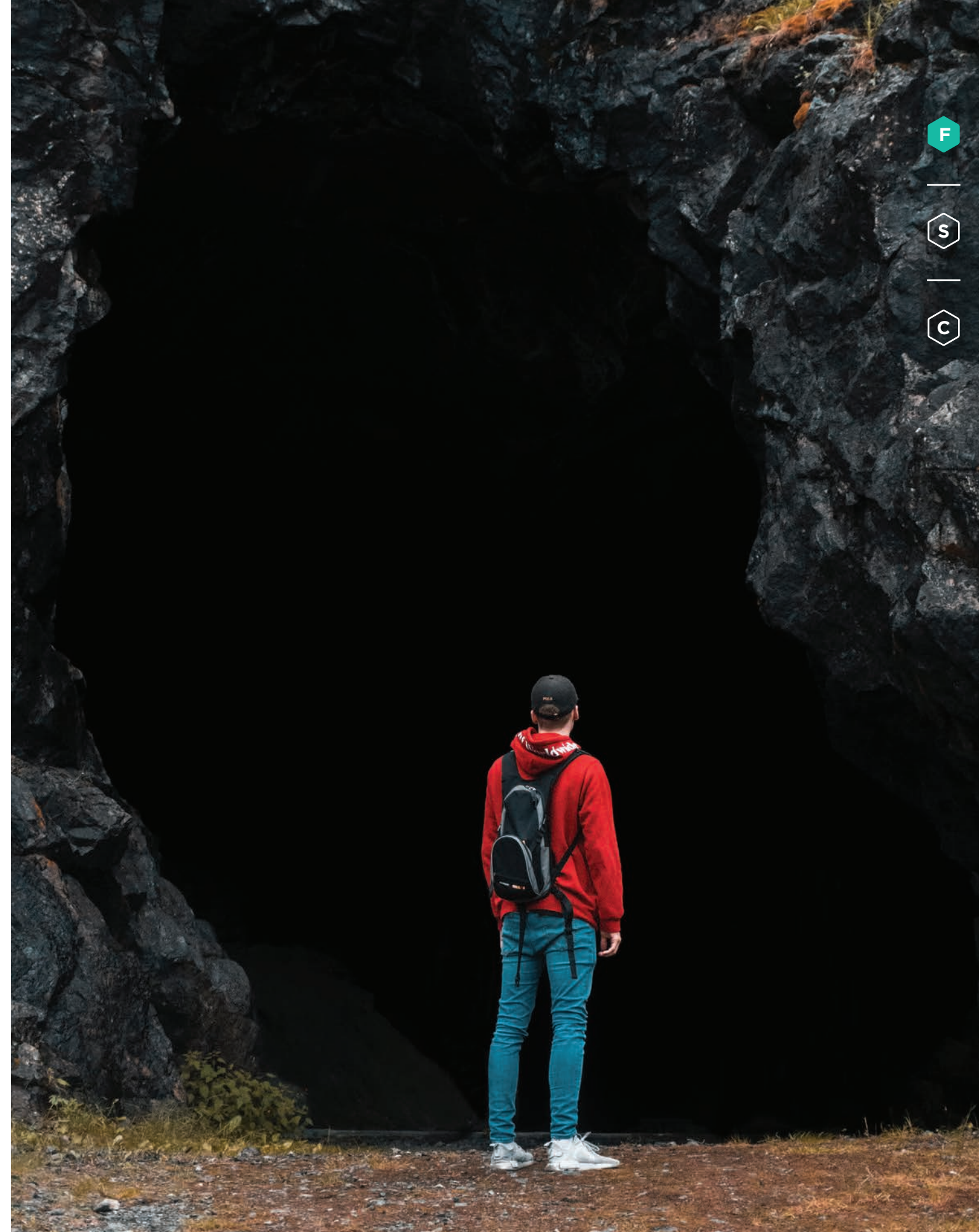
She came to Colstrip, a tiny Montana town of roughly 2,400, because her husband works at that local power plant. Needing a job, she began substitute teaching. That led to her acquiring a Class 5 Emergency Permit to teach in Montana. Now that she's hooked on the profession, she is now working to earn both her teaching certification and a master's degree.

CHANGE IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

Speaking of the local power plant, it's one of the reasons Yates is so passionate about fast-tracking the entrepreneurial mindset that her town needs right now.

Colstrip has depended upon the local power plant as its economic driver for generations. With a planned total shutdown by the summer of 2022, the phased exit of the coal-fired Colstrip Electric Generating Station is going to leave a gaping hole in the local economy. One that, with the right young minds, can and will be filled with new ideas and innovations.

Like many other small towns across the nation, this community needs some young business-minded folks unafraid to take their entrepreneurial ideas to market and start building a profitable future. So when Yates and her fellow teacher, Mindy Kohn, happened upon a booth at





I didn't know I was creative,
until I started doing her class.

a Career and Technical Education Conference and learned about the Youth Entrepreneurs program, they envisioned an immediate payoff.

"I would be crazy not to try this," Yates says.

Kohn concurred, and together the pair is gradually getting every other teacher at Colstrip High on board.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR EVERYONE
Kohn brought entrepreneurship expertise to her culinary, fashion, tourism and personal finance classes, a move which initially bewildered students and parents.

"I don't think anyone could rationally argue why it wouldn't make sense to learn about entrepreneurship in almost any class, truly," Kohn says.

She herself runs a culinary side hustle, for instance.

One of Kohn's students had the idea about bringing a non-profit dialysis center to the Indian reservation where she lives.

She had seen her grandparents travel to Billings for care so often that she felt there was an unfulfilled need.

Yates and Kohn recently guided the student in molding her ideas into a contest submission. The Montana Chamber of Commerce's 2021 High School Business Plan and Pitch Competition will award cash prizes and scholarships to high school students with new ideas and existing small businesses.

"It does impact the community, it just depends what the student is passionate about," Kohn says.

Another start-up venture with promise is Abby Baer's Virtual Outfitters, an app the sophomore designed to help online shoppers. Users upload their photo along with their measurements. Then, they can visualize themselves in the piece of clothing they're considering buying. Her vision is to sell the app to retailers who would link to the tool from their online stores. She intends to pitch her idea to the popular clothing store in Colstrip, followed by other retailers.

"I did not know I was that creative, until I started doing her class," Baer says, "and that I could actually start a business."

THE REAL PURPOSE OF EDUCATION
While much of education can get lost in standardized testing, AP credit, and the hundreds of other distractions that muddy our waters, the true purpose of schooling is on full display in the classrooms of Yates and Kohn. By addressing the students' individual needs and unique abilities, they're addressing the needs of a struggling community.

Kohn says her once-weekly entrepreneurship activities have succeeded in getting students who don't normally participate more engaged.

"It's scary to give up control when you are doing PBL (project-based learning). You don't want to just let the kids go. Because what's going to happen? You don't know." Maybe more of the career should feel like this. Letting go of control in order to take it back. That will most certainly be the story of Colstrip. Letting go of something that felt so important, and believing in their people to usher in the next big thing.

Erika Rose is a freelance writer. She's written for hospitals, universities and more. You may read more about her at Erikacharlotterose.com

OPENING DOORS AND REIMAGINING PATHWAYS

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SUIT UP





BURNOUT IS JUST A MEME

For a decade, I taught these fascinating creatures called “Teenagers.” A never-ending well of oddities, eccentricities, and unusual social behaviors, these little fellas continued to perplex and excite me with each passing day. Among the more unusual behaviors prevalent in the lifecycle of the American teen was an evolving linguistic device ... like coded speech or a spy game cypher ... called a “meme.” The memes seemed to be at once completely vapid and powerfully meaningful; ironic and on-the-nose. I couldn’t figure it out.

The memes were like an elevated emoji, capable of conveying important thoughts, but only for a matter of days or weeks at best. They’d birth entirely new language from the meme-culture. For a while it was “salty.” They were salty about everything. Then it was “triggered.” Then “shook.” Got a bad test score? Shook. Heard a mind-blowing fact? Shook. Hilarious joke? Shook.

As soon as I came to understand something, it would vanish. Gone with the advent of a new meme. A completely transitive language.

Transitive, temporary, ironic, and without substance. That’s how I think about teacher burnout.

Let’s take a long look in the mirror. Are we so different from those creatures we teach? Rather than calling something “sus” we use terms like “stressed.” “Burned out.” “Over it.” Our slang has gotten more boring, but it’s still there.

Between 19-30% of teachers quit within their first five years, according to a report

**THE MEMES
WERE LIKE
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BEST.**

by the Learning Policy Institute. Overall teacher attrition rates in the United States are at 8%, which is high when compared with other countries such as Finland, Canada, and Singapore, where the rate is closer to 3%.

I don’t question that teachers feel burned out — I’ve been studying burnout for years. Instead, I question what exactly do we mean when we say “burned out”? What are the symptoms? What are the causes, beyond just saying “work”? Is it a permanent condition that deserves a

permanent solution? Or is it “distracted boyfriend,” a sliver of the zeitgeist, gone when we’re ready to grapple with the next thing?

The truth is, it’s the latter. But to move beyond burnout, we have to own it, appreciate it, maybe even laugh at it, then set it aside and move forward. We have to move it from “meme” to “meaningful” to “memory.”

Let’s start by exploring the symptoms and the causes. Then, we can find the remedies of burnout (and yes, there are remedies).

SYMPTOMS

In service-based occupations, there are three main symptoms of burnout, what I refer to as the Three Horsemen of the Burnout Apocalypse. Consider if you’ve felt any of these recently:

Emotional Exhaustion

The “stress” element of burnout — feeling fatigued, overextended by work, and drained of physical and emotional resources.

Depersonalization

Cynicism, negativity, and disconnection with others, especially students. This can also include feeling demoralized toward the profession as a whole.

(Reduced) Self-Efficacy

Often referred to as “reduced personal accomplishment,” reduced self-efficacy is a more accurate way to describe burnout among teachers. We can still objectively be successful, but if we don’t feel efficacious in our current and future abilities to achieve goals, it contributes to burnout.

BURNOUT CAUSES

Now let’s explore what’s likely causing those burnout symptoms. There are plenty of factors, especially this year.

Emotional Exhaustion

New roles and new processes for virtual and hybrid learning mean new work loads. Higher workload plus reduced resources equals higher exhaustion. Vicarious stressors (like trying to parent

or just exist in a pandemic) increase emotional exhaustion. And, importantly, we’re facing some real cognitive dissonance between what we think our purpose is as teachers and what the job actually entails.

Depersonalization

Not being face-to-face with the students we serve reduces our sense of personalization. Teaching to a Zoom room of blank

cameras doesn’t lend itself to deep human connection.

And then there’s doom scrolling social media, which exposes us to anti-teacher tirades. Even if the “teachers are the enemy” viewpoints are the minority, our brains latch onto these demoralizing sentiments.

Reduced Self-efficacy

Perhaps the most important driver of “burnout” is a feeling of helplessness and purpose that rise from a combination of institutional challenges, current realities, and a career that doesn’t always have the freedom and flexibility we believe (rightly) we deserve.

FIXING BURNOUT

It’s totally possible to conquer this feeling. We have a few suggestions.

Notice the good stuff

Our brains are wired to notice and remember bad more than good, so we need to work harder to feed our minds positive experiences. Positivity accounts for 44% of the variance on resilience and 52% of the variance on burnout. So make a move from hoarding every emotion to curating the good ones. Have a victory session rather than a vent session, and start a gratitude journal.

Limit the Bad

Facebook secretly manipulated new feeds in 2014, and experimented by changing the positive and negative posts users saw: they wanted to see how emotions on social media spread. The result? Emotions are contagious, especially negative ones. See too many negative posts, you’ll feel depressed. Consider resisting the urge to vent, as it doesn’t increase well-being and often diminishes it. You can also try taking a social media break.

Live in the present

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction has been found to significantly reduce burnout.. Here’s how it’s done:

Pause to breathe and note your surroundings, especially when you feel tension, stress or anxious thinking.

Check the chatter in your head surrounding adversity. Stress isn’t what happens to us. It’s how we feel about what happens to us.

Stop striving for 2019 goals in 2021. Students need connection more than content. They need hope rather than homework. And, stop “should’ing” on yourself for not being a master teacher during the biggest shift in education we’ve seen in our lives

Burnout is not a nebulous malaise. It has specific symptoms, specific causes, and

specific remedies. We have to know our ills before we can grow our skills.

Give yourself the permission to self-reflect. Get specific about how you’re feeling, then take aggressive action in caring for yourself using real research-based, teacher-tested practices. But remember, burnout is just a meme. It’s a language with tremendous power. It drives overwhelming emotion. But it’s impermanent; transitive. Face it. Take the time to understand it. Laugh at it. Then, poof —

push beyond it.

Burnout is not your fault. But well-being is your right and responsibility.

Shook.

Chase Mielke is an award-winning teacher and nationally recognized speaker. He is the best-selling author of The Burnout Cure: Learning to Love Teaching Again. Find him on Twitter @chasemielke or via his website www.affectiveliving.com.



UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LINGO

BY JAIDYN SOFIA a 14-year-old 8th grader.

Understanding slang and new terms is a very easy thing to do ... for kids.

For adults, on the other hand — well, it’s a completely different story. Every time I hear an adult say something is “swag” or “rad,” I, as a 14-year-old, feel a very strong sense of second-hand embarrassment. Trying to keep up with kids and modern slang can be difficult, especially if you’re trying to stay hip and cool. One wrong slang and you can go from “cool” to “OMG, nobody even uses that word anymore.”

For the sake of your own embarrassment, it’s a good idea to try to stay in close touch with what words are “in” and which ones aren’t. I’ve decided to create a list of modern slang words to help make your job a little bit easier. Hopefully, this list helps you get some leverage to assist you in communicating with kids.

01 Mood: to feel the same, or to have gone through the same experience
In a sentence “Dude, I got like no sleep last night.” “OMG mood.”

02 Karen: A person who feels extra entitled
In a sentence “I asked for soy milk, not whole. I need to talk to the manager right now.” “Don’t be such a Karen.”

03 Fire: Something really good tasting
In a sentence “Those kicks are fire, bro.”

04 Cap: to lie
In a sentence “Bruh, I knew she was capping when she told me she was sick.”

05 Stan: To support somebody, or to like somebody
In a sentence “I stan Olaf in Frozen 2, he is so iconic.”

06 Tea: The gossip or news
In a sentence “So tell me the tea about your breakup with Joshua.”

COURAGE

SHOES

How one class project launched
an international business that's
making a difference.

By Megan Sullivan



In August 2020, 12-year-old Evalyn Eddington was feeling nervous about going into 7th grade. In a normal year, seventh grade brings on feelings of anxiety: junior high, new school, changes all around. But this was not a normal year. This was the year of a global pandemic, and Evalyn was feeling the same amped-up nerves that millions of kids were feeling as they entered into the new school year. Karen Eddington, Evalyn's mother, recalls, "In the mornings, she would just be in a puddle of like 'I don't want to go to school, this is hard, this is scary, this entire school year is new.'" Grappling with a year of uncertainties ahead of her, Evalyn found a creative outlet in a pair of white sneakers. Breaking out an old watercolor set, Evalyn turned the plain white low-tops into a vibrant array of color and emotion. When she put them on, she knew she could brave it. She knew she could muster the courage to push through this year ... to thrive in this year of middle school.

Meanwhile, Joslyn Heiniger from South Cache Middle School in Hyrum, Utah, was also preparing for an uncertain school year, filled with Zoom sessions and social distancing. It'd be vastly different than anything she'd known before, especially since her classes were hands-on experiences. Faced with the challenges of teaching during a pandemic, Heiniger questioned how she would teach her College and Career Awareness class that relies primarily on experiential learning. "Covid shaped what happened in

the classroom this year," Heiniger says. "How are we going to keep [the students] safe? How do we do group work? Is it okay to have them talk?"

Pulling knowledge from her previous career as an academic advisor at Utah State University, partnered with her 10 years of teaching math at the middle and high school levels, Heiniger embraced the challenges ahead of her. She was eager to introduce her 7th graders to an entrepreneurship program she had implemented in her high school courses the year prior. Despite the challenges of the year, she knew she could bring the deeply experiential learning model to which she'd grown accustomed to life in the Covid-world. The entrepreneurship class would be the ultimate test of her own ability to innovate, but she also knew it had the greatest upside.

With her shoes painted rainbow, Evalyn began the seventh grade, and soon enough, she was coming home raving to her mother about Heiniger's class. Eddington says, "In this class, she just listened in and got ideas and she came home and she would talk about her ideas all the time." Heiniger noted Evalyn's interest in class, and once the unit on entrepreneurship began, Evalyn was even more eager to learn, this time about starting a business, and soon enough, an idea was born.

Evalyn started staying after class with Heiniger to discuss ideas she had about selling shoes like the ones she had made for herself. After two weeks of telling her

After 2 weeks of telling her mom about her plans, Evalyn and her parents launched her business *Brave and Creative* with a social media post, and within an hour, her Courage Shoes had sold out.

mom about her plans, she and her parents launched her business "Brave and Creative" with a social media post, and within an hour, her Courage Shoes had sold out. "I thought it would take a couple of days for even one person to want the shoes. But we sold out in an hour. I was so surprised," Evalyn says.

Today, Evalyn's idea, the one that began in Heiniger's classroom, has become an international business. Heiniger is proud to point out how her student's business is so much more than an entrepreneurial endeavor. "The whole concept of her shoes is to give back and to bring joy ... to me, that made the whole moment worth it," she said. "That was the point." In the challenging school year this has been, she is happy "... that at least something got through."

Megan Sullivan teaches fifth grade in New York, and has spent the last 13 years teaching mostly middle school grades in Rhode Island, Indiana, and New York. When she's not chasing her two kids around or playing cards with her husband, she is pursuing a postgraduate degree in Educational Administration.

Evalyn's watercolor shoe project helped her find her bearings during the pandemic and launched a new entrepreneur into the world.





MAIN STREET
USA
20 Lesson 21
PLANNING

Building Social Entrepreneurs

Bringing our economy back will rest on
young minds and driven hearts

Pull into Anytown, USA; drive down to the town square and take a little stroll. You'll see local businesses struggling to survive. Even with a community rallied in support, you'll likely see a Main Street still in decay.

Big box retailers of the 90s put pressure on small and local companies like never before. Picking up where they left off, Amazon and the rise of e-commerce decimated the remaining local shops. And now, a global pandemic, barring us all from the local brick and mortar experiences we had come to cherish, may have dealt a death blow to an already ailing downtown in many American cities. Indeed, popular local business review platform, Yelp, projected an average of 800 businesses have closed each day during

the height of the pandemic. 48-percent of those businesses impacted have indicated there's a real chance they'll never reopen the doors.

But, ask any entrepreneur and they'll be quick to point to history. With each next wave of economic destruction, newer and more industrious businesses have risen to fill the void. As many budding entrepreneurs might say, rumors of the death of Main Street have been greatly exaggerated.

But, those new local businesses require new local entrepreneurs. And that starts with us, the teachers. The Vacant Lot activity gives teachers the chance to contextualize nearly any learning goal or standard into a project for social entrepreneurship. You'll build up community changemakers simply by asking your students to imagine the impact they could have on the streets of their own town, had they some simple resources and a great idea.

PROJECT STATS:

TIME REQUIRED:
120 mins / 3 class periods

DIFFICULTY:
★★★★

GRADE RANGE:
9-12

NOTES:

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PROJECT: THE VACANT LOT

OVERVIEW

Vacant Lot asks students to be social change-makers in their community. Photos of vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and empty land are scattered around the class or presented on the display with a simple question: What should be built here? What can create value for your community? How would you imagine your community better?

The answers can be anything. A new non-profit, a park, a business, or a service center. It's all up for grabs. But, careful, the name of the game is creating value for the community. That means it should be both economical and feasible for the city and its constituents to support. Students will conduct research and plan to design a business model that they will pitch. Only one business will be selected for investment by the city, so students must be prepared! You'll have to demonstrate that value to succeed as a change-maker in this lesson.

PREPARATION

Getting ready for the project is all about exploring the local community. A little Googling often uncovers a ton of information on local resources.

01 Select the Lots

Select a handful of vacant lots that the student would choose from. This can be handled by exploring a commercial real estate website (Loopnet) or, for the more adventurous-at-heart, by driving around neighborhoods.

02 Explore local resources

Local economic development boards and chambers of commerce often have initiatives in place for repurposing vacant lots. They can even be tapped into for project mentors, focus group participants, and pitch panelists.

INTRODUCTION

03 Set the Stage

You have been contracted by our city to identify what business should fill a vacant lot here in our community. The business selected for that location should be financially viable and sustainable in the local economy. That means it has to appeal to the people in that neighborhood and probably draw in business from elsewhere. You will conduct research, plan, and design a business that you'll then have the opportunity to pitch to me and a whole panel of folks. Only one business will be selected for investment by the city, so you must be prepared!

ADAPTATION

This activity is incredibly versatile and can be applied to most any grade level or in any subject area. As a result, getting ready for Vacant Lot is all about deciding the best variation for your students.

What learning outcomes do you expect your students to achieve?

Vacant lot applies perfectly to economics and marketing courses. You could imagine applying learnings to a module on The Great Depression. Pitch and planning elements bring composition and persuasive speech to life.

What's your project timeline, including deadlines and deliverables?

Include a deadline of when your students need to share what product they will create so you can purchase their supplies.

How will your students reflect and receive feedback throughout the project?

Will students work together or in groups?

This project can be done in either format, but might need some reimagining.





Part 01: Research

Like any good product or business, we start with a hearty research phase. Your students will employ a number of research methods, get some on-site experience, and get their heads fully into the site they're developing

- 04
- Build the Questions**
Students must conduct research to learn more about their community, so they can decide what kind of business would be successful and beneficial. Allow students to generate their own driving questions.

Driving questions will push them through their research. They should all attempt to find the answer to the big question: "Which business is the best addition in my community"? As they research, make sure they are recording what they learn.

Example Questions:
What are the demographics, psychographics, etc. of our community?
What do community members think should go there?
What was at that location previously (if anything)? Why did it fail?

- 05
- Walk it Out**
Get students out there and in the community. They'll never be able to understand the space, the neighborhood, and the clientele without a little bit of time on site. Do a community walkabout. Get your students out of the classroom and go on a trip to view the vacant lot in person. This also allows the opportunity to see what environment surrounds the vacant lot (houses, businesses, etc.)

- 06
- Host a Focus Group.**
Sounds monumental, but it's way easier and way more impactful than you'd imagine. Just invite in community members with connections to the property to share their inputs for what they think the community needs, what they would like to go in that location, etc. Remember to keep logging that research.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION

Use Google Earth. Students can explore the entire community at their fingertips.

Part 2. Product Creation

Ok, we've got our heads in it. Now, let's build something that will revitalize the community and brighten up the neighborhood, bringing smiles to the faces of passer-bys and bringing some much-deserved cash into your students' pockets.

- 07
- Ideate, Ideate, Ideate**
This is where students have the hardest time acclimating to the Empowered classroom. We love and encourage failure. Use this step to get your students' minds cranking on full tilt. They should be throwing out dozens of ideas before landing on the one perfect concept... the one they're ready to bring to life.

During the process, remind them to think critically. Weed out worse ideas through clever questions and use Empowered Principles to serve as a framework to think through each next concept.

- 08
- Build the Plan**
Allow students the opportunity to choose what product they create to outline/develop their business idea. Don't step in the way of any idea.

IMPORTANT: Research continues through this part – Students will need to continue researching driving questions related to their business idea.

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

Looking for an easy way to bring ideas to life without all the business jargon? The Business Model Canvas gives the student the structure of a business plan without the overhead, allowing quick understanding and ease of change.

Not sure if an opportunity is worth your time? The Business Model Canvas allows students to use a super-easy graphic organizer to outline an idea, assess the opportunity, and think about whether it makes sense before jumping in deeper.

This simple tool affords numerous opportunities for students to expand upon their learning and practice other skills. Find the template using the code here.



SOMETHING HERE

Ex eumquia eprepre ruptio cu una aciande llique vellupt asitenest quis ut harum, que moluptur?

Part 3. Pitch Prep

Have students prepare a brief pitch to share their business model. Here are some ideas of how you could set up this pitch:

Class Pitch: Students will pitch their business model in front of the class, using whatever visual aid they feel best supports their idea (PowerPoint, model, display board, etc.).

Video Pitch: Incorporate digital media and audio/visual skills by having students create a video pitch to share their idea. This could be posted to YouTube or your school website and shared with community members.

Gallery Walk: Students will create a display for their business model. Visitors to the gallery walk will visit each display to learn about the ideas. You could split the class into groups and rotate who are the visitors in rounds. You could also invite other classes to visit. Be sure to include a way for visitors to give feedback to the presenters – This could be comment cards, have visitors "vote" for their favorite idea, have visitors "invest" in the business model they think is best, etc. You could use YE bonds to have students vote.

Judges Panel: Invite in community members, staff, administrators, etc. to sit on a panel to hear each pitch. The judges will provide feedback to the presenters. You could also have the judges select the top pitches.

Student Choice: If possible, allow students to choose which presentation method best suits their idea and personality. This may be difficult to logistically plan; however, it will give your students greater ownership in the project. continue researching driving questions related to their business idea.

Part 4. The Pitch

It's finally time. Let the students pitch. We suggest a Shark Tank vibe to dial up the fun IRL. But, if, you're virtual, FlipGrip and other tools make the virtual pitch, voting, and commenting super interactive.

Don't forget to plan a way to record and/or collect feedback – This includes from their class-room peers, other students, staff, or community members. Your panel of judges will fill out a simple rubric as part of the assessment for Vacant Lot. That rubric is fully in the hands of each individual teacher, but we suggest including things like: creativity, viability, presentation, research, and product on 1-10 scales as a starting point.

Part 5. Reflection

Engage students in a reflection of the entire project. Ask them to think about what they learned and the process of how they learned it. Are they proud of their work? What would they do differently next time?

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think the lot was vacant to begin with?
- How did you decide what was the best value for the vacant lot?
- How did you decide which business idea to pursue?
- What influence did using Sound Judgment have on your selection of a business idea?
- Explain how Win-Win Focus played a role in completing this project.
- What did you discover about your community?
- What would have happened if you had not used Knowledge during your planning?
- What was the most challenging part of this project and why?
- How would you justify your business idea over all the others?

Debriefing is an instructional strategy that asks teacher to Zack Morris - style pause their lessons to reflect on an interesting moment.



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Vacant Lot activity is a great way to bring SEL skills into the normal learning environment. Three of the major SEL skills are on display in various parts of this activity.

In this activity, students are exercising **Social Awareness** as they are invited to explore virtually or in-person parts of their community that are vacant or lackluster. Through this process, students will be challenged to empathize with the information they are learning to proceed in the design thinking process for the remainder of the project. Additionally, students will practice **perspective-taking** and **respect for others** as they define the problem and ideate on possible solutions.

Finally, students will be challenged with their **Self-Management** skills as this project has many facets. They will need to manage their stress, control their impulses, and discover what motivates them in order to best complete the project in full.

BRING IT TO LIFE WITH EMPOWERED



SPECIAL NEEDS ISN'T A LIFE SENTENCE

BY MEGAN SULLIVAN

WHEN STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SLIP THROUGH THE CRACKS, THEY OFTEN LAND BEHIND BARS. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CHANGE THIS AND HOW CAN WE EMPOWER OUR MOST CHALLENGED LEARNERS TO BECOME MORE THAN A STATISTIC?

We all know those students. The ones who can't sit still, the ones whose eyes glaze over when we give directions; and yes, the occasional students who can get so frustrated that they scream, throw things, or lash out at anyone in their path. For students with learning, emotional, or behavioral disabilities, or history of trauma, every day can feel like a battle as they face insurmountable challenges in learning, regulating emotions, and socializing.

Beckett Haight, of San Jose, California knows exactly how that feels. Describing his childhood as a time of being “off the walls,” Haight was diagnosed with ADHD in first grade and was put on medication to control his impulses. Years went by, different medications were tried, but little improvement was seen. Haight was still impulsive, was getting into fights and stealing, and he was also diagnosed

with ODD (oppositional defiant disorder). He found out years later from a teaching assistant who had worked in his school that he was the student that the teachers argued over, because no one wanted him in their classes.

In sixth grade, he was expelled from his school and went into juvenile detention for the first time, and by the end of junior high, he spent most of his time drinking and smoking marijuana. Finally, during the summer before ninth grade, he hit a low point. He had already been arrested a few times, and when his mom found a stash of things he had stolen, she called the police and Haight was sent to rehab. By 15, Haight had a criminal record and little hope for his future.

The story of Haight's experiences as a special education student is hard to digest. The challenges he went through, the times he spent in juvenile detention — many of those moments may have been avoided if he had gotten the help he needed. Sadly, his journey from the classroom to the criminal justice system is a common one that is occurring across the country.

The “school-to-prison pipeline” is a term that is well-known in the special education realm, but to general education classroom teachers and the larger community, this phenomenon may be less familiar. According to a data snapshot by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, students with dis-

abilities represent fully one quarter of all students arrested and/or referred to law enforcement, despite making up just 12% of the overall student population. It's the sad reality that we don't want to face: students with special needs face more than double the risk of falling into the criminal justice system when in school and it gets even more pronounced as they progress into adulthood.

Kim Lybolt, the Director of Special Education and Student Services in the Hudson City School District in Hudson, New York, has a front row seat to the school-to-prison pipeline. “It doesn't surprise me — the students who end up in trouble with the law, based on things that happened in the school,” Lybolt says. “Now,

when you have a kid who's already engaging in maladjusted behavior, you've got nothing left but to classify them.” Faced with the frustrating reality for these students, Lybolt passionately stresses the importance of teaching independence and hope. “We have to be more deliberate and intentional on our part in terms of teaching kids self-control, self-advocacy, self-reflection,” Lybolt continued, “That's where we'll see the greatest gains.”

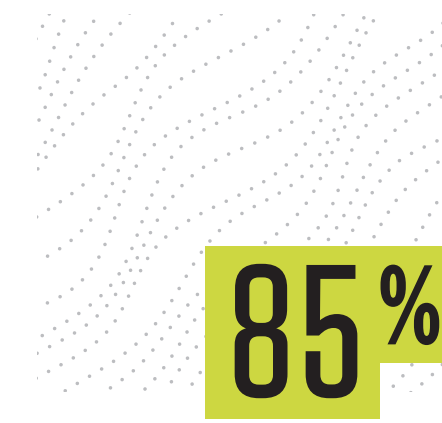
Classifying students and providing them with IEPs, 504s, graphic organizers, preferential seating, counseling, one-to-one aides, and a host of other accommodations can be a step in the right direction, but more often than not, it paves a path

to greater challenges. Students with disabilities often struggle to regulate their emotions and advocate for themselves. As a result, they're more likely to experience disciplinary actions that remove them from the learning environment. In fact, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (13%) than students without disabilities (6%), according to the US Department of Education.

Instead of behaviors improving, students with disabilities are often left to feel alienated, and when this is coupled with the inability to regulate emotional responses, they are set up for failure — lacking purpose, identity, or a connection with their own value. Without the support they need in school, they fall through the cracks, and find themselves marred in a cycle of crime and recidivism.

Matt Moran, 37, of Westtown, New York, spent six years preparing inmates at the Orange County Correctional Facility in Goshen, New York, to take the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) so they could receive their high school equivalency diplomas. He witnessed firsthand the embarrassment that students with IEPs and 504s had felt surrounding their disabilities before landing in jail. It became clear that the gaps in resources available to them, and the stigma of being classified, were a large part of their transition from classroom to jail. It was emotional to even hear about.

“Some of these kids had dropped out at such a young age, 16 or 17 years old,” explained Moran. “This is part of the other side of the stigma, when they are left behind and when you're 16, 17, and you're in a class with 14 year olds. I heard that so many times — ‘I didn't want to be in class



One study found that 85% of students in detention or delinquency centers qualify for special needs services, while less than 40% receive needed services. The numbers are more staggering for minority populations.



WHAT CAN WE DO IN OUR CLASSROOMS TO EMPOWER OUR STUDENTS WHO ARE FEELING FORGOTTEN AND UNDERVALUED?

with little kids? It wasn't just because they didn't try all the time. It's because they had difficulty reading, it's because they needed these extra mods that sometimes in a larger school setting, they weren't able to get. Even with the IEP, even with the 504, overcrowded classrooms and not enough resources, the school wasn't able to meet those goals, as much as they tried."

Lybolt recounted the experiences of a former student she had worked with who had experienced "significant trauma at a young age" and was then adopted. Though the student received a great deal of support and was even placed in a "residential private special education school paid for by the district," her intense emotional and mental health difficulties led to a pattern of suicide attempts and drug use. It means she can't maintain steady employment, can't take care of her child, and can't pull herself out of an endless feeling cycle of challenge. While this student hasn't yet been through the prison system, stories like hers mean that those alarming statistics are actually just a tip of the iceberg.

Within the boundaries of a challenged system, this poor girl's teachers and school district had done everything they could to support her. Their efforts and the resources provided simply weren't sustainable and, in some way, she was already lost. "Our programs are designed to give students the tools to use as adults," Lybolt says, "but there definitely seems to be a gap between the intensity of support available in the school system (almost a forced participation in services) and the adult world where no one is calling you or knocking on your door to show up at your appointments." In our work to support our struggling learners, we run the risk of stunting their independence and sense of self.

And so, without an eye on each student's path to self-discovery, the school-to-prison pipeline gets established. Tests, yearly progress, and near-arbitrary metrics of success all erect barriers that incentivize a system to let those most in need simply fall away. Behaviors in the classroom lead to suspensions, gaps in learning widen, and frustrations and self-doubt reach new heights. From there, these young

people find their value elsewhere — often on the streets. Especially in low-income and urban areas, "Gangs do offer that sense of identity and source of income," Moran explains. Lybolt echoes this idea, noting, "Our kids that end up involved on the streets tend to find their value in relationships."

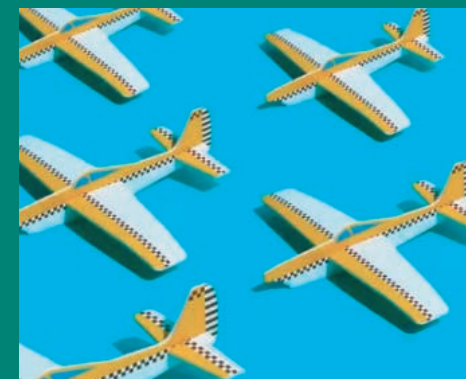
So what can we do in our classrooms to empower our students who are feeling forgotten and undervalued? It starts by empowering teachers. Entrusting us to build a classroom around discovering and developing the unique talents of each learner. Entrusting us to build solid, real relationships. "You're not just another teacher — you actually give a crap. Once [the kids] realize that, you can get through to them," Moran says.

For students with disabilities, authentic relationships with people who care can make a world of difference. But that's just the beginning. The right resources need to be available and life skills need to be taught. "We have to be more deliberate and intentional on our part in terms of teaching kids these things, right?" Lybolt asks. "So, self-control, self advocacy, self-reflection and not hiding the fact that a kid has a learning difference or a learning disability or an emotional disability or whatever. But almost embracing it, saying, 'This is me, it's ok, and these are the strategies I need to go over it, go around it, or go through it.'"

Beckett Haight's story didn't end in rehab. For him, rehab was where his future of self-awareness and worth began. After a 10 month stay, he sobered up and was put on new medication. With new medication regulating his ADHD and an IEP finally in place, he was able to slow his brain down and look at his life and assess where it was going. He remembers thinking about his future for the first time and realizing he couldn't rely on his mom's help forever. Until that point, the thought had never even crossed his mind. As he explained it, most kids with ADHD simply can't think deeply like that, because their mind has already moved on to the next thing.



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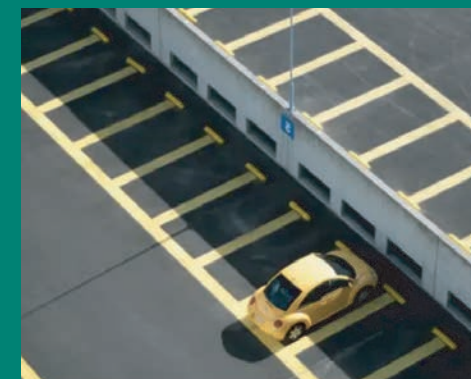


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Here's what we learned this year, according to science.

By Alyson Krueger

2020 was the year of experimentation. As in-person learning was suspended across the country and remote learning took hold, we learned a lot about different ways teachers can connect with students as well as at-home issues that impact academic performance.

A range of researchers had a field-day looking at everything from how a lack of nourishment at home can impact test scores to how virtual learning compares to the classroom. We now have the results of studies from this challenging and enlightening year. Here are some of the highlights.

01: INSIGHTS ABOUT INEQUALITY

Some Students Have Way More to Lose in a Crisis. “The pandemic has set back learning for all students, but especially for students of color,” according to a report released in December by McKinsey, a global management consultancy. When an emergency hit, low income students and those from minority communities could not adapt as well to virtual learning. Low income and minority students former are likely to lose a total of 12.4 months of learning during the pandemic, twice the national average.

This is an issue we should all care about; it impacts how Americans will contribute to the economy in the future. Black students, for example, could lose as much as 18% of their potential lifetime earnings.

The racial achievement gap in the United States is already depriving our economy as much as \$705 billion each year. The good news is there are proven acceleration methods that can help.

Kids Can't Learn When They're Hungry. It should come as no surprise that when kids don't have proper nourishment, their work suffers. The National Bureau of Economic Research released a report backing up this common sense with science. It found that as benefits like food stamps run out at the end of the month, kids show noticeable effects in their work. Teens who are hungry do significantly worse on their college-entrance exams. This study reminds us of the need to address the whole-child when teaching.

02: NEW TEACHING METHODS

Acting is the Best Way to Learn Language. As teachers struggled to connect with students over Zoom, many tried new ways to get kids to learn. The Educational Psychology Review studied one of these methods: acting. In their report, released at the start of the pandemic, they showed how having kids act out new



words and phrases nearly doubles their ability to remember them.

If acting isn't an option, the report also found that having kids looking at videos and pictures can help them better remember words than just staring at text. The general takeaway: remember to use all sorts of techniques to engage every type of learner in your class.

Analytical Questions Drive Comprehension. Applied Cognitive Psychology studied another technique college professors in particular are trying out: having students formulate their own queries. Their report found that getting students to generate questions about a text is far more effective than testing, highlighting, underlining, or note-taking at helping them remember. They also found that students who generate questions also tend to understand concepts rather than simply rote trivia.

Soft Skills are Important Too. The National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research looked at how schools are focusing on all aspects of a student's mental and intellectual

development. They found that some schools are great at social learning, which prepares kids with soft skills, improves attendance, and increases mental health. Others focus more on “hard work,” which increases GPA, test scores, and academic performance. The answer lies somewhere in the middle. Looking at the entire child in education can help students develop in all areas during their time at school.

03: VIRTUAL LEARNING

We Don't Know Jack About Virtual Classrooms. Video streaming services were around long before the pandemic, but they were never tested for the classroom until COVID-19 became a reality. The Metro Atlanta Policy Lab for Education published one of the earliest reports over the summer on this topic, looking at the efficacy of virtual instruction in grades K-12.

The authors believe that engagement is the number one predictor of success in virtual classes and that incentives like low-cost “nudges” can push kids to participate. The biggest finding from this

study is how much we still have to learn. “Unfortunately, existing research provides little reliable evidence on which online learning practices are most effective,” wrote the authors. “And the few existing causal studies yield inconsistent results.”

Surprise! Teachers are Stressed. It's no surprise that COVID-19 stressed out teachers. With no warning and little training, they were forced to transition to entirely new teaching styles (and that's on top of worrying about the health of themselves and their families.) But the RAND Corporation found that teachers were already overwhelmed long before the pandemic. In fact, it is one of the top reasons public school teachers quit.

Teachers will have less anxiety if they are given flexibility (many stated it as their number one reason for picking a new gig) and have more agency in their careers. It's up to school administrators to make that happen

Alyson Krueger is a freelance journalist in New York City.

7 podcasts every teacher should be trying.



The annals of podcasting are stocked with content-producers ranging from the untouchable brilliance of NPR to “Buffy Buff’s Weekly Dive,” a three-hour analysis of an episode of “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and a scary trip into the psyche of a man with an ever looser grip on reality.

Thankfully, there are also podcasts directed specifically to teachers and the craft of education — and this genre has grown tremendously in just a few short years. They’re not just rich in education, they’re also cathartic in a way you won’t believe until you jump in. Here are seven to try.



CULT OF PEDAGOGY

Jennifer Gonzalez

Maybe the most popular and well-reviewed podcast in education, Jennifer Gonzalez’s “Cult of Pedagogy” has lived up to its name ... it’s started a cult following. Every big name in the industry, from Sal Khan (Khan Academy) to Pedro Noguera to Wendy Turner, has been interviewed, and the show has only gotten more interesting with time.



EDSURGE WEEKLY

Jeff Young

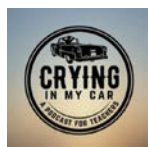
Known as the best brand in ed tech, “EdSurge” offers a fount of information on the software, hardware, and technology that propels most modern learning experiences. These hosts keep things digestible and always applied directly to education.



THE CREATIVE CLASSROOM

John Spencer

Often leaning into big-think ideas like project-based learning, growth mindset, and student transformation, “The Creative Classroom” is chock full of research, tips, and practical ideas that can be applied to — or at least inspire — your teaching and your classroom environment.



CRYING IN MY CAR

Devin Siebold

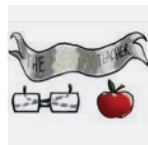
The name maybe says it all. But, if it doesn’t, the name of one weekly segment says a lot: “Teachers in the News Not Touching Kids.” A weekly breath of fresh air to help teachers get through class without pulling their hair out.



WATER FOR TEACHERS

Shamari K. Reid

Teachers, teaching, books, and more, the Heinemann podcast features a little of everything. Here’s how they describe it: “Focused on engagement with the hearts and humanity of those who teach. One thing we know for sure is: teachers are human. We have fears. We experience tragedy. We struggle. We are affected by crises and pandemic.”



#NERDYCAST

Nicholas Provenzano

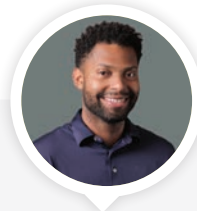
An education podcast featuring some of the smartest and funniest people in our school landscape. Talking education, technology, and pop culture, every week brings some new laughs and some deep thoughts to drive the classroom forward



REIMAGINE SCHOOLS

Greg Goins

Hosted by Greg Goins, this podcast features many of the nation’s top educators, authors, and innovators in K-12 education, with an emphasis on leadership development, scaling innovation, and transforming our public school system.



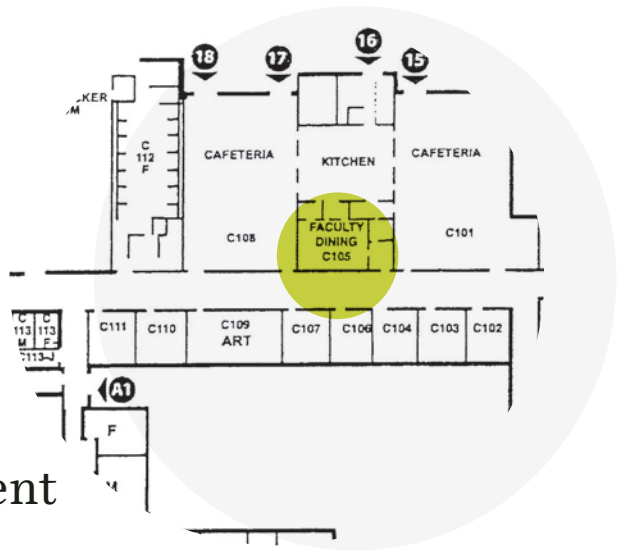
TIPS FROM A PRO:

Variety and diverse perspectives are always best. Bring podcasts into your lesson plan to leverage unique voices and highlight important ideas through story.

— MIK LOVE

Dear Lydia

Q My district split kids up, so many of my students that went virtual had another teacher.



The problem is, as they come back, they are way behind the kids that have been here. How can I pivot what I'm doing to get all of these kids back on track?

Sincerely,
Off the Rails

A Dear Off the Rails, Let's take a moment here to pause — deep breath, in and out. I can feel your stress and it's important that we acknowledge a couple of things: First, it is totally normal to feel stressed. Second, you're not alone. Yep, even the Teacher of the Year in your building likely feels this same way. We also need to do a quick reality check — for those kids who are "behind," you likely aren't going to get them all back on track. Sorry, but even superhero teachers like yourself are constrained by limits of time and attention.

Most importantly, in this situation specifically, you have students who are stressed, unsure, and know they are behind. Imagine the impact it's having on their mental health and self-esteem. So, before we move into some tactical strategies, reorient yourself — the social and emotional well-being of you and your students must remain the number one priority. Acknowledge the realities, show humility, and let the kids follow your lead.

Okay, now let's flex on this situation a little bit and show the world what we're made of. I know you may be accustomed to your class running in a more traditional manner, but this isn't the year for traditional ... it's the year for innovation rising from chaos. So, come on a

little journey with me. Let's use Experiential Self-Discovery™, our Empowered methodology, to problem solve here a little bit. If you're not familiar, no biggie. We'll run through the five components together here.

Right now, your freedom — how you are able to teach your students — may not totally be up to you. But what can you control? And how can you offer some of that control to your kids? It's amazing what a little bit of agency and choice can do particularly for the kids who are behind, feeling embarrassed, or just plain want to give up. Let the lesson work around them, not the other way around. Bring in some choice boards, build out a handful of pathways for each next lesson, and let them showcase what they do know — in a way that's most comfortable to them. For example, they could sing a song, write an essay, or create a comic book.

When all the kids are working on different skills, it's beneficial to have a shared framework for learning in place to keep them connected to the class and each other. Foundational Principles give you an evergreen lens through which students can make sense of anything, regardless of their mastery. I'd suggest implementing those principles and bringing the class together on projects that

You've felt a sense of unease, you have a vision of a better state, and you are working to make that vision attainable, for both you and your students.

don't require shared prior —knowledge, while their individual work aims to get everyone back on track.

To ensure that every student is challenged and honing their skills, you might ask students who are ahead to take on the role of peer leaders and help those who are behind. The magic of peer-to-peer learning is always amazing

and truly does create a win-win — your behind student is learning, while the ahead student gets to practice sharing their knowledge in a way that others can understand. Sounds like it's maybe time for some jigsaw learning or reciprocal teaching.

And don't forget: incentives matter. A classroom economy is an easy way to reward the behavior you like to see and get the class engaged together. The economy is critical as you rebuild a classroom of trust, respect, and excellence.

Your new classroom is probably feeling a lot different already. One thing you'll begin to notice with the increased freedom and new incentive model is that kids are more engaged and anxious than before. That's a good thing.

That anxiety — or sense of unease, as they call it — is what powers action. It's what powered you to make this change, for example. Creating that tension is your job now. Show them why not knowing causes distress, and learning eases it. Show them that the world is theirs to grab on to and make something of. Finally, how can you connect students to opportunities to discover their purpose? What kind of value can they create? What uniqueness can they bring to their community? That's what it's all about. And that's what this whole exercise has been about. You've created a classroom that mirrors a community, where students thrive by bringing their uniqueness to the table in each activity, where they are intrinsically motivated to get better and learn more, where they are finally connected to their value.

Your students are varying wildly in what they

know and where they're at in the learning process right now. But, the big secret is that's okay. It doesn't have to be impossible for you and it doesn't have to leave kids behind. It just means you have to get a little innovative. Remember how we said social and emotional well-being is the number one priority? Well, the smiles, laughs, and things that you learn about your students during experiential learning are good for the soul. Happy teaching. Stay Empowered. learning are good for the soul.

Happy teaching. Stay Empowered.

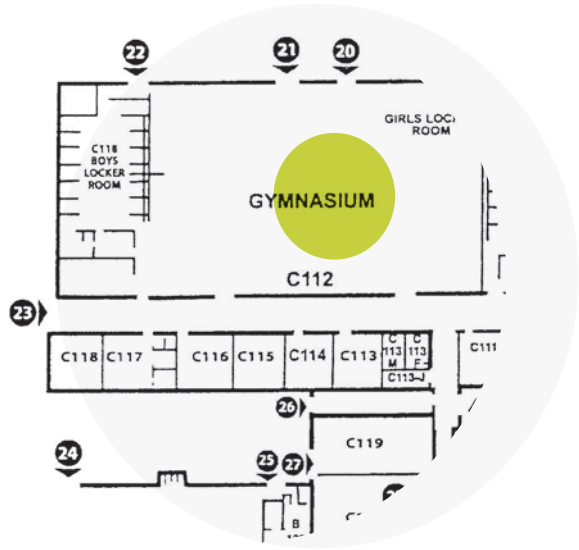
— Lydia

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Coach K on Creating an Environment for Winning

Sports are merely a microcosm of real life. Any good coach will tell you that they are preparing you, the athlete, to tackle some of life's greatest challenges. It's a well-worn tradition in modern coaching to create purpose first and players second.



A former standout basketball coach, Mik Love brings the competitive fire of sport into the classroom through his work with Empowered.

That means connecting each player to their purpose and the shared purpose of the team. Just as that philosophy creates championship teams and driven individuals, when applied in the classroom, it creates well-rounded students who are more connected to their unique talents and abilities.

Duke's Coach K (Mike Krzyzewski) has a list of accolades longer than this publication. Having won 5 NCAA championships and 3 olympic gold medals are just the tip of the iceberg. His philosophy on coaching gives us a perfect metaphor to build an effective and empowered classroom: Create an environment of ownership, eliminate arbitrary rules, put the focus on sound judgment, and empower every learner. Do these simple things and you'll be #winning.



OWNERSHIP

He sets the stage by giving his players ownership. "I don't want them playing for me or playing for Duke," said Krzyzewski on a panel at his university. "I want them to be Duke; to take ownership. It sounds simple, but it is amazingly strong." In your classroom it's all about giving students agency in the learning process and reminding them that, here, they're a part of the whole community, not a rogue actor.

FREEDOM

"Be careful not to 'rule' yourself into a box," he continues. The top-down approach to leading is almost never as effective as building intrinsic motivation. "Rules should not take the place of sound judgment and making choices, and as a leader, I'd rather have more flexibility to lead." It's time to do away with the poster of rules and punishments and replace it with expectations and incentives.

EMPOWERMENT

If you're going to create a culture that's sustainable, you need to have empowered people at every level," advised Krzyzewski. "Everyone is important, has ownership, and has the opportunity to lead in their way." Rarely do we see classrooms built in a way the empowers every learner and teacher to bring their unique value to the table. Great teams, however, use that mindset as the general operating principle. It's time we adopt the same concepts in the classroom.

These three concepts, applied in the classroom, can build a winning mindset in the individual students and a winning message from you, the coach. And, like any great coach, your message is only amplified by the confidence, vulnerability, and empathy you embody when delivering that message. Showing the ability to individually connect to each one of your players... well that puts you up there with the greats. You might not get the individual accolades or become world famous. But Coach Love gives credit where credit is due. If there were no empowered teachers there would be no me, no you! You commit to the journey, to daily improvement, to changing the lives of those you influence in the classroom and beyond. Now, let's build a Duke-dynasty in your classroom.

"I think it's impossible to burn out doing what you love. Your fire grows if you're doing it for that, because you learn more about what you love and you know there's even more to learn."

MIKE KRZYZEWSKI



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A Guide to PD in 2021



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Teacher Burnout

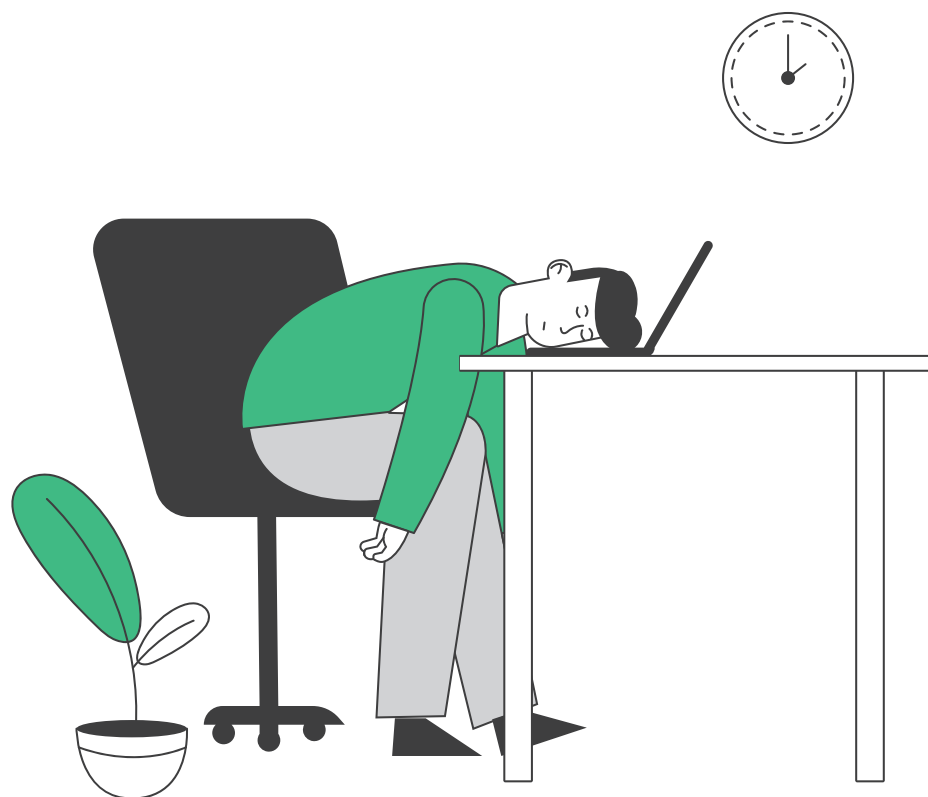
By *Suzanne Williams*

Even before the pandemic, which has been the most challenging professional experience of many teachers' careers, the stress associated with the teaching profession has worn down teacher motivation and dedication, leaving some teachers to question their commitment to the profession. By some accounts, more than 1 in 5 teachers have plans to exit the profession in the next year. It's time for a major turnaround in the hearts of our greatest American asset.

Educational psychologist and author Tish Jennings has been following the teacher burnout crisis, as well as the growing attrition rates in the field of education for the past 20 years. She believes the untenable working conditions, paired with misguided reform efforts, are the causes of teacher burnout.

In her new book, "Teacher Burnout Turnaround," Jennings presents a host of stress-causing factors and provides solutions for each. By following the strategies presented in this book, Jennings suggests that the all too common issue of teacher burnout can be addressed by individual teachers who actively engage themselves in school transformation, despite the shortcomings of the system. Jennings is careful to note, however, that she does not see teachers as the only people responsible for the changes that are necessary in the education system, nor does she want to further burden teachers. She does, however, believe that teachers are uniquely positioned to initiate change in the system in ways that will better engage students and promote learning.

Although the book was written pre-pandemic, it feels particularly relevant amid it.



Jennings wrote this book to guide teachers through the process of effecting sustainable change from the bottom up, by learning how to apply systems and design thinking. She hopes that her work will empower teachers to inspire students to engage in meaningful, self-directed learning that will prepare them for a successful career and fulfilling life in the real world.

The book is divided into three parts: "Addressing Teacher Stress and Burnout," "Preparing for Transformative Change," and "Empowering Teachers." In part one, Jennings explains how teachers got to this place of burnout and solutions for fixing it. She also explains the stress matrix and discusses the process of building inner resilience. From there, in part two, she addresses everything that is necessary to prepare teachers for transformative change, including how to change the way we think about school, mind traps, and design thinking. In the third and final part of the book, Jennings places her emphasis on empowering teachers. She discusses taking the lead, professionalism, and empowering students.

Although the book was written pre-pandemic, it feels particularly relevant amid it. While the issues of teacher stress and burnout were not created by the pandemic, they were certainly exacerbated by it, leaving teachers across the globe feeling exceptionally stressed and bringing the need for the important conversations presented in this book to the surface. This book would be a welcome addition to teachers' spring or summer break reading lists because it feels relevant now, in this time of uncertainty, when so little else does. Additionally, it leaves teachers with a ton of simple, useful strategies for improving situations that are afflicting the field of education today.

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It is clear from her writing that Jennings truly believes that teachers are positioned in a way that no one else is to be agents of change in the educational system and beyond. In order to do this, she believes that they need a toolbox, which she aims to provide partly by way of this book. "Teacher Burnout Turnaround" is illuminating in the sense that it provides the background information and necessary support for teachers to start making changes in the system in ways that improve outcomes for students and themselves, pandemic or not. The toolbox presented in this book has the potential to illuminate the path to positive changes in education, led by the professionals who know best — teachers.

"Teacher Burnout Turnaround" is a truly empowering book, which helps teachers

to better understand the issues that ail them, prepare them for transformation, and put them on the path to it. In the book, Jennings enlightens readers about the issues of teacher stress and burnout, and why they're growing more and more prevalent by the minute. By understanding how we got where we are, what causes this stress, and how to build resilience, teachers are left in a better position to prepare for the transformative changes that Jennings suggests are both possible and necessary.

Challenging teachers to reframe their thinking, this book really asks all of us to think about the purpose and setup of school differently. Powerful ideas in strategic thinking are introduced into the teacher repertoire. You'll learn about things like design thinking and mind traps, that'll quickly become arrows in your quiver as you approach classroom, community, and even personal challenges.

The last and most helpful part of the book, about empowering teachers, is what really stands out, though. In this section, Jennings gives readers some simple and career-changing tools — mental exercises being a key one — that help us all to step up and take the lead, display the professionalism necessary to get their voices heard, and offer ideas to empower their students at the classroom and institutional level.

Overall, "Teacher Burnout Turnaround" is a timely, illuminating, and empowering book that is certainly worth a read, particularly in these unprecedented times.

Suzanne Williams is a high school teacher and publications director in Indiana. When she's not teaching her students Journalism or Japanese, she's reporting on education-related topics, crafting, longboarding or playing with her Corgi.

Truth for Teachers

“Truth for Teachers” offers a refreshingly honest perspective on an array of educational topics

By *Suzanne Williams*



If you want to really dig into the truth about teaching, this is the podcast for you.

Angela Watson’s “Truth for Teachers”

podcast has over 200 episodes on topics ranging from being in the teaching profession, to maintaining work-life balance while teaching from home, and many others. The podcast boasts more than five million downloads and is consistently ranked in the top three K-12 podcasts on iTunes.

Watson, the podcast’s creator, is a National Board Certified Teacher, with more than 11 years of classroom experience as well as over a decade working as an instructional coach. In addition to her popular podcast, she has supported teachers by creating a variety of printable curriculum resources, developing several online courses, writing five books, and creating the 40 Hour Teacher Workweek Club. Although many of her paid resources are also worth a look, her podcast is a way to experience Watson’s insightful perspective for free, as a part of your weekly routine. New episodes are released on Sundays, making it a per-

She consistently preaches self-care and realistic boundaries...



TRUTH FOR TEACHERS

fect, positive addition to any K-12 teacher’s Sunday evening routine or Monday morning commute.

Watson’s self-proclaimed mission for the podcast is “to speak life, encouragement, and truth into the minds and hearts of educators and get you energized for the week ahead,” and that’s exactly what she does. The podcast tackles a wide array of relevant topics, never shying away from discussing tough issues. Watson has a way of bringing her unique brand of honesty and reflection to even the most difficult of subjects, including the dangers of being “neutral” when it comes to issues of bias and racism, motivating reluctant learners, and not feeling okay as a teacher amid the pandemic. As they listen, audiences are challenged to reflect on their own practices and beliefs, encouraging teachers to let go of limiting thoughts and assumptions, and focus on what they can do to improve education for themselves and their students — one week at a time. The strategies she suggests are short, measurable, comprehensible, and well-targeted for K-12 educators.

Watson’s expertise shines through with her insightful perspective, which is de-

The podcast tackles a wide array of relevant topics, never shying away from discussing tough issues.

livered to her listeners in a radically honest, calm, and authentic voice that is uniquely hers. She talks to teachers as if she were a friend or colleague, genuinely concerned about the best interest of her listeners. As someone who has struggled with anxiety and depression, she wants her listeners to take care of themselves, reminding them often to take care of themselves before they can care for their kids. She consistently preaches self-care and realistic boundaries to avoid burn-

out. Her work focuses on the idea that the true best practices are the ones that are not only sustainable, but also simultaneously benefit both kids and teachers. The messages that she delivers in her podcast episodes truly do speak to the minds and hearts of teachers, recognizing that they want what’s best for kids, but also that there are limits to what can realistically be done. Watson is not afraid to encourage teachers to be quietly subversive when necessary to improve outcomes for both kids and themselves. This realistic, down-to-earth approach makes her a source of advice that is relatable and applicable for many classroom teachers.

Unlike some education podcasts that can feel somewhat disorganized and unnecessarily long, “Truth for Teachers” gets to the point, often in less than 30 minutes. Watson cares about intentionality with time and actions in teaching, and she models this in her podcast by not dragging episodes out unnecessarily. The shorter length does not come at the cost of quality content, though; Watson is just more concise than many podcasters and packs a lot of high-quality content into less time.

DIY PODCASTING KIT

You talk for a living. You’re inspiring, empathetic and, well, kinda awesome. Isn’t it time you started your own podcast? It’s easier than you think, here’s what you need.

01

Rode NT1KIT: This kit comes with mic, stand, filter, and cords.
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

02

Focusrite Scarlett 4i4: A simple amp for multiple mics.
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

03

Anchor: All the tools you need to edit and upload.
[anchor.com](https://www.anchor.com)



Education in a Pandemic

An introduction to chapter 25: *Increasing Your Resiliency* from *Don't Just Survive, Thrive* by SaraJane Herrbolt



As I sit to write this, we are nearing the one-year anniversary of when life, as many of us knew it, was disrupted and altered. Quite suddenly, we found ourselves thrown into a pandemic that disrupted our routines, blurred the lines between home and work boundaries, forced us to learn and embrace technology in new ways, and perhaps experienced moving through a cycle of teaching students in a hybrid model, then virtually, and then back to hybrid. As cliché as it sounds, change seems to be about the only constant we've experienced. How many of you feel as though you've spent the last year surviving, barely able to keep your head above water? I imagine very few of us anticipated all that we would be asked to navigate, or that we would still be in the midst of a pandemic, moving through continued changes. **Yet, here we are.**

These past few weeks, I've heard several people saying, "What am I doing wrong? Why is this still so hard?" As though after twelve months, we should have this all figured out and all the problems solved. It's simply not that easy. It's not hard because you are doing something wrong. It's hard because this is an incredibly challenging and difficult time we are moving through, and let's be honest, being an educator wasn't necessarily a walk in the park before the pandemic. Being an educator is hard work. I was concerned for those who were feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and close to burnout prior to the pandemic. Now, I am even more concerned with how we

will navigate the demands of the job along with the additional stress of a pandemic — and the many other circumstances that remain beyond our control.

THE RIPPLE EFFECTS

It is true that stress is something we all experience. How we navigate stress is impacted by the way in which we view our stress, the degree of stress we experience, the way in which we carry that stress, and how it shows up within our bodies. Some forms of stress, at times, can be helpful. This is the "good" part of stress. It activates our adrenaline and cortisol and gets us moving to take action, try harder, and meet deadlines. It's often thought of as what helped us survive the early days of caveman living. However, stress is primarily meant to help us deal with short-term problems, not frequent or ongoing long-term ones. As our stress load increases, our energy is depleted and we may feel as though things become unmanageable even more quickly.

Over a long period of time, the impact of continual stress begins to take its toll. The ongoing activation of the stress response means that the body is continually exposed to adrenaline and cortisol. This constant, consistent exposure is considered chronic stress, and chronic stress puts your health at risk and makes you more susceptible to experiencing burnout.

Encountering persistent symptoms of stress, overwhelm, fatigue, depression,

anxiety, frustration, or apathy can be an indication that we are likely experiencing burnout. We know that when we shift into this state it not only has serious negative effects that impact us as individuals, but on the collective as well.

So how do we respond and curb the impact of burnout? Well, to begin we need to start talking about it. Then we need to actively engage in practices that build resilience.

RISING RESILIENT

Some refer to resilience as the ability to bounce back and return to a state of normalcy. While this may be true to a certain degree, we will encounter some experiences throughout our lifetime that we cannot just bounce back from due to the long-term impact of some catastrophic events. Resilience is not an absence of pain, struggle, or hardship. In fact, resilience is more about how you cultivate strength to move through and cope with setbacks, obstacles, or barriers.

While I do think that resilience is in part demonstrated when we keep going or persevere, especially during difficult circumstances, I do not think it means we must push ourselves through unbearable pain in order to persevere. When we view resilience in this manner, we set ourselves up to feel trapped, hopeless, and helpless. We are holding ourselves to unrealistic expectations and standards if we think of a resilient individual as one who never needs to step away, doesn't give up, and doesn't get overwhelmed by stress or trauma. I worry that in this

mindset, we are setting ourselves up for a lack of compassion and support. We can't always do it all. It's okay to ask for help and take a break along the way when dealing with difficult things so that we can keep coming back. We have to be brave enough to acknowledge our humanity.

Resilience helps us thrive even in the midst of struggle and constant change. Practicing resilience is not going to necessarily always be easy, nor will it allow you to control every circumstance you encounter. But resiliency will help you determine how you approach each circumstance and challenge.

We decide our amount of resiliency by choosing to cultivate it or by letting things lie stagnant and becoming disengaged. So where does one begin?

By building awareness, especially self-awareness.

Paying attention to ourselves helps us navigate not only the external world, but the internal one as well. If we are unaware of how we feel when we are in a particular state of being, it becomes more challenging to properly respond in order to get the very things we need to thrive and to meet the needs of those around us.

By caring for ourselves and meeting our basic needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs demonstrates how our needs build upon one another. Unless we can meet our needs at the most basic level, like sleep and nutrition, it is unlikely that we will be successful in meeting our higher-level needs. True self-care is knowing who you are and how you are.

By connecting with our mind and our body.

The mind and body are intricately connected. To care for one allows us to better care for the other. When we give ourselves the time and space through meditation or yoga to notice how we are breathing and what is going on inside, we

We all face struggles. The very presence of this does not mean that you are doing something wrong, but rather, it means that you are human.

also give ourselves a choice — to continue or to do something else.

To be a resilient educator, you must know when you need to choose yourself first. It means you must know your limits and take time to care for yourself so that you can care for others. I long to find the exact right words to offer, so educators can feel seen, heard, and acknowledged for the complexity, joy, and heaviness of the work they do. I want you to know that your struggle and suffering has not gone unnoticed. However, I also want to acknowledge that we all face struggles and hardships throughout our lifetime. The very presence of this does not mean that you are doing something wrong; rather, it means that you are human. So, breathe deep and don't lose hope.

Read Chapter 25 of *Don't Just Survive, Thrive* now! →





An Excerpt from *Don't Just Survive, Thrive* Chapter 25:

Increasing Your Resiliency

by Sara Jane Herrbolt

Being an educator is hard work. There will be days when you feel overwhelmed and overworked. You might even find yourself wanting to walk away from it all. Resilience helps us thrive even in the midst of a struggle and constant change. Practicing resiliency is not going to be easy, nor will it allow you to control every circumstance you encounter. But resiliency will help you determine how you approach each circumstance and challenge.

To increase resilience, we must first understand it and then practice it again and again. Resilience resides within all of us, and its presence within our lives often depends on how we cultivate and nurture it over the course of our lifetime. Another piece of good news, we never reach a point where it is no longer accessible to us. However, it may become harder to attain if we do not engage in practices that aid in building resilience on a regular basis. We are the CEO of our well-being. We decide our amount of resiliency by choosing to cultivate it or letting things lie stagnant and becoming disengaged.

“It’s highly distressing to carry with you fear, pain, and uncertainty. But it’s even more distressing trying to repress or forget those feelings. Resilience is not about bouncing back. It’s about moving forward.” —Brad Stulberg, author of *Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout, and Thrive with the New Science of Success*

Educators are role models. Let’s model

a resilient mindset by viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. Let’s be models who demonstrate healthy coping strategies, make it safe to admit vulnerability and personal limitations, reject the stigma associated with imperfection, and be strong people who seek support and guidance.

Think of one situation or experience in your life when you had to cultivate resilience. What did that time look like for you? As you recall this time, do you notice any shifts in your thoughts or feelings, maybe even in your body? How did you cultivate resilience during this time? Are any of those things present in your current day-to-day life?

INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE

We can think of resilience in two different ways: how we experience it as an individual, and how we experience it as a collective or a community. While there is some overlap in both of these experiences, there are also some distinct differences in what we encounter and create during each scenario. Largely, practices of individual resilience have to do with exactly that, you the individual and how your thoughts and behaviors, and the actions you take, nurture your personal well-being. No individual will move through life without encountering some problem or struggle along the way. A resilient individual recognizes that shifting into catastrophic thinking prevents them from growing through the struggle.

These practices of resilience are centered around how you show up and hold space for yourself when encountering such events.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Connection to and with others is a key part of resilience. Humans are hardwired for relationships. In “Building the Foundation of Learning Partnerships,” author and educator Zaretta Hammond states that “in a collectivist, community-based culture, relationships are the foundation of all social, political, and cognitive endeavors.” Our sense of connection to others occurs in different ways, whether it be found within a school or sports group, a civic group, or even a religious group. Each of these groups, especially when built upon trusting relationships that make us feel safe and secure, creates a sense of connection and belonging, which helps us to thrive and reach our full potential.

Interpersonal neurobiology is an interdisciplinary field that combines research from psychology, sociology, and cognitive science, among others, to better understand the function and importance of empathy and relationships within the human experience. At the forefront of this specialized field is Daniel J. Siegel, MD. His research is meant to challenge us to think about the concepts of compassion and kindness as not just helping those who are suffering, but actually helping people to flourish. Our modern-day soci-

ety has conditioned us to keep our schedules full and move through our days at the pace of a bullet train. In the workplace, it’s easy to find ourselves too busy or too stressed, and often disconnected socially from our colleagues and associates.

Interpersonal neurobiology teaches us that our interpersonal relationships, how we connect with those in our community, influences our neurobiology, or our neurological and biological responses. In other words, what happens to us affects what happens in us.

Just like we know that stress can be contagious, joy, peace, and a sense of security can be contagious, too!

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships matter. They matter with our students and their parents, the staff we work alongside, and our family members, and they play an important part in our health and well-being, especially when we build meaningful relationships built upon trust. That connection we feel with our students, loved ones, and even

our surroundings is often correlated to the connection we have with ourselves. We have to begin by having a deep relationship with ourselves.

EDUCATOR SUPPORT CIRCLES

Somehow, even when surrounded by many people, the work of educating can feel isolating and lonely. When we are in a constant state of high stress, it begins to impact our relationships. It is challenging to connect emotionally when you are stressed out and without a sense of safety. That is why in trauma-informed practices, we often talk about creating a sense of safety to help foster and build relationships and connections. One way that we can build connective relationships to experience community resilience is through a circle practice. This form of collective engagement derives from traditions found among indigenous communities around the world. There are a variety of ways that we implement a circle practice in our classrooms, whether during a morning meeting, an afternoon community circle, or in the context of a closing or restorative circle. “Circle

sharing is a more formal way of practicing our deep listening and loving speech with others to open up about our thoughts and feelings.” Just like our students, educators need and deserve a space like this. Some of my fondest memories with colleagues occurred when I had the honor of facilitating these spaces. Within these spaces we have the opportunity to feel and experience connection, compassion, empathy, and support, and we are given the opportunity to offer it in return. We can breathe deeply together, and be a witness for one another, as we release some of the pain that comes with doing this work. By offering a space that provides deep listening and the opportunity to take care of one another, we potentially offer a space that brings healing. A community’s ability to sustain, respond, and recover in response to a challenge is based on its capacity to show up in a healthy way.

Now let’s get personal:

A Personal Account of Building Resilience

By Ben S. / kindergarten teacher

As an educator, you witness some of the very best things in life, and some of the worst. It is important to understand how your job impacts you and to know how to best care for yourself in a way that rejuvenates you so that each morning you can take on whatever the world has to throw at you. I, Mr. S., a 6’10”, openly gay kindergarten teacher, have worked hard to find the ways that I can tend to myself to ensure that I am the best I can be, not only for myself, but also for my students and those around me.

My practices of self-care certainly look similar to some, but a little different from others in the workplace. Of course, there are things like a manicure or pedicure, getting my hair cut, or an evening walk that help to “fill my bucket,” but in all honesty, most of my self-care is reliant on relationships. I always tell people that I went into education because of a TED Talk. Rita Pierson, a lifelong educator and educational coach, gave a TED Talk called “Every Kid Needs a Champion,”

where she highlights the “value and importance of human connection: relationships.” Nothing has ever struck a chord in me like this woman’s wise words, and until seeing her video, I had no way to accurately tell myself how to best tend to myself and my needs.

I am as extroverted as they come and frequently spend my time contemplating the shapes I see in the clouds, and consistently get way too excited about literally everything. I would not change this for anything. I largely depend on other people and my interactions with them to fill me up. Over time, I noticed the bulk of my self-care completely revolves around time spent in three significant relationships in my life—the relationships I have with my students, my teaching team, and my family (both chosen and given). These relationships give me the strength and determination to be the best version of myself. If you talk to anyone who has been in the education world, you will hear wildly different stories, struggles, and triumphs. The

one commonality is that the students are often the reason they show up and stay. Teaching is hard, but the students completely make the hard job worthwhile. For me, this is wildly true—my students do more than make my job worth staying in. If we break down my 24-hour day into an average timeline, I spend 8 hours, or 33% of my day at home sleeping. The remaining 67% of the time is spent, as Rita Pierson says, “either at the schoolhouse, on the way to the schoolhouse, or talking about what happened in the schoolhouse.” Seeing as how I spend 8 hours of my day with my students, naturally they became an integral part of my self-care. There are few things better than kindergarteners being so overjoyed with how well they are writing their name or how excited they are that their dog barked that morning (yes, everything is exciting to them). As a teacher, rough things happen during the day, so I rely on the joy my students bring each day to help find and offer joy and happiness to them in return. How is it then not natural to see their joy and feel joy as well? They bring all of their joys and sorrows to the classroom and trust you, the teacher, enough to share it all with you.

When I am not educating my students, I am working with a superb group of fellow educators. Six of us make up the team that teaches the kindergarteners and 1st graders. I can confidently say that I wouldn’t have made it through my second year of teaching without these wonderful friends. Feeling love and trust are crucial, and my team not only shows this to me, but they also provide support and understanding. Although one would think that teaching 5-, 6-, and 7-year-olds is all sunshine and roses, in reality it can be some of the hardest work you will ever do. You cannot go through this job without a solid support system in and out of school, and I am lucky enough to have teammates who offer me exactly that. We laugh, cry, problem solve, and share bits and pieces of our lives,

all while helping each other through the many frustrations and hardships that come within and out of our jobs. These individuals impact me not only professionally, but personally and are a vital piece in my sense of connection and care.

The final piece of my self-care routine is perhaps the most important, but most delicate one of all. My family goes beyond nuclear and extends to individuals who make me feel completely whole and loved. I have been blessed with a wonderful, supportive family who truly wishes nothing but the best for me. I feel a bit boastful saying this, as this is not always the case with individuals in the world today, but it is true. In addition to my biological family, I have several individuals in my life that I consider to be like family. I laugh at myself a lot when I talk to people about my friends because I often reference someone as a “best friend” and a few sentences later find myself talking about another “best friend.” This extensive list of best friends is an invaluable part of the glue that holds me together, and an even more cherished part of my self-care. My family, both chosen and given, help to not only bring love, trust, support, and understanding into my life, but they add happiness, devotion, kindness, and patience into the mix.

Without them, I would truly be lost. When I said before that my self-care was different from others, it’s because I believe self-care is what you need to not only feel grounded, but also rejuvenated—it’s what fills your cup, and it varies from individual to individual. My self-care is largely reliant on other people, because what grounds me, what rejuvenates me, is being surrounded by the people that I love and care for, and that love me in return. On some of my worst days of teaching or life in general, it is the people I mentioned in the paragraphs above that brought me back to being a better and even more ready version of myself.

Take a deep dive...



DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

An excersize from Increasing Your Resiliency

We need to be in a deep relationship with ourselves in order to have deep relationships with others. Consider the ways in which you connect with your students, colleagues, and those outside of your workplace. Ask yourself:

Do these connections come naturally, or do they take effort?

If you were to reflect on the relationships you have, who uplifts you and brings you joy, gives you strength, or helps you prioritize your health?

Who helps you navigate your most challenging times? Which relationships make you who you are?

By bringing these individuals to mind, you invite the opportunity to experience a shift in the sensations of your well-being.

Easy Lunch

BY KIRBY WALTER

Have you found yourself at the McDonalds drive-thru a few too many times this week?

Relying on a couple Clif Bars and hot chips to get you to that last bell? You're not alone. The problem is, we end up feeling sluggish, hangry, and utterly unsatisfied. Just a bit of planning, and you'll be feeling energized enough to push through a full day of chaos.

Planning and prepping lunches may seem time-consuming or daunting, especially if the kitchen is a foreign space for you. The good news is, making delicious, healthy, gourmet meals can be really simple, and a little prep goes a long way. Just an hour of prepping a few easy ingredients can leave you with lunches for an entire week. And instead of feeling drained and bloated after lunch, you'll feel energized and ready to take on the afternoon.

Cue the Spring Quinoa Bowl: protein-packed and fiber-rich, this dish features seasonal vegetables mixed with a variety of hearty textures and flavors. It can be whipped together quickly, savored slowly, and is sure to impress even the most skeptical of taste buds. Your colleagues will scowl as they choke down another day of cafeteria chicken tenders.



Meal Prep Benefits

01

You'll save money.

Drive-through and snack foods can really add up over time.

02

You'll save time.

Spending 15 minutes of your 30 minute break fighting traffic leaves little time to actually eat the food. By bringing your delicious lunch, you'll have time to savor and enjoy.

03

Your abs will thank you.

Fast food and processed snacks are loaded with preservatives, excess oils, sugar, and little nutrition, which long term can take a toll on your health AND your waistline.

SPRING QUINOA BOWL

Serves: 4 / Prep time: 20 minutes / Cook time: 35 minutes **Total:** 65 minutes

Ingredients:

For the bowl:

- 1.5 lbs chicken thighs
- 3 small (or 2 medium) sweet potatoes, washed and cubed
- 1 bunch of asparagus washed and trimmed
- 1 cup of dry quinoa
- ¼ cup dried cherries
- ¼ cup mint, minced
- 3 Tbl avocado oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the dressing

- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1/8 cup olive oil
- 2 Tbl mayonnaise

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Place the chicken thighs on one side of a baking sheet. Spread the cubed sweet potatoes in an even layer over the rest of the pan. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of avocado oil over both the chicken and sweet potatoes; toss the sweet potatoes until they are evenly covered. Season all with salt and pepper. Bake for 25 minutes or until the chicken is almost cooked.

Meanwhile, add 2 cups of water and quinoa to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil; cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Fluff with a fork and put aside.

Remove the baking sheet and move the sweet potatoes to the side to leave a space in the middle. Spread the asparagus evenly between the chicken and sweet potatoes and toss with olive oil and salt and pepper. Return the pan to the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes or until the chicken is browned and has an internal temp of 165 F.

Assemble the ingredients for the dressing and mix together until fully emulsified. Add mint as a garnish.

Transfer chicken and asparagus to a cutting board and cut into bite sized pieces.

Here's where it gets really beautiful. Grab a few travel containers. Pack each with around 1 cup of the quinoa and top it with asparagus, sweet potatoes, and chicken. In another container zipper bag, add the cherries and mint. Finally, in a small container, pour the lemon dressing. You can add the dressing before you leave for school in the morning for a more moist dish, or wait until lunchtime to enjoy a more al dente feel.

Combine the ingredients, stir, and enjoy for a burst of guilt-free energy with a ton of flavor. Just watch out for Mrs. Frankenberger's jealous gaze.

Kirby Walter is a registered dietitian, owner of The Nourish RD, and mom of three.

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Website: www.thenourishrd.com



Note to my First Year Teacher Self

The other day I came across a well-worn notebook where I like to brainstorm and write down goals. It includes my 100 bucket list items, notes of inspiration from time spent abroad, and my dreams and aspirations of becoming a teacher. Flipping through the pages, I found one labeled "Teacher Goals 12/13," which must have been written the summer between my first and second year of teaching. Ten years in, I smile at my young, naive, teacher goals but realize my past self did carry wisdom. I thought it would be fun to edit my young teacher goals, as well as tip my hat to her knowledge.

01 In the words of one Ms. Taylor Swift, excellent classroom management "never goes out of style."

02 They will inspire you. They will also sneeze and vomit on you, bring you questionable wet items from the restroom and make you laugh until you cry. Sometimes they just plain make you cry. Your students will worry you and humble you.

TEACHING GOALS / DECEMBER / 2013

- 01 I will have excellent classroom management.
- 02 My students will inspire me everyday.
- 03 I will be the best teacher I can be for my students.
- 04 I will have a well-behaved, attentive, organized class.
- 05 My students will grow considerably in all subject areas.
- 06 I will keep myself organized and sufficient as a teacher.
- 07 My relationship with the staff will continue to grow and deepen in the most positive ways.

Ten years, two districts and two grade levels later, so much has changed yet so much has stayed the same. This profession is a kaleidoscope of hope and wonder, frustration and anxiety. A wondrous mix of goofiness and stern eye-opening moments. To my

first year teacher self, I can't prepare you for all the unpredictability that is to come but if you build relationships with your students, fight for your own peace, and stay true to yourself, that is an equation that will lead you closer toward the teacher you aspire to be.

03 It will take you years to learn this. You really can't pour from an empty cup. The best teacher is a happy teacher who isn't carrying the guilt of trying to be everything for every one.

04 You will learn sometimes students will act out for reasons they don't even understand. Don't be afraid to get to know them, understand their story and relate to the trails and tribulations they are going through.

05 It is important that they grow academically and to keep consistency in the classroom. However, don't be afraid to support them to grow as people. Show them kindness and forgiveness. Be an example of someone that looks past what they are wearing or things people may have said about them.

06 You are going to make so many mistakes. You will pick up tips and tricks as you go. Just remember, when you are stressed, your students can sense it. Find a system that works for you and soak in as much knowledge from the teachers around you.

07 Some of your deepest friendships will come out of this profession. No one else understands exactly what you are going through or will understand the love you pour into your students. Your fellow teachers are not your competition, they are your saving grace. They are your best allies and loudest cheering squad.

Classroom Chic

Spring cleaning isn't just about purging the excesses of a winter hibernation. It's time to take a cue from Marie Kondo and simplify your life, starting with your wardrobe. Our Spring '21 Capsule Wardrobe gives you dozens of versatile outfits for the classroom, the yoga studio, or the wine bar, and it gives that hanger rod a much needed break.

WHERE TO PURCHASE

- 01. **Basic Tissue Tees:** Madewell \$22 [madewell.com](https://www.madewell.com)
- 02. **Puff Blouse:** & Other Stories \$89 [everlane.com](https://www.everlane.com)
- 03. **The Modern Trench:** Everlane \$168 [stories.com](https://www.stories.com)
- 04. **Ruffle Chambray:** JCrew \$98 [jcrew.com](https://www.jcrew.com)
- 05. **Vintage High Rise Crops:** Target \$29 [target.com](https://www.target.com)
- 06. **The Easy Pant:** Everlane \$60 [target.com](https://www.target.com)
- 07. **Cotton Jogger:** Madewell \$68 [madewell.com](https://www.madewell.com)
- 08. **Cotton Side Slit T-Dress:** Everlane \$50 [Everlane.com](https://www.everlane.com)
- 09. **Poplin Midi Dress:** JCrew \$128 [jcrew.com](https://www.jcrew.com)
- 10. **The Modern Loafer:** Everlane \$100 [everlane.com](https://www.everlane.com)
- 11. **Almost Perfect Tote:** Portland Leather \$99 [portlandleathergoods.com](https://www.portlandleathergoods.com)



01

/ TOPS



02

You can never go wrong investing in high quality basics. They elevate your everyday wardrobe by adding classic, clean lines and have an enduring style that will feel relevant for years to come.



04

Basic doesn't equal boring. Add interest by choosing pieces with unique details, like the oversized buttons on this modern trench, or the ruffled collar on this contemporary spin on a classic button-up chambray.



03

THE PERFECT PIECES TO ELEVATE YOUR SPRING WARDROBE

/ BOTTOMS



05



06



07

Looking put together doesn't mean sacrificing comfort. Try out a pant with a high waist, in a light fabric, with a straight or wide leg. We love a cropped length for spring!

/ DRESSES



08



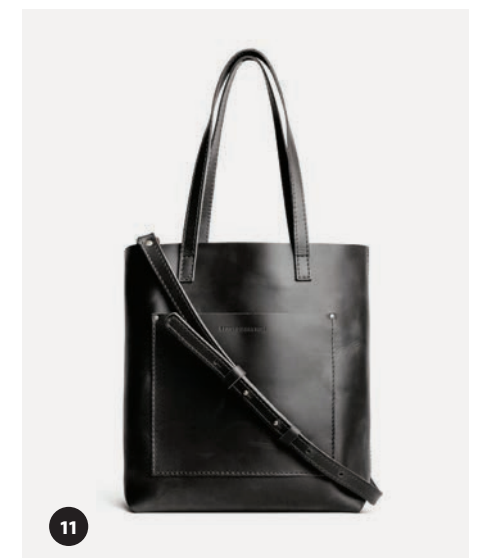
09

Whether you love a basic black dress or you want something with a bit more personality, we've got you covered. Keep it simple by adding a classic shoe in a versatile color along with a high-quality bag with simple lines to complete your perfect work look.

/ ACCESSORIES



10



11

Dig in

A step-by-step guide to an in-class garden

Green thumb or not, we learn as we grow. Whether you're a novice or you pot-it-like-it's-hot on the regular, you and your students can immerse yourselves in nurturing nature. Learn responsibility, teamwork, and best of all - indulge in the fruits of your labor.

01 Think small, not big

A simple, manageable salad garden can start in one container. Early spring is a great time to start if you want to enjoy before school's out for summer. Grow a variety of leafy greens or fresh herbs in unique vessels like old jars, bird-baths or just your good ol' terra cotta.

02 Involve everyone

When you're distributing tasks, look at your students' strengths and weaknesses. In your class medley, there will be the growers, planters and even the necessary destroyers.

03 Plant a seed

Find good quality soil by examining its texture (should be soft and crumbly). Be sure to plant at the proper depth. Read seed packets for watering information. Fertilize. Let the sun shine all over that garden. And watch your seeds and students grow with pride.



04 You've Got This

If you're into it, and the kids are into it, is there room to accommodate a larger garden? One with tons of veggies ready to change the minds of picky eaters? Eat fresher with fresh air.

05 Ready to Eat

Depending on the type of lettuce you plant, you can generally harvest between 4-8 weeks. And tomatoes about 6 weeks. Be patient for germination with fresh herbs and other veggies.



THE DIRT

A few facts to help you grow

11 million kids in America struggle with hunger, according to No Kid Hungry.

7,101 schools in the U.S. have a garden, according to the USDA.

One study showed 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students who participated in school garden activities scored significantly higher on tests.

Getting students outdoors can work literal miracles for attention and studies show that getting your hands dirty calms anxiety.



TECH TOOLS

Every Teacher Needs in Their Toolkit

Teachers may not need a hammer and nails, but they do need their own toolkit. These are our teacher tech tools.

CHECK THEM OUT



app.edu.buncee.com

Tool Buncee

Use it for Creating multimedia presentations.

How it works Getting started is easy by exploring ideas in the Ideas lab, or choosing from thousands of templates available. Buncee offers Immersive Reader for translation to more than 100 languages, which enables us to meet language needs of students and families. With Buncee, add in 3D objects, animations, emojis, audio and video, and even create in augmented reality.



info.flipgrid.com

Tool Flipgrid

Use it for Speaking assessments, check-ins, creating screen recordings or teaching a lesson.

How it works Videos can be up to 10 minutes, and include different backgrounds and stickers. Flipgrid also has an Immersive Reader. Choose from thousands of prompts for discussion in the Library to get students talking and collaborating.



Tool Wakelet

Use it for Collaborating, curating, sharing ideas, storytelling and more.

How it works It provides a digital space. With the Immersive Reader integration, Wakelet provides more accessibility for students on a global scale.



Tool Zigazoom

Use it for Video-sharing.

How it works Students and teachers can use it to create a short video in response to daily prompts. Getting started is easy by exploring the different educator channels or making your own to assign to a class. It has the look and feel of Instagram and Tik Tok, and students love using it.

Rachelle Dene Poth is a Spanish and STEAM teacher at Riverview Junior/Senior High in Oakmont, Pa. Dene Poth serves as the past-president of the ISTE Teacher Education Network and is an ISTE Certified Educator. She is also an attorney, edtech consultant, and the author of five books.



edpuzzle.com

Tool Edpuzzle

Use it for Blended or flipped learning.

How it works With Edpuzzle, you can add open-ended questions, multiple-choice answers, or even notes into a video so that students can work through the video at their own pace. Students can complete the lessons using the app on their phone or on a computer.



nearpod.com

Tool Nearpod

Use it for Engaged learning

How it works This is an interactive tool that engages students in learning through a variety of content options, activities, and even immersive virtual reality experiences. Nearpod has thousands of ready-made lessons on topics such as career exploration, digital citizenship, and social-emotional learning, and is always updated with current events and trends. Lessons can include audio and video, drawings, quizzes, polls, matching pairs, and content from PhET Simulations, Desmos, BBC, YouTube, and more.



Tool GoFormative

Use it for Assessments

How it works It is a web-based tool used to create digital formative assessments that can include a variety of question types and response formats. There are "Formatives" to choose from in the library that you can use or edit to meet your specific assessment needs.

EXPLORE & CREATE

with Augmented and Virtual Reality

06 TO GET YOU STARTED

Take your students on field trips to the moon and back via Augmented Reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). When we offer these options to our students, we provide more interactive learning experiences for our students, but more importantly, we give them a chance to create more with the content.

01

CoSpaces EDU is a virtual reality platform which has become a favorite in my STEAM course each year. Teachers can explore the library to see sample projects and download lesson plans to get started quickly. Students can collaborate on teams to write a story, build a fun space to explore, create a game, to name a few possibilities. Students will enjoy creating in VR and develop coding skills too.
cospaces.io



03

Thyng App A personal favorite for creating AR experiences that include animated characters, text, and more. Thyng can also be used to scan a target image and record up to a 10-second video to go with your target image. (iOS and Android)
thyng.com

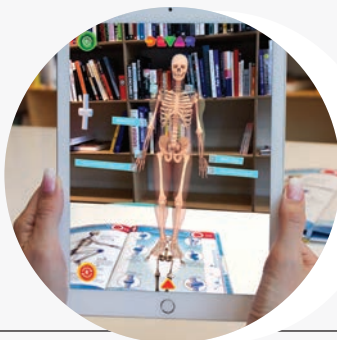
05

Merge EDU Imagine holding a frog, a volcano, the earth, statues and more for close explorations right in your hands. Merge EDU is an AR/VR platform that provides more interactive learning for students to explore science-related topics in AR through Merge Explorer. Start with the free lesson on Terraforming Earth. Object Viewer can also be used for creating your own 3D content to upload onto the Merge Cube to bring into the real world. Print your own cube at home and try it out!
mergeedu.com



02

Devar A fun app for bringing animated characters into the real world. I recommend this one for a quick way to get started with Augmented Reality. Students can choose a character and then record a story to go along with it. Devar even has other products including AR books, cards, and games.
devar.org



04

Figment AR One of the first AR/VR apps that I added to my phone a few years ago that has been my favorite and a favorite for my students too. A free tool that offers AR and VR in one. Create with Figment AR and add animated characters, objects, special effects, and even portals. When you enter the portals, you move from AR to VR. Screen record and narrate a story as it happens in the real world. (Available for iOS and Android)
viromedia.com/figment



06

Google AR/VR For anyone looking for many resources for learning about augmented and virtual reality, I recommend exploring this site available from Google. There are different experiences which offer immersive ways to learn about the human body, math, and science in augmented reality.
arvr.google.com/ar/

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Crossword

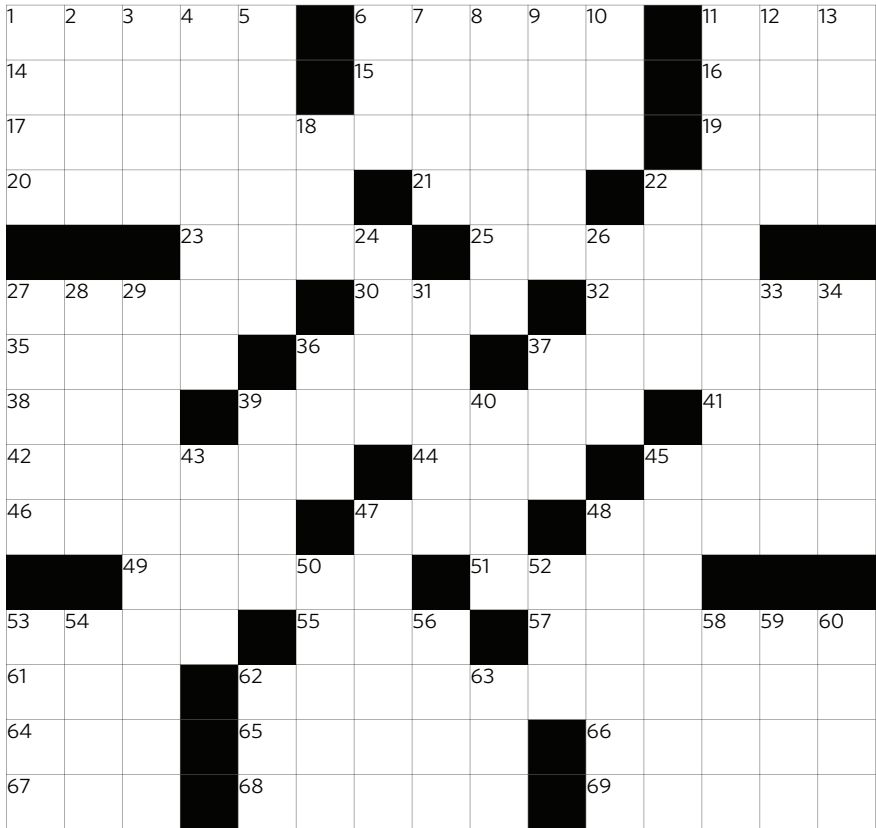
CHALLENGE YO' SELF

ACROSS

01. "Goodbye, Mr. ____"
06. Place for the rite stuff?
11. Madison or Monroe: Abbr.
14. Made of a certain grain
15. Escalante who inspired "Stand and Deliver"
16. Subject of psychoanalysis
17. Nurse, teacher, and patient clerk who founded the American Red Cross
19. Greeting from Sandy
20. Outstanding football player
21. Egg container, sometimes
22. Midge relative
23. "____ On Me"
25. Still snoring
27. Like some guards
30. Counterpart of the Roman Aurora
32. They may be split
35. Pope when the Reformation started
36. Word after acheivement, learning, or opportunity
37. Stay behind
38. Old "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" channel
39. "O ____, My ____" (poem featured in "Dead Poets' Society")
41. School yardstick, for short
42. "Semper fidelis" and others
44. Doc. for students in public sch. who need specialized attention
45. Be foul
46. Educational acronym whose A stands for Ans
47. "Suzie Q" band, for short
48. Take a second chance
49. Glower
51. Eligible for the draft
53. Surreptitious sound
55. Trending
57. Way that schools strive to ensure that all students have equal opportunities
61. __xtended __earning
__ppportunity
62. Russian pshychologist known for his concept of the zone of proximal development
64. Cochlear implant site
65. "If band name after a carb
66. Repeated musical theme
67. Ballpark figure: Abbr.
68. Fires off, as a text message
69. Name on a 1994 gun control law

DOWN

01. Imogene of classic comedy
02. Study ____
03. Type that tilts: Abbr.
04. Bewilder
05. Caught in one's web
06. 1977 Steely Dan album pronounced like a continent
07. Actor Mikkelsen of "House of Cards"
08. "Remember The ____"
09. Company that merged with BP in 1998
10. Kevin's "Footloose" role
11. Swiss psychologist known for his theory of cognitive development
12. Site of India's Moonlight Garden
13. ____ skills
18. Serpentine squeezer
22. U.S. territory since 1898
24. Tide that occurs during the third quarter of the moon
26. Back in the day
27. University grads
28. Transplant, florally
29. Famed Italian educator Maria
31. ____ nerve
33. Closer to being harvested
34. Like a winding road
36. Krypton is a noble one
37. Roaring start?
39. "Papa Loves Mambo" singer Perry
40. Inflatable bed brand
43. "The ability to describe others as they see themselves," per Abraham Lincoln
45. Power plant apparatus
47. Like goat hooves
48. Disentangle again, as hair
50. Word in a geography quiz
52. Unlikely derby winner
53. ____ observation
54. Hefty slice
56. Super Bowl highlight, for many
58. Spanish for "are"
59. Late-braking development?
60. "Resident Alien" network
62. Abbr. in a birch announcement
63. Bolt measures: Abbr



A Newfound Power

BY KYLIE STUPKA

As we collectively return from spring break, we enter the homestretch of what could well be the end of a traumatic few years of teaching. We round the corner toward summer, and something feels just a bit different. I can sense it in every conversation I have with our teachers ... exhaustion meets excitement. We know that we've made it through the worst, we've come out the other end stronger and more resilient, and this coming school year will mark one of tremendous change for how we do our jobs, and for what we demand the classroom look like. That energy is palpable.

You see, the past year has given us headaches, but it's given us perspective in equal measure. We've been forced to stop, to reflect on what we're doing, and remind ourselves of the real purpose of education. It isn't about rank-and-order grading, high-stakes testing, and prescriptive and standardized curriculum. Those things have only served to build a system that spits out unhappy students, unresilient members of society, and a generation of folks who may never understand their unique talents and abilities.

Bureaucrats and policymakers have built an endless volume of rules and regulations around education. And, for each next problem those rules create, more rules are built as solutions. And, with each next rule, over the past few decades, our teachers have lost another chunk of freedom; of agency. The modern teacher has been captive to a top-down system that posits to know better what their classroom (their students) need than the teachers could themselves. Well, we know better than that.

This past year has taught us that, in the face of real challenge, the rulemakers freeze or melt into a puddle, while the teachers step up to face it. We've faced the challenge of a global health crisis, together, and we've overcome it. Education was knocked off balance, but it's come back stronger than ever. Now, it's time to face the other big challenges, and that means it's time for rulemakers to step aside and believe in teachers to make the difference in education. And, if they don't, maybe it's time we push past them to get things done. It's time to reimagine education as a means to discover and develop the unique talents of every learner.

While our nation suffers a devastating viral pandemic, it silently suffers another ailment. Slower, but every bit as serious, the symptoms are growing clearer each day: learned helplessness, stagnation, and an erosion of personal agency. Simply put, Americans are increasingly comfortable in the passenger seat of their own lives. It's something the psychologists call an "external locus of control" and it chips away at our self-worth, leaving us feeling powerless to make change. Millions are growing up having never known what it means to believe in



themselves. And, as a result, we don't know how to believe in each other.

The classroom has come to reinforce an idea that many, particularly those in underserved communities, are already entertaining. Instead of learning how to help, kids are learning to feel helpless. Instead of learning to see an obstacle as an opportunity, they're learning to see it as evidence of an institution that won't allow them to succeed. Instead of learning to believe in themselves, climbing in the driver's seat of their lives, they're learning to accept wherever the road takes them, a witless passenger in their own story.

Education is troubled, but it isn't too far gone. We have in front of us a very fixable problem. One I've personally seen fixed. But, the stakes couldn't be higher. In the balance hangs our very way of life. And the solution isn't another top-down mandate, however well-intentioned. It isn't another guiding hand from above thwarting the power of teachers and discouraging the pursuits of students. It's simply belief. In each other, in our unique value, in our potential as individuals and as a community.

We've learned from this pandemic. We've learned from the past several decades. When teachers are trusted and empowered, it reflects in their classrooms, their communities. The schools become aflutter with experiences and enrichment. Students are excited to be there and feed off of the energy and agency of their teachers.

As we come into the homestretch of this school year, I can sense something different. You're tired, exhausted, running on fumes. But, there's a feeling of hopefulness and power. You've spent a full year making something out of nothing. You've got a taste for what real freedom feels like in teaching, and you aren't going to give it back. Please don't. You're our only hope.

Kylie Stupka is President of Empowered, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering teachers to develop the growth mindset.

AD

**BACK COVER
AD**